### Let's wait and see

by MadHatter13

**Summary**

Midoriya Deku, and her road to becoming the world's greatest Hero.

**Notes**

So I had a lot of feelings about female superheroes, and what place better to explore that than BNHA?  
Hit me up if my portrayal of transgender folks is in any way badly executed or out of line.

I've always imagined the series takes place in some nebulous future or at least a couple of decades from present day, given the hero phenomena has been going on for a while and how advanced tech has become, so I don't mention any dates explicitly.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

This much is different:

Midoriya “Deku” Izuku transitions publically about a year before she meets All Might. This is somewhat easier than it would have been in the early 21st century, but kids tend not to discriminate on, well, what to discriminate over. It’s another thing to add on top of being a Quirkless loser.
The practical details get sorted out pretty quickly; her teachers are instructed to refer to her by the right pronouns, and she gets signed up for HRT with the nearest hospital. The name remains an issue though – she can’t really seem to manage to pick a good one, but doesn’t want to keep the old.

In any case there isn’t anyone at school who refers to her on a first-name basis, so it’s either ‘Midoriya’ (the teachers) or ‘Deku’ (most of the students except for the kinder ones).

Kacchan doesn’t give her grief over it. Apparently having no Quirk is bad enough – he wouldn’t want to unfocus the efforts of his bullying.

Some days she’s grateful for at least that small mercy; other days, she hates him for it. At least it would mean he knew she was a person and not just a powerless puppet. But absolutely nothing matters to Kacchan as much as Quirks, and the power they give you.

Her mom smiles every time she comes home, and helps her find a style to suit her longer hair, and shells out for a new school uniform without a word, and goes to all her appointments with her. Midoriya gets the feeling that she is being extra supportive because she wants to make up for something – she might not be able to give her daughter superpowers, but this piece of happiness she can help her with.

‘If they don’t respect you, they don’t understand the true heroism of deciding to be yourself,’ her mother says firmly. ‘And if they don’t understand that they can go hang.’ She pauses, and brushes the hair out of her daughter’s face, and gives the new school uniform a final once-over. Her face softens. ‘But I just know it’s all going to turn out well for you, dear.’

Her mom may easily be the world’s greatest superhero (lower case).

These things are not different:

Kacchan still sets her notebook on fire and tells her to throw herself off a building, and she still refuses to give in. This means she still goes through that tunnel and runs into that slimy villain.

This is still how she meets the World’s Greatest Hero (Upper Case).

Being her, she panics when he takes off and, yes, hangs above the ground at deadly heights at the mere prospect of being able to talk to her idol.

Once he powers down, he tells her, ‘no.’

He tells her, not in so many words, ‘i’ve already near-killed myself doing this. with a quirk to rely on.’

If hearing it from the doctor, from Kacchan, from everybody, had broken her down… From him it snapped her clean in half. She stares at her shoes (sill shiny, she takes good care of them so her mother won’t have to replace them again soon) until he leaves, and drags her feet on the way downstairs, because if she doesn’t go outside, cross the street, go home, maybe it will never have happened and she can still blindly believe that she can become a hero if she just tries hard enough. She looks down all the way, because her eyes keep filling up with tears and she doesn’t want anyone to ask if she’s okay, because she isn’t.

But old habits die hard, and that’s how she finds out that the villain from before is loose and has
captured her childhood bully. And before she knows it –

There’s two things there: One, her mother always taught her that if you make a mistake, you try to fix it, no matter what. She probably didn’t mean to include fighting giant slime monsters by yourself, but then again she should really have been more specific. Two, even if she despises Kacchan and how he treats her, she has never been able to completely hate him. She understands him too well.

But mostly it’s that she couldn’t not do it. That’s the important part.

It goes about as well as expected, but it still ends with All Might punching the actual weather into submission, and that part is pretty great. The scolding, not so much, and she suspects she gets an extra helping for being a just a ‘helpless girl’, on top of the absence of a Quirk. Never mind that Mt. Lady is standing ten feet away holding the remains of an actual building under one arm.

The Number One Hero, or at least the guy who might as well be several smaller versions of him stacked together in a trench coat, interrupts her on the way home… And the rest is history.

Yagi Toshinori had few reservations about passing One for All on to a girl so young. For one thing, he was running out of time. For another, in an odd, not-entirely-accurate way, she reminds him of Nana. The cheerfulness, certainly, although that had been as much of a surface feature with his master as it sometimes is with him.

Determination, that was it, he thought as he watched her haul a stack of car tires to the truck with a grim expression on her face. She had it in spades, even if she would start crying at the drop of a hat, usually when he said something nice to her.

He did tweak the All-American Dream Program a bit. People put on muscle differently and he had a feeling that few teenage girls her age wanted to end up looking ‘like a brick shit-house,’ although he’d felt a little hurt when Aizawa had put it like that. He made a few extra changes once she had, eyes on the ground in that unfortunate way of hers, admitted to him two months in that the muscle gain was playing havoc with her dysphoria. He had wanted to admonish her for not telling him sooner, since the whole idea had been not to damage her health in the first place, but then again she had no obligation to tell him at all. He didn’t want to risk losing her trust. Anyway, whether she’d accepted or not, he had gotten her into this in the first place. He was supposed to be the responsible adult in the area – although he could imagine Gran Torino would have a heart attack laughing that one off.

She forces herself past her limit several times, which ends up setting a disconcerting precedent, but every time his scar hurts (every day. at this point it’s easier to parse when it doesn’t hurt.) he feels assured by her hard work. This girl was never made to hold One for All, but she’s damn well going to earn it.

Every day he teaches her, Yagi Toshinori feels ever more certain of the triviality of his own impending death.

Her mom notices, which is okay. Worse is, her councilor notices, and raises an eyebrow that Midoriya is spending so much time exercising instead of more ‘feminine’ activities. So she grits
her teeth and tells him – in the highest voice she can manage – that she was inspired by Mt. Lady when she saw her during the slime villain incident and wanted to “get in shape” to look more like her. The councilor seems to buy it, although she makes sure to wear makeup every single time she has her appointment. The neighborhood hospital has just the one specialist and it took her long enough to convince him to get her hormones.

He is replaced a few months later by a councilor with a very calming aromatherapy Quirk and who doesn’t have the same set-in-stone expectations regarding gender roles. Midoriya never finds out why, though she is relieved. But some time later she realizes she had told All Might about the problem when she was feeling too tired to smile through it. It’s probably a coincidence, she thinks. He may be pretty influential, but it wasn’t about training or anything. He wouldn’t do that just to make her happy.

It takes her another year to realize that yes, he would.

The day she receives her very own superpowers is both the happiest of her life, and also the weirdest.

Her stomach churning, both from the stress and… the power transfer… she puts her hair up in a ponytail, nervous it might get in the way during the entrance exam. It reaches below her shoulders now, and is increasingly untamable, but she likes the way it frames her face.

She had waited until the last possible minute to tell her mom she was doing the exam, nervous that it wouldn’t work, that the Quirk transfer would fail, that All Might would change his mind, that an asteroid would hit the country, that she would accidentally push Kacchan off a roof and have to flee to a different continent… Nervous about a lot of things, really. But she suspects she’d figured it out anyway. Midoriya has never been this motivated to do anything in her life, and it shows.

She still gets poked by a cute girl on the school grounds, and still makes a fool of herself in front of the other examinees. But she works up the courage to talk to the girl before the exam starts, no matter what that rude glasses guy says. Admittedly it isn’t much, she only just manages to stutter out a ‘good luck!’ Before Present Mic sets them off to the races. But the girl gives her a big encouraging smile in return.

Stuff like that can make all the difference

Using One for All feels like being filled up with fireworks. It’s exhilarating, it’s amazing, it’s… amazingly painful, once the adrenalin wears off. But she managed to get that robot out of the way before it trampled the nice girl from earlier – how was this test even legal? She could have died! – and in the moment that’s all that matters.

This time, unlike with the earlier villain, she can do something!

She has just enough time for that exhilaration to turn to terror as she plummets towards the ground, but not long enough to complete the thought ‘I’m going to die’ before getting smacked in the face, hard, and floating mere inches above the ground before passing out from the pain.
‘Midoriya, my girl – this is your hero academy.’

She wants to redact her previous statement – *this* is the happiest moment of her life. She’s been crying grossly for well over an hour now, but she can’t stop smiling, and her mom has given up on calming her and has gone to make dinner to celebrate. But for a while, Midoriya just sits in her room clutching her All Might action figure, her brain muttering constantly ‘I’m going to be a hero I’m going to be a hero I’m going to –’

Once she manages to calm down enough to at least see, she goes to help her mom. But after this day, there’s something new hanging on the wall along with the posters and memorabilia.

Hanging up the video chip itself would be a bit bare, so since there’s not actual admittance letter, instead it’s a beautifully written note in Inko’s hand, saying ‘Midoriya ____, admitted to UA, fall of 20XX.’

The personal name is left blank, to be filled in at a later date.

She becomes distressingly used to breaking her fingers, which doesn’t reflect well on anyone in the situation. She loses track of the many times Recovery Girl tells her off for it, or the absolutely Done look on Aizawa’s face when she does it again, or All Might’s strained expression, like he feels personally at fault.

He’s not, not really. If she was better it wouldn’t keep happening. She still feels her face go red when Kaminari mutters something about how she must be a masochist, since she keeps getting herself into these situations.

Ochako’s response is that it is how she gets herself *out* of them, and anyway isn’t he the one who fries his own brain on the reg so what right has he to talk?

But she still tells Deku she is worried about her, and asks if there is anything she can do to help.

(This is about the point when she starts going by that name – because it doesn’t sound wrong when Ochako says it, and maybe it even sounds just right enough. It’s only a couple of months until she starts signing her name like that, instead of in that uncomfortable way of before)

This much is different:

Midoriya has not explained anything to Kacchan about the sudden mysterious manifestation of her Quirk.

This is for several reasons – one is that when she comes back from the infirmary she not only has a broken arm after their first real fight, she also had a newly healed second degree burn on her face. Training simulation or not, Kacchan does not hold back.

Another is that when she leaps up to follow after him, Ochako says ‘Oh, just let him be – he’ll have to learn to deal with his stupid ego one of these days.’ And a part of her – the part that always shies back whenever he so much as glares at her – thinks *but I owe him an explanation!*

The part of her that has stopped flinching thinks, *I don’t owe him squat.*
The pause for thought is what ultimately stops her. Because even if she’s always been rash, whenever she has time enough to think things through she can usually spot the terrible consequences her actions will have. She can’t risk anyone finding out about the true origins of All Might’s power, or her own role in that story. Besides, she thinks somewhat cynically, Kacchan could never not make this about *him*. He wouldn’t believe her if it meant he could wallow in his own wounded pride for longer.

That part stays with her, and even though not everyone can tell, slowly it becomes stronger.

*I don’t owe you squat.*

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Tsuyu, as everyone will notice without minutes of meeting her, is extremely straight-forward.

However, people who do not see past the eyes and the expression and the ‘ribbit,’ may fail to notice that she’s also incredibly perceptive. Combined, these characteristics make her capable of making personal observations about people with devastating accuracy.

Deku experienced that first-hand when she made the distressing connection between her Quirk and that of All Might’s. The truth, though, remains hidden not only because of her own ineptitude in handling this power, but also because the real story (she believes) is far more impossible than whatever guess people could cook up.

Still, it’s nice of her to visit Deku in the infirmary when she’s recovering after the League of Villains incident. Most of the class does, in fact – at least once All Might is safely out of sight. It’s very different from anything she’s used to. Back in middle school, her friends wouldn’t even visit her at home, never mind when she was sick. Well… Not that she’d had friends to visit her in any case, but that’s really beside the point, she thinks.

She’s there for a couple of days (every time she uses One for All to its fullest potential it takes her longer and longer to heal, a fact that sits snugly with all of her other anxiety, waiting to strike) and they take turns visiting her for an hour or so while she’s allowed to receive guests. It keeps away most of the boredom of lying around doing nothing, and she plays cards with Kirishima (who cheerfully cheats), eats contraband sweets with Yaoyorozu (who has to keep her body fat high for her Quirk to function but also just really loves sour candy) and is lectured by Iida on the danger of injuring oneself in a fight, with much gesticulating. She had that coming, she supposes, and keeps trying to think of ways to keep One for All under control.

Tsuyu isn’t quite as energetic, but they have a nice enough time just chatting until frog-girl says, as if she were commenting on the weather ‘Midoriya, you’re transgender, right?’

Does her life flash before her eyes? Well, she might have thought so before, but now she’s had several actual near-death experiences to compare to, so no. Granted, this didn't happen either back when Togaraki Shimura was a fraction of a second from dissolving her face, or when her friends’ lives had been threatened. Everything had been too immediate, and nothing had mattered as much as the present moment. Afterwards, though, she had had a kind of delayed reaction, fighting off the panic attack of her life when she thought about just how close they had all been to that end, and all the things that would never happen if things had gone wrong

Now, her insides just freeze up, which feels awful but not quite as bad as almost dying. But… Tsuyu didn’t say it with judgment, or even like she particularly expect an answer, although she’s looking Deku in the eye, head tilted to one side.
She could get mad, or play dumb, but she’s faced scarier things, so she just replies, ‘Why do you ask?’

Tsuyu considers this, and says, ‘Well, I thought… then it would make two of us.’

Deku blinks. Tsuyu nods.

For a while the two girls are silent, but all the while they wear the biggest smiles they have ever shared together.

When Todoroki confronts her about the similarity between her own powers and All Might’s, she’s certain he’s figured it out. Well, certain for all of two seconds.

‘You’re always hanging around All Might, and your quirks are similar. Are you like his illegitimate kid or something?’

Turns out he could not be further off, but she can’t really point this out because her brain short-circuits and all she can utter is ‘Uuuuuuuuuuh…’

Not her most eloquent moment.

Todoroki stares at her with morbid fascination, like a man watching a car crash. ‘I’ll take that as a ‘no’, then.’

That sticks in her mind for a while, even after he reveals the remarkable shitshow that is his family life. It even comes up when they’re in the same hospital room after the Stain incident and Iida (who always wants to be clear on these things) asks ‘Ah! We never asked, but Uraraka and I wondered who that skinny man was, visiting you in the infirmary after the sports festival? Is he your dad?’

Ochako, who happens to be visiting, says ‘Don’t be rude, Iida! Besides, they look nothing alike! That guy looked like some kind of heroin addict with bad posture!’

Iida, one arm swinging emphatically, says ‘It is you who is rude! Have you never heard of adoption or step-families, Uraraka?!’

She waves her own hands placatingly. ‘I’m sure he’s a nice man – he did look very worried about you, Deku.’

She is sure even they notice that there’s something weird about her torrent of negatives (Todoroki who is sitting five feet away certainly does) but eventually she winds down to ‘Uh, he’s just a relative!’

…Which isn’t an answer at all, but Iida refrains from asking again.

It keeps her awake at night while she’s in the hospital (although she would claim it’s because no-one who has their arm in a cast is going to have a great time sleeping). She tells herself it’s a ridiculous assumption to make in the first place, because you would be hard pressed to find two people who are less alike. Of course, most people assume that Quirks are passed on genetically, so from that perspective it’s not a difficult leap to make. Looking at it like that is far more believable than the truth, after all.
But the assumption is less troublesome than how it makes her feel, because that’s what’s at the root of her current insomnia. She’s already been given so much from him – training, confidence, a Quirk, a future, a friend. She shouldn’t want this to be true.

But why does shouldn’t matter when she does? Asks a part of her that sounds remarkably like Tsuyu.

Look, she tells her imagination. If you’re going to be like this, I’m not bringing you along again.

The memory still keeps her warm for a long time after.

She’s good friends with Iida and some of the other boys, but she still feels… nudged to the side when she’s around just them. They all talk freely of their goals – to become the best, the greatest, the coolest hero this side of the Pacific, but she feels this weird gap in the conversation when she admits to the same goal. When she mentions this to the other girls, Tsuyu says in her straightforward and slightly cynical way that she isn’t at all surprised. After all, the top five heroes in the country are all guys, and have been for a while.

Most of the other girls, as it turns out, have dreams on their own, even if they aren’t constantly talking about them. Ochako wants to help her parent’s business, Tsuyu wants to work in water rescue, Mina is fine with just becoming a ranked hero at all. Toru, it turns out, wants to be a popular public hero even though her own Quirk often makes it difficult for people to know she’s in the room at all. While Deku can’t imagine letting go of her own goal, theirs also seem a lot more possible, for which she envies them.

She isn’t alone in her over-the-top ambition though. She wishes she was as confident as Yaoyorozu, whose immaculate education and upbringing has made her the perfect candidate to reach the top five at the very least. She admires her with all her heart, far more easily than she admires Kacchan, who always comes with the disclaimer ‘But also you’re a horrible human being.’ Yaoyorozu is a good person, and a reliable friend.

And, as it turns out, not as confident as Deku believed her to be.

‘Is everything all right?’ She eventually asks her. They have all just returned from their respective internships, and Momo has been sitting under a cloud ever since she got back.

She sighs into her folded arms, face-first on the desk. ‘Midoriya… Do you think we’ll have to be sex objects when we go professional?’

‘Ha?’ She leans back in her seat in surprise, which tugs at her healing scars, but she tries not to wince. ‘Wha – what do you mean?’

‘I mean…’ The girl leans forward on her desk, head in her hands. ‘Kendo and I interned with Miss Uwabami, and I thought it would be really interesting – but then all we did the entire time was help out at her modeling agency! I know heroes are allowed to have other careers but…’

‘Uh… was it at least interesting from a business perspective?’ Deku asks, always eager to see the bright side.

‘Maybe if I wanted to be a model… But that’s not what I’m aiming for at all! I want to be a hero to help people! Do you know what she said to us? She said she hired us because we’re pretty.’ She makes this sound as if this were not the highest insult she could receive, but still close
‘Well… you are…’

‘That’s not the point! The point is that nothing else we did or could do mattered! I wasn’t picked because of how I did during the sports festival, or because I was ranked high on the entrance exam, but because of my stupid pretty face.’ She kicks the table leg in frustration. ‘I mean, is it my costume? Is it because I show too much skin? How I use my Quirk is reliant on my clothes not being too much in the way, but that doesn’t mean I have to be damn-near naked! I sent in a request for something more down to earth, but that thing they sent me back looks like something out of a porno mag… I’ve already sent in a request for a redesign that doesn’t risk my actual boobs hanging out but what if I end up having to wear skimpy clothes anyway for the publicity?’

Deku thinks of Mt. Lady and Midnight and so many of the other top female heroes, who tend to look like they jumped right out of an American comic book. She looks up to them a great deal, but it must be exhausting to have to show up to a battle or a natural disaster in full makeup. She’s pretty sure that’s not a requirement for the guys – although some of them may choose to. She refuses to believe Edgeshot’s eyebrows naturally look like that. Not to mention that skin-tight catsuits don’t exactly make for great armor, if your Quirk doesn’t make you in any way damage-resistant. She also thinks of her former councilor, who might well have disqualified her from being seen as a girl if she didn’t look the part.

This has not changed: Her mother made her hero outfit, and it’s still after her own design, easy to move around in and has many similarities to a tracksuit. The idea of having to switch to skin-tight spandex (even if that’s what All Might wears) when she goes pro makes her, frankly, uncomfortable.

‘A cloak!’ She says, nearly jumping out of her seat.

‘Huh?’ Momo peers at her out of her distress.

‘Listen – I think you’re a hero no matter what way you dress. But if it makes you uncomfortable, and, I mean, you probably get cold a lot in that outfit, we can surely find a way around it that doesn’t interfere with your Quirk. And I think you’d look really badass in a cloak.’

Momo stares at her. Then her face brightens up slowly and she says, ‘You think so? I mean, I got a really bad fever this one time at the start of fall and I’d rather not have to take time off…’

‘Mhm! A real warm one when it’s winter, and maybe a lighter one in summer. We’ll make it one of those that detach easily so it won’t be a disadvantage when you’re fighting, or if it gets caught on things. It’ll even make it easier for you to hide whatever your Quirk is creating if you want to have an advantage against villains. Plus, if you add a hood you’ll be able to pull off really cool and mysterious entrances!’

They talk excitedly right about the possibilities up until Present Mic bursts through the door for English lessons, and next time it’s chilly outside, Yaoyorozu is sporting the coolest Mysterious Cloak TM Deku has ever seen (courtesy of Hatsume Mei) along with her redesigned costume, to a shower of compliments from the girls. The only thing that spoils the moment is when Mineta makes some sort of gross comment about being deprived of the usual show, but he is silenced when Tsuyu casually knocks him off a roof. And then, there is not even that.
After being kidnapped and subsequently rescued, Bakugou knows perfectly well who is behind it, even if it is Kirishima who yanks him out of there. Because not a single one of them could come up with such a stupidly dangerous plan except for Deku. And even if the rest of them ever did, they would never dare to actually implement it.

It makes him furious on several levels, aside from the usual one of ‘How dare she think she’s better than me?!” Even he can concede that a villain powerful enough to almost defeat All Might and drain away the remnants of his Quirk isn’t someone he can even pretend to beat, no matter how he wants to.

Mostly he’s angry because he isn’t sure why she did it. He tells himself he doesn’t hate her because that would mean acknowledging her as anything but a powerless failure, but the truth is that he does. He teeth-grindingly, mind-numbingly hates her for even trying to be on the same level as him. And he knows she hates him (probably out of jealousy, he tells himself, looking past more than a decade of bullying) so he concludes that the only reason she got the others to rescue him (the idea makes him retch) is because it would make her appear heroic.

Never mind that she had to leave the hospital, still injured from the fight before, to do it. If anything that just makes it all look even more heroic. What an arrogant fuck.

(he thinks about this all to cover up the cacophony of his own mind telling him it’s your fault, it’s your fault all might is no longer a hero, it’s YOUR FAULT -)

And if she didn’t do it for that reason, she did it to rub it in his face! How is she supposed to even try to surpass him (laughable!) if he’s too dead to compare to?

He gets answers to none of this, as has no insight into the sudden manifestation of her Quirk, and when he tries to call her out she straight-up forgets to show up. When he blows up (quite literally) in the gym a couple days later and demands to know the answer, she turns to him with a mild expression, as if he hasn’t just incinerated a bunch of equipment. ‘It was Kirishima who saved you. I thought you noticed.’ She steps out of the way as a long-suffering Iida zooms past with a fire extinguisher. ‘You really should thank him one of these days.’

As she jogs over to the rest of their classmates, he stands there fuming, giving off small explosive sparks from the palms of his hands.

A heavy hand lands on his shoulder. ‘This is coming out of your pocket money, kid,’ says Aizawa, regarding the smoking pile dispassionately. ‘Or, failing that, your college fund.’

Bakugou grits his teeth, and straightens up.

He doesn’t understand.

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There is something strange, after All Might’s retirement.

Well, lots of things are strange, actually, but the really strange thing is how most people talk of him not as if he retired, but as if he died. It’s as if they can’t keep the image of the spectacularly muscled Symbol of Peace in their head along with the very sharp man who sometimes shows up on TV and just so happens to share his name. It even happens in the school sometimes, once he goes back to teaching, but to Deku it’s the most blatant when she sees him on what has to be the twentieth interview he does after the All for One incident. The interviewer and a gaggle of politicians speak oddly – not as if he isn’t in the room – but as if he is someone else and not the
constantly smiling god who had appeared on the same TV station countless times.

It’s as if he isn’t anyone outside of being a hero. It’s as if none of them have any idea of him as a person, or as a teacher, or (she thinks very quietly) her best friend. To them, All Might isn’t just retired, or dead, but gone, almost as if he had never existed as anything but an idea.

It makes her sad, but mostly it makes her very angry. She isn’t sure she’s good at anger – she’d rather not be like Kacchan, who has more issues than the National Geographic, but at least she’d like to know what to do with it, instead of waiting for it to burn out or simmer over.

She wants to help, not just by taking the mantle off his shoulders (because she isn’t sure even he knows who he is without this power) but by making him understand that she knows. He isn’t an actor who finally quit his most famous role, he like a knight without a sword. He may no longer slay dragons, but that doesn’t matter as much as being someone who made the decision to do so in the first place.

She wants to help.

Everyone changes in some way as a result of their internship, and the ensuing chaos. Deku’s own might be the most obvious, since she no longer is at a risk of basically exploding every time she uses her Quirk. But there’s something new about everyone. Kirishima has for some reason become very polite (especially when knocked over the head), Iida’s hand still trembles when he uses it. Jirou seems almost supernaturally aware of evacuation procedures and exit routes in dangerous situations, and Momo is now less prone to catching colds.

What is now different about Ochako is that she is 100% less willing to take shit from anybody.

It’s not immediately obvious, aside from the fact that she now attends classes at Gunhead’s dojo with almost evangelical zeal. But it’s as if she, instead of internalizing whatever thoughts she has regarding the situation, now speaks them freely.

‘No, Kaminari, if you use your lightning while we’re all standing on this steel grid we will literally die, how do you not know this already?’

‘Gee, Monoma, I’m not sure what it says about 1-B if class 1-A are really this incredibly incompetent.’

‘Bakugo, I’m sure you’re having fun blowing up the dorms again, but what is this I’m holding? Oh, it’s a fire extinguisher!’

That last one had been memorable if only because Kacchan was still cleaning foam out of his ears two days later and wouldn’t quite look Uraraka in the eye for a week after that.

It’s like being mauled by a duck, if the duck was capable of both roasting you and putting you in an armlock without breaking a sweat.

Funnily enough, she also does this with compliments, saying whatever comes to her mind as it occurs.

‘Tsuyu, that jump was amazing!’

‘Koda! That is the cutest bunny I have ever seen in my life!’
‘Sato, you are an amazing baker! Whoever marries you will be lucky!’

‘Deku, your hair is so cute today!’

It’s like living with a motivational speaker, if the motivational speaker did stuff like urging you to go jogging with her at four in the morning to “breathe the sea air”.

Which is why what happens in the dorm living room is both not entirely unexpected and very, very unexpected.

Mineta is at it again and, really, that’s the problem. It shouldn’t be some regrettable fact that you nevertheless resign yourself to. He has become expected, but he should never have become accepted. Some members of the class imagined he would quiet down if you had to put up with him all day every day. If anything, living with him is worse. When he’s not inviting the girls into his room to look at his ‘collection’, he’s standing next to whatever male classmate who can’t run away fast enough, and making loud personal comments about whatever girl happens to pass by, complete with an If-You-Know-What-I-Mean elbow straight in the ribs.

It’s an untenable situation, and it comes to a head one night, when he has sat himself down on the couch and has resolved to guess every single female classmate’s bra size before 10:30. This is met with a chorus of ‘get lost!’ and ‘eat shit’ from whoever is on the receiving end as they return to their rooms or go to the kitchen to grab a snack.

Regrettably, Deku is completely unprepared to do the same when she returns from the gym, feeling gross and sweaty and in any case trying to get to the bottom of which would win in a fight: Gang Orca or Selkie and his crew, on and off-land.

‘B-32.’

‘Huh?’ She halts in her stride on the way to the shower, and is met with Mineta’s sleazy grin from atop the sofa cushions. ‘Did you say something?’

‘B-32, which puts you at the bottom of the class, Midoriya, sad as it may be.’

‘Hey, grape head? Fuck right off,’ says Jirou from the kitchen.

‘If you insist, C-28.’ Mineta blows a kiss in her direction, but turns back to Deku and for some reason she can’t walk away, can’t say anything, or tell him to shut up. Her throat feels blocked up, and in a way it reminds her of the sludge villain back when she first met All Might. Slimy and greasy and suffocating.

‘Don’t be disappointed, at least you make up for it in other ways,’ he says, wide eyes sliding down to her ass. ‘That’s more than I can say for some of the company here. Although your broad shoulders kind of cancel it out.’

‘Hey dude? For your own health and safety you should shut up right about now,’ says Sero, giving the frozen Deku a concerned look.

‘Come on, you guys, you never have fun with me,’ Mineta whines, showing that there is but a quarter inch between Sexual Predator and Whiny Manchild.

‘God, give it a rest already,’ says Kaminari, who is playing a console game with Sero by the TV.

‘Like you guys aren’t thinking the same thing – ‘
'Stop talking,' says Todoroki, finally looking up from his book.

But Mineta would not be Mineta if he knew what ‘no’ meant.

‘God, you’re all so sensitive,’ he says. ‘At least she’s improved since we enrolled! Midoriya, I mean, you can’t have been more than an A –’

The boot sails across the living room, and smacks him clean in the face, heel first. Mineta goes over the arm of the couch like a sack of potatoes, and silence rings like a bell. Then, all eyes turn to meet Uraraka Ochako, her expression one of beatific, platonic fury, standing next to the front door, still in her tracksuit. Slowly, Mineta’s gobsmacked visage, a red boot print across his entire face, rises over the side of the couch like a stunned moon.

Ochako smiles sunnily. ‘So nice to finally hear yourself think again.’ Then, in three long strides, she crosses the room to Deku’s side, and takes her hand. ‘We’re just going on a little walk, don’t worry. Have a nice evening!’

Deku lets herself be lead out of the house in silence, only just closing the door on an astonished ‘HOLY SH-’ from both Jirou and Kaminari. She feels gross, not just because she needs a shower, and also like she might maybe throw up, but Ochako’s hand is warm in hers, and they walk across the school grounds in darkness, even though it’s only a short while until curfew. Finally, when they’ve walked fast for quite a while, like they’re retreating from a particularly slow-moving villain, Ochako stops walking, and squats down on a hillside, staring out into the darkness.

‘That was gross,’ she says, not really knowing why she’s stating the obvious. ‘He’s gross.’

‘Yup,’ says Ochako. ‘I hate him.’

‘Hate is kind of a strong word –’

‘That’s why I’m serious when I use it, Deku.’ She gets up again and starts pacing around. ‘Never mind how that grape-headed idiot got into this school, it’s a mystery to me why he hasn’t been thrown out yet! He makes every single day just that bit harder, and yet people just laugh and say stuff like ‘Oh, that’s just Mineta!’ So? When we see a thief robbing someone in the street, we don’t say ‘that’s just a purse snatcher’ and let them get on with it.’ She kicks at a clump of grass, exploding it into shreds of plant matter. ‘What’s more, it shouldn’t be our job to keep him in check! We’re students, for god’s sake! Where are the adults in this situation?!’ She gives a muffled scream of anger, then sits down again.

After a while, Deku says, ‘It must have been amazing to throw that boot at him.’

She blinks. ‘You know, it was? I can see it in slow motion inside my head as it collided with his stupid face and wiped that disgusting smug grin off. I wasn’t even mad at the time, it just felt like ‘ah, this is how I solve that problem.’ Crystal clear. Didn’t even use my Quirk.’

‘Thank you.’

She blinks again. ‘Don’t say that, I just wanted to help.’

‘Well...’ Deku turns to her and smiles a huge smile. ‘Guess that makes you a hero, then.’

Ochako blushing crimson, and says, ‘It doesn’t! Anyway, don’t let anything he said matter, I think you’re gorgeous!’
This time, it’s Deku that blushes. Down by the dorms, they can hear the bell ring in curfew, and Ochako gets up, dusting grass off her pants, and reaches out a hand for the other girl. ‘Let’s go back before they start a nationwide manhunt for us. No offense, gorgeous, but you need a shower.’

Deku takes her hand and gets up. ‘I know…’

Maybe it’s because she looks so sheepish when she says it, or because she looked so cornered earlier. Maybe it’s for some entirely indifferent reason, but whatever it may be, Ochako leans in and presses a soft, dry kiss to her cheek, which makes Deku tingle from her toes to the tips of her ears.

Maybe it’s for the best that the way back is long, and the darkness so murky, or they would both still be red in the face by the time they got home.

Aizawa is running on nothing but fumes around the time he comes back to the classroom. Some administrative red tape had kept him from his 3rd period nap, which means he is a little less taciturn than usual. Or, he may just be so in a different direction now. The end result, anyway, is that his brain-to-mouth filter (never particularly strong) is basically nonexistent.

Midoriya brightens up when he enters the classroom, and turns away from the discussion group. ‘Teacher, we figured out how we wanted to do the search and rescue simulation you had us plan!’ She is practically vibrating with excitement, but this may in fact just be a normal school day for her.

‘Mm,’ says Aizawa, already climbing into his sleeping bag.

‘Ah – but we thought it would be more successful if we were allowed to use the forest area on the school grounds.’ Aizawa has noticed that Midoriya tends to present opinions as given by a group instead of taking credit for her own, but whether that’s because of insecurity or because she wants to be sure everyone feels included, he doesn’t know. He’ll probably have to deal with it at some point.

‘Mm,’ he says, lying down behind his desk and pulling the zipper up to his nose.

‘…Teacher? Is it okay? We promise to try not to destroy too much.’

(this results in a ‘hey!’ from Bakugo, which is amazing since no-one actually mentioned him by name)

Aizawa gives a deep sigh and opens his eyes again. ‘I don’t know, ask your dad.’

There’s a ‘Huh?’ From Midoriya, and a ‘Who?’ from a few of the other students.

Aizawa turns to face the wall. ‘You know the guy, he’s around here somewhere – the one who looks like the answer to the question ‘what would happen if you hit David Bowie with a train?’ That one. I’m pretty sure I saw him in the cafeteria earlier.’

As he falls asleep (finally) he can hear Yaoyorozu say ‘Is he talking about All Might?’ and Kirishima say ‘Jirou, stop laughing!’ and Iida’s ‘Midoriya, are you alright?’ And the girl’s own flustered, rapidly accelerating mumbling.

Well, he thinks as he conks out. It’s not as if he was wrong.
She doesn’t tell Kacchan anything, but even though she tries to keep it in, eventually she has to tell someone. If she doesn’t, she’ll explode, and she doesn’t use that metaphor lightly these days.

She tells her mom.

Not the whole truth, but enough to if not reassure her, then at least join up some dots. Midoriya Inko deserves better than having to watch her only daughter repeatedly injure herself for the sake of others, or often even for no real reason at all. She shouldn’t have to wait in fear every time she leaves for school, uncertain if this time might be the time she does not return.

She tells her, when her mom asks her not to go back to UA. Not to convince her to change her mind – well, not entirely – but because she finally realizes how scary it must have been. Not only had she felt secure that Deku would never get a chance to lead this dangerous life, but when ‘her’ Quirk finally manifests, it’s something so incredibly damaging.

So she tells her, ‘It’s true. The doctors were right. I never had my own Quirk from the moment I was born. But then I met someone who… gave it to me.’

Midoriya Inko did not raise a liar, and so she believes her from the first moment, but she also knows when she’s not being told the full truth. ‘Who was it?’ The question comes with the implication that if she ever finds out, the person in question had better run for the hills.

‘I’m sorry – I promised not to tell anyone. And I’m sorry that I scared you. But I have so many people helping me now. I’m… I’m not alone anymore, mom.’ She clutches the phone in her hand, and tries not to cry.

There is a brief silence at the other end of the line. ‘Then make me a promise?’

Nervous to the point of nausea, Deku utters a positive into the receiver.

‘If they can help you, let yourself be helped. You’ve always tried to do everything by yourself, dear. So if your friends can help you, please, stop hurting yourself. You’re not the only person out there who can do something. Don’t do your friends the disservice of thinking they can’t handle it.’

Deku is definitely crying now, but she still mumbles a ‘yes’ through the phone.

She can hear the tired smile in her mother’s voice when she asks, ‘What have I always told you?’

Deku grins through the chattering of her own teeth. ‘Don’t set fire to yourself to keep others warm.’

Inko smiles, for real this time. ‘That’s my girl.’

There was a point, and Toshinori isn’t sure where on the line from the past to the present it happened, that he no longer felt reassured by the prospect of his own death.

When he first started training Midoriya, every advance, breakthrough and new skill she gained had
him relieved – he is certain that she will keep accelerating long after he’s gone, and that lets him embrace his eventual end even more than he had before gaining a successor. Had he not passed on One for All to her, he suspects she still would have become a hero out of pure nerve and stubbornness. But he did and as she grows more capable and in control of her power (his power no longer) the less he feels needed and that is good because his path was set out since the beginning and he wants to make sure she can still continue well after he’s gone-

But…

There are some things. Everyday things, mostly, that plant something in him like a virus (thankfully a metaphorical one since a real one would surely be the end of him) that refuses to stop spreading even when he tries to cull it. There are things like running together (which they do slowly, pausing many times, or he has to stop every few feet to cough up blood). Like seeing the genuine determination and pride she takes in cleaning up the beach so that there is not even a broken IV needle left in the sparkling sand. There is telling her some things and failing to tell her others, or drinking tea together, when time allows. There is how she just keeps being a total crybaby no matter what (especially when something good happens) and honest to a fault. There is how sometimes she asked how long he had been powered up and would create diversions without thinking when he was out of time.

There is that, no matter what, she continues to get herself into trouble far outside her capacity, and that goes beyond making him worry; if anything it makes him near-livid with anger. Most of it aimed at himself.

Point is, he’s never been very good at pretending to not care about people. What he’s even worse at is having them care for him. When Gran Torino and Sir Nighteye try to steer him off the path to self-destruction, he just… Leaves them, in a way. Doesn’t call, doesn’t answer phone calls, finds a reason to be anywhere else than where they are. Because doesn’t want them to be around when he goes, because he doesn’t want to hurt them by forcing them to see it.

Of course this doesn’t work out as expected. People have a way of hanging on to those they care about.

It matters less when all this changed, and more that that’s how it is now. That he is completely willing to bow to Midoriya Inko and promise her that he will not die for her daughter’s sake is just another proof of that.

He thinks about all of this not in that moment, but a week or two later when he’s sitting at his desk, procrastinating from finishing grading papers over a cup of rapidly cooling tea. After all, making a promise and realizing you really, truly want to keep it are two different things.

Yagi Toshinori no longer fears living.

Upon reflection, Tsuyu is either the best possible person to talk to about this, or the worst possible person. Really, there’s no in between. Still, Deku isn’t going to find out until she tries, and so she braces herself and knocks on her dorm mate’s door, which opens almost immediately. Tsuyu is still sitting on her bed at the other end of the room, reading an issue of LaLa magazine, which probably meant that she used her tongue to pull the door open. Deku goes on a brief tangent inside her own mind on the risk of her picking up dangerous bacteria that way, with a detour over to the fact that Tsuyu never seems to get sick, culminating on the suspicion she might have a well-above average immune system. She snaps back to the matter at hand when her friend says, ‘Close the
‘Oh – sorry!’ Tsuyu always has the heat turned up in her room when she’s there, indicating to Deku that even if she might not be fully cold-blooded, she was vulnerable to the cold, similar to amphibians. A humidifier in the corner of the room seems to confirm this. She closes the door and straddles the desk chair beside the bed, twiddling her fingers, attempting to come up with a conversation starter.

‘You’ve got a problem.’ It’s a statement, not a question, and Deku blinks, looking up at the blank face. ‘You would have started talking by now if you just wanted to chat, but instead you’re in deep thought.’

‘Maybe I’m just not feeling very chatty today,’ says Deku, a touch defensively. The blank expression doesn’t change, which speaks for itself. She sighs. ‘You’re right.’

‘Is it school related?’

‘No…’

‘Did Bakugou set fire to the gym equipment again?’

‘What? Oh – no, not that I know of.’

‘Then it’s personal stuff.’ Tsuyu closes the magazine. ‘No offense, but usually when it’s personal you talk to Ochako, not me.’

Deku can feel the blush begin somewhere around her knees, and rise steadily upwards, and there is nothing she can do to stop it.

Tsuyu watches her steadily reddening face impassively. ‘Ah, it’s like that.’

‘It’s not like anything!’

‘But you like her.’ Another statement, delivered in a matter-of-fact fashion.

Deku rubs her nose furiously, and runs a hand through her hair (now long enough to keep in a tight but messy bun when they’re in the field). ‘Well… Yeah…’

Tsuyu shrugs. ‘So tell her.’

Deku looks at her with exceptional horror. ‘I can’t do that!’

For the first time, Tsuyu looks something close to bewildered. ‘Why not?’

‘Because… she might not like me back!’

Frog-girl tilts her head to the side, considering the possibility. ‘Hm. No,’ she says. ‘No, I find that very unlikely.’

‘We’re using that word too much,’ Deku mutters.

‘As a problem, it has a pretty easy solution,’ says Tsuyu, ignoring that. ‘You have a crush on her, you tell her. What do you want me to do?’

She huffs, and folds her arms on top of the back of the chair, spinning it in half a circle in a futile effort to leave this conversation. ‘I don’t even know if she likes girls.’
Tsuyu gives her a very cynical look. ‘Don’t you? Because I remember you telling me that this one time –’

Deku stutters. ‘Well – maybe she was just being nice!’

Tsuyu slowly shakes her head. ‘Oh dear. Compulsory heterosexuality makes fools of us all.’

‘Huh?’

‘Look, to me it sounds like you’re just making all kinds of excuses because you know the solution but you’re scared to implement it. And that,’ she says, poking Deku in the arm, making the chair spin again, ‘Doesn’t sound like you at all.’

Deku is silent long enough that Tsuyu is about to reach for her magazine again when her friend mutters, ‘There’s something else.’

‘Mm?’

‘I don’t know if she’ll be okay with –’ Words fail her and she gestures emphatically to herself.

A light comes on in Tsuyu’s eyes. ‘Midoriya, do you not think Ochako is a good person?’

Deku looks up. ‘Huh? Of course I do!’

‘So don’t put words in her mouth. She wouldn’t do that to you, whether she likes you as a friend or as a girlfriend. Besides, she was just fine when I told her about me.’

This makes Deku take proper notice. ‘You told her?’

‘Mm. And if you ask her out and she says yes, she isn’t going to like you despite or because of you being trans, but because you’re Midoriya, and you’re wonderful. And she isn’t going to be just ‘okay’ with it, she’ll embrace it.’ She opens her magazine again, and finds the page she was on. ‘And you, presumably.’

‘Tsuyu!’

She’s pretty sure her brain is going to glow red hot and drop out of her head any moment now, both because Tsuyu cares that much for her and because she’s too embarrassed about the whole feelings thing to even think about it too hard.

But that is nothing to when there’s another knock on the door and it opens to reveal Uraraka Ochako, holding her math textbook and looking just far more cute than was fair to poor Deku’s heart.

‘Tsu, I know you said you weren’t sure how to solve tomorrow’s homework so I thought I’d help – Oh, hey, Deku! How’s it going?’

Midoriya Deku, heir to One for All, apprentice of the World’s Greatest Hero, feels her jaws close as if wired shut against the minutest possibility that she’d mention anything talked about in the last half hour.

Tsuyu, however, has no such misgivings.

‘Midoriya has a crush on you and would like to take you on a date.’
As she feels her mortal soul leave her body, Deku can see through the calm haze on the other side of absolute panic that Ochako’s mouth drops open for just a moment. Then the girl squares her jaws, gives Deku the kind of piercing gaze normally reserved for her opponents, lifts her chin and says, ‘Cinema, this Sunday night. Don’t be late.’

Then she closes the door and leaves.

There is silence.

Deku flops down face-first on the floor with a tortured sound. ‘Oooh my gooooood.’

Tsuyu flips a page. ‘You’re welcome.’

‘Asui Tsuyu… Whyyyyyyyy…’

Tsuyu taps her on the head with the rolled up magazine. ‘I hate unnecessary drama the most. Now go and tell her she was too flustered to mention at which time you’re actually seeing the movie.’ As her friend leaves, Tsuyu wraps a blanket around herself against the evening chill. ‘Thank god Mineta has been suspended,’ she mutters, and finishes reading her manga.

Midoriya Inko is a smart woman. She doesn’t need a Villain’s crazy conspiracy board to join up that dots that a) her daughter began training with someone shortly before applying to UA and suddenly manifesting a Quirk out of nowhere, b) her daughter admitting that she was gifted that Quirk by someone and c) Japan’s former No.1 Hero’s keen investment in her daughter’s continuing education.

In fact, she’s realized it before he’s bowing to her, pressing his nose against the wooden floor of her living room so hard she briefly worries it’ll snap, before the final battle at Kamino Ward, possibly even before All for One himself did. The knowledge had began to form way back when she first heard that All Might was going to be one of her daughter’s teachers, and how Deku would sometimes slip up when talking about him with a kind of familiarity she did not express regarding anyone else. Even though she still admires the man with the same fervor she has since she was four years old, it is as if now she also sees the person and not just the symbol – and isn’t the least bit disappointed.

Putting aside the fact that her daughter has apparently been socializing with a strange man for almost two years now, which would be highly worrying in any other circumstances, she is none too thrilled when the final drop of certainty trickles into place. If this man had done his job better, her daughter would not be at risk of losing the use of her arms. If not for him, she wouldn’t have had to face so many things a girl her age never should. If not for him, she wouldn’t be on the fast track to one of the most dangerous careers in the world.

But the thing is… She can’t quite believe that. Because Quirk or no, whether she made it into UA or not, Inko has always known that her daughter would find some way to put her mark on the world. Whether she would have been the first Quirkless superhero, or if she would have become a literal walking database on every hero and villain in Japan (and possibly the world), Deku (she has grown affectionate of the name, now that her daughter has explained its meaning to her) was far too resilient to roll over and let the world tell her ‘no’ when it came to this.

Nevertheless, it is the very skeletal blond man inspecting the minute detail of her floors that is the adult in this context, and he at least should know better. And know to do better.
She senses that he knows this, even if he’s unsure of how to accomplish it. And he’s more than ready to die for her daughter, but she also has the feeling that he’d be ready to die for nearly any cause that might come along, up to and including cats stuck in trees. So that won’t do.

Midoriya Inko is a smart woman, and she knows that it is far more difficult to keep on living than to die. Well. Then he’ll have to make an effort, because her daughter needs him, and Inko isn’t done with him yet.

All Might had damn well better give up on the idea of dying any time soon.

The bus is about to leave, along with the entirety of classes 1-A and 1-B, for a couple of days of summer break on the beach (no training, really, we promise this time) and a close-to-zero chance of villain run-ins. A couple of people are late. Jirou took one step inside, then ran out to harvest the piles of CDs in her dad’s car’s glovebox when she heard the driver playing Barry Manilow on the radio. No-one had seen hide nor hair of Tooru but then it turned out she’d been sitting in the front row the whole time, having forgotten to put on visible clothes that morning. Mineta is absent, due to the happy fact that he dropped out earlier in the year, and no-one’s heard anything from him since. Aizawa is technically late, but only because he got tired waiting for the rest of them to show up and fell asleep in the parking lot right next to the bus, face-first on the asphalt.

Midoriya is late, but only because All Might hasn’t showed yet and someone had better find him. She checks the classroom, since it’s close, but she figures he’s still in the teachers’ office, and true enough, that’s where she finds him. He appears to be on the phone, and just as she passes the threshold he says, ‘-I will. You too. Goodbye.’ And puts the phone down. Then he spots her in the doorway, brightening up. ‘Ah, Midoriya, my girl. Am I making everyone late?’

‘I think there’s a few people that haven’t arrived yet, but Iida keeps counting down the minutes to when we’re supposed to leave.’ She grins apologetically.

‘No matter, just let me grab my coat.’

They walk side by side down the empty hallway, and she tries think of an unobtrusive way to bring up the phone call, curious to find out who he’d been talking to this close to departure.

Turns out she doesn’t need to. ‘Gran Torino sends his greetings,’ says All Might, shrugging on his suit jacket – the terrible yellow pinstriped one.

‘Oh!’ She hasn’t heard from him for some time, and had wondered if he was doing okay. ‘I never know if I should just call him to say hello.’

She thinks she hear him mutter something like ‘Tell me about it,’ but he follows it up with a ‘He sounded very impressed by you increasing the power of One for All up to 12%.’

She feels a smile break out on her face. ‘Really?’

‘Well, he said he was amazed you’d gone this long without breaking any bones,’ he sees her face fall, and grins. ‘But I speak Gran Torino pretty fluently. He means the other thing.’ He pauses. ‘For the record, so am I. I’m proud of you, my girl.’

She feels her face go red as a lobster and mumbles something about it being pretty embarrassing to still be only at 12% of her potential power. She doesn’t realize that he’s stopped walking until she’s taken a couple of steps on and doesn’t hear the eco. She turns to see what she
mentally classifies as his Serious Face (Non-Dangerous) (as opposed to Serious Face (For Dangerous Topics Only)) as he looks at her with what she recognizes after some time as affection.

‘Not just that,’ he says. ‘All the rest of it, too.’

She feels the embarrassment recede, and find that she understands without needing him to clarify. And so she’s able to say, with perfect sincerity, ‘Thank you, All Might,’ while trying to will everything she’s already said at one point or another into that one sentiment.

He smiles. ‘And it’s Yagi, actually. Yagi Toshinori.’

The fluster comes back with a vengeance. ‘Huh?!’

‘Well… I figured at some point that I never told you my civilian name, and by that time I couldn’t find a way of bringing it up without it being weird…’ Now he’s the one that looks embarrassed. ‘So – nice to meet you, Midoriya, my girl!’ He sticks out his hand, sweating profusely.

She grabs it and shakes vigorously, awkward by association. ‘I-it’s Deku! Nice to meet you!’

They shake hands and, when they see the looks on each other’s faces, burst out laughing. Toshinori claps her on the back, and they continue down the hallway towards the waiting bus, which promises to carry them away to, if not relief, then at least a short break.

‘Are you sure you want your personal name and your hero alias to be the same?’

‘Oh – who are you to talk!’

When they exit the building, Iida yells at them for not being on time, and Kaminari and Momo are in the process of dragging Aizawa up the steps of the bus (although at this point he’s just pretending to sleep, really). As they drive off, with much bickering, laughter, and complainants about the music, Deku sits back, with Ochako falling asleep on her shoulder, and her friends settling down around her. From up near the driver’s seat, her mentor gives her a smile and a thumbs-up, and Deku grins back.

All in all, not a bad turn-out.

End Notes

Reviews and comments very much appreciated.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!