Kidnapping of a Cryptid

by AMournfulHowlInTheNight

Summary

The conversations hadn't quite gone as planned, but that didn't mean that Izuku was going to make it easy for him.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
Justification of a Cryptid

Chapter Summary

A well reasoned cryptid is a dangerous cryptid.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Izuku stumbled out of the warp, held standing only by All For One’s unrelenting grip. Not happening, Izuku thought, pulling away. Hardly an inch was made before he was pinned back to All For One’s side again.

Reaching for his phone, Izuku was thoroughly unsurprised to find it missing from his pocket.

“I know it’s not what you want, but as far as injuries are concerned, you don’t exactly have a stellar track record for acting in your own best interest,” All For One’s voice almost seem to come from a great distance. “If this had’ve been dealt with sooner I wouldn’t be involved.”

All For One. Hisashi Midoriya. Japan’s most nefarious supervillain. Japan’s most socially inept husband.

Izuku made a strangled sound. “How?” How does this even work?

“Despite my chronological age, my biological age is still very much so that of a stupid twenty-five-year old, as an employee of mine was so kind to remind me at every available opportunity,” All For One explained as Izuku was tugged through a lobby. Straining to suppress his trembling, Izuku again tried to pull away without success. “And before we knew it, you were along the way,” All For One finished cheerfully.

“It’s never that simple,” Izuku snapped and was yanked forwards by All For One's much longer strides. Stumbling again, Izuku blinked at the comfortable apartment he’d just unwillingly entered. What looked like an assortment of full leather lounges outfitted with cushions and bright neutral colours decorated the living room with the kitchen clearly visible in the same space.

“It was for me,” All For One hummed, either unconcerned or embodying an unwillingness to acknowledge Izuku's dragging feet. “How do you like the apartment so far?”

“I expected more dismembered remains,” Izuku griped, still being tugged through the room, taking note of the sparseness of the premises as far as personal items were concerned. Not so much as a photo or personal touch decorated the room.

“Usually horrific dismemberment is outsourced, though occasionally it does need a more personal touch,” was the light and instant remark. Izuku couldn’t tell if it was a joke or not as he found himself gently dropped into a lounge, All For One stepping away. After what happened at the warehouse though… Somehow it not being a joke was more probable. “Now, ground rules.” Izuku resisted the impulsive urge to dive forwards and slam his head into the table. Nothing in Izuku's predictions accounted for this happening. Absolutely nothing.

“No Quirk, right?” Izuku sighed, fingers clawing into the soft leather, breath heavy as he struggled
against the crushing feeling against his chest.

“Right, so long as I’m here, your Quirk won’t be,” All For One smirked.

“What if you’re not here?” If All For One wasn’t there then the Quirk nullifier wouldn’t be either.

“Good thought, but after sixteen years of absence it’s a good a reason as any to keep you at hand.” There wasn’t anything menacing about All For One in making that statement, the posture far too relaxed for it to be a threat. For some reason, it frightened Izuku far more than anything else that had happened so far. Japan’s cryptid almost seemed comfortable.

“You’re really enjoying this, aren’t you?” Izuku asked, burying his head in his hands instead.

“Whatever gave you that impression?” It was too innocent an answer for Izuku’s liking. “You’re not a prisoner though, not technically.”

“You’re not grounding me,” Izuku bit out. “I want to go back to school.”

“I’m not stopping you, but your mother is another matter entirely.” Izuku wasn’t sure if that was meant to be placating or not, but it was ruined by the elder’s chuckle as he partially disappeared into the kitchen. “Tea or coffee?”

Izuku thought to himself for a moment. “Coffee and a copy of the *Mirror* if you have it,” he managed in a quiet voice as he curled up on the lounge, sinking into comfortable depths. What he wouldn’t give to be back in hospital, blissfully unaware of Hisashi Midoriya’s existence. On the downside, he’d be effectively dead again, but did that really matter when the prospects of leaving alive were so slim? Family connections hadn’t saved All For One’s brother.

If All For One had his way, he’d be back in hospital alright, but Izuku couldn’t trust the paperwork that had been briefly offered to him.

“The former I can manage, but I thought you didn’t read the *Mirror*,” All For One called through the bubbling of the kettle. “A generous amount of milk if I remember correctly.” That he knew Izuku’s preferences at all sent chills down Izuku’s spine. “I kept an eye on the household from a distance, but it wasn’t enough.” Not that Izuku would consider it a defence, not when anyone else would’ve solved issues by just speaking to the people involved.

“You bugged the house,” Izuku realised with mounting horror, Shigaraki’s dissected hideout and cameras presenting themselves within his mind’s eye. “That’s how you knew about the finances. You were listening the whole time.” And still would’ve been listening if he hadn’t been imprisoned and likely resumed listening as soon as he was free. What had he heard in the month he’d been back?

“Precautionary given my work, not that it really helped in the long run. Once you stopped speaking to your mother, there was a void. You didn’t talk about any interests, school, friends… it was as though you didn’t live there anymore.” Maybe it was Izuku’s diminished imagination, but All For One almost sounded… Despondent...

“There wasn’t anything to talk about,” Izuku denied, but it was a weak effort at best. There was plenty to talk about, but none of it was going to make his mother happy. Just another reminder of her self-assigned failures. Why bother? She couldn’t change anything. No one could. Or would, Izuku thought and winced, thinking of his middle school.

“Oh really? Then the bullying and unending torment and your general misery at school weren’t topics of any note to your mother then?” All For One drawled, a gentle tink of a teaspoon carrying across the space.
“Nothing she could’ve fixed,” Izuku again dismissed. All For One had no right to comment on classmates after having murdered Kacchan’s friends. *No right at all,* Izuku thought, a fist clenching involuntarily, nails digging into his palm.

“Are you referring to the attitude of your school or classmates or the Quirklessness?”

Izuku snorted and remained silent.

“Fine. I'm still curious though, I thought you didn’t read the *Mirror,*” All For One reverted to the original topic, which was almost as jarring as the previous one.

“I sort of need to read it now,” Izuku explained through a beige cushion. “Now I know that you own it. Do you own *Conspiracy* and *Quirk Focus* as well?” Peaking over the armrest, Izuku spotted his captor.

“Certainly, but you’d already guessed that much for yourself, hadn’t you? You didn’t even need to know my name to trace my involvement,” All For One exhaled deeply, leaning against the counter. “I was afraid for the longest time that’d you work out who I was and out me in front of the wardens. I would’ve been happier without you knowing, but after what happened…” All For One grimaced. “There’s a more urgent reason to be involved now since the benefits of not being involved are being outweighed by the detriments.”

“What detriments?” Izuku asked, partially muffled by the cushion he was leaning on. “You didn’t seem to care too much about not being involved for the nine years you could’ve been around.” It hurt to say it, a burning feeling of even verbally acknowledging it. Slow suffocation had been a better experience than whatever unnameable feeling that was sinking its teeth into him now and Izuku retreated back into the corner of the lounge.

“The detriments to you, Izuku,” All For One stated as though it were the most obvious thing in the world. Then, a chink of china on glass, his voice closer. “Being related to a criminal is far worse than the treatment received for Quirklessness. At no point though, did I expect you to be targeted for an event which occurred before you received One For All. It was a mistake on my part.” There was a soft whoosh and a rustle of paper which slapped down on the table. “Here you go.”

Mumbling automatic thanks, Izuku reluctantly sat up to face his kidnapper and reached for the newspaper without looking up.

Blissfully, All For One himself had located a copy of a magazine and left Izuku be without another word. Meanwhile, Izuku stared at the *Mirror’s* front page, but not a single word registered. Japanese might as well have shifted into German for the sense it made and pictures were skewed. It might have been a photo of Tartarus on the page… Izuku didn’t know and, for the moment, didn’t care.

Throwing down the paper, brain at bursting point, Izuku reached for his coffee. “Why am I here?” He demanded. “You’ve been out for over a month, why now?”

All For One was void of Quirk nullifiers prior to this instance as far as Izuku remembered. There was no history of him ever using them, his own Quirk a powerful enough type of nullification in and of itself, but All For One had never held a wielder of One For All captive before. Playing cat and mouse with them, Izuku guessed, but holding them hostage? It’d be more pragmatic to kill them and call it a day. Instead, All For One had delayed and emerged with a Quirk more than capable of leaving Izuku at the man’s mercy.

More pertinently, if All For One was all about pragmatism then, why had All For One let the Quirk run for what was now nine generations? Why allow for the concept of All Might to come to light in
the first place when All For One had long been aware of One For All? Was he unwilling to end the
Quirk’s lineage and why?

“This was actually your mother’s idea,” All For One called from over the top of Quirk Focus,
interrupting Izuku’s thoughts and completely failing to answer the question. “With your time off
school, she decided to do some health management.” That, to Izuku’s shock, did answer the question
and he knew all too well where the suggestion would’ve come from for this to be happening now.

“I really doubt that, she never said anything about it beforehand.” Izuku sunk metaphorical heels into
the ground while he sipped his coffee. It had the right amount of sugar in it too.

“To the contrary, she and many of your treating doctors after recent escapades have commented on
it,” and with that All For One fished out a thick folder from the side table to his left and slapped it
down onto the table in front of them with force, as if he’d been waiting for it. “She also said that you
agreed to “getting better” and this surgery counts for that, you’d think.”

Izuku cringed. That conversation happened numerous times, but that didn’t exactly qualify as being
informed about anything for surgery. “Are those my medical records?” Oh god, they looked like his
medical records.

“All of the ones not in the hands of U.A., since the military department of the government enjoys
dragging people through the mud to access records,” All For One confirmed. “If you’d like to have a
read through your”—All For One paused delicately—“extensive records for the past three years,
you’ll see that concerns were raised about U.A. treatment and the lack knowledge you seem to have
about U.A.’s provision of treatment.”

Like a boat set adrift, Izuku was being rushed along an unsteady sea by winds outside of his control.
Without any other option at hand, Izuku flipped open the folder and immediately paused on the first
page. “What the… is this a mandatory reporting form?” There, in handwriting that was quite possibly
worse than All For One’s, was a fourteen-page handwritten report to the Japanese Medical
Association. As Izuku scanned, he caught words like “abuse of authority” and “outside of the scope
of public interest or heroics” and felt his intestines twitch unpleasantly.

“To be more precise, it’s a complaint from the surgeon who was denied the right to operate on you
previously by U.A. after he was the specialist on duty for emergency surgery.” All For One leaned
over and handed Izuku another leaf of paper with Ken Yuasa heading the top of it without looking
up from his magazine. “What Recovery Girl probably didn’t tell you is that, following the televising
of your maiming, ambulance services were independently contacted by one of the saner members of
the audience.” All For One generously waited for Izuku to close his mouth.

“What, why? I know there’s been injuries before…” Izuku hesitated, All For One’s downright
predatory expression over the glossy sheets stopping him in his tracks.

“And deaths, because students didn’t receive adequate enough treatment following injuries.” Izuku
found himself leaning backwards at the vehemence crossing the table. “Chiyo Ibuka lost her son in
one such incident and has been campaigning for more transparent treatment of students across
various Heroics Departments. She made the phone call.” All For One’s entirely conversational airs
did little to mask the creasing of his brow. “Imagine the hospital’s surprise when the ambulance
turned up and paramedics were told that their assistance wasn’t required. Imagine the continuing
surprise of that same surgeon when you were readmitted to hospital following your dispute with
Overhaul with the same injury unresolved even though it was within the grasp of Dr Yuasa and his
team at the time.” Sarcasm aside, Izuku had seen plenty of angry doctors while he was hospital. Now
that All For One mentioned it…
All For One paused in his reading and leaned back in his armchair, smirking in a knowing manner. “Worst of all, imagine your mother’s response to learning that the JMA are now conducting an inquiry as to why Recovery Girl was allowed to undertake a surgical procedure without a relevant medical licence. As such, the doctors we consulted and those that saw you previously, agreed that an assisted surgery was for the best, instead of leaving it in Recovery Girl’s imprecise and unqualified hands,” All For One concluded, tossing his own magazine onto the table. “Once we had the records, spoke to the doctors, it was agreed that you’d be taken back for a follow up.”

“Most doctors don’t just automatically agree with each other,” Izuku pushed. That exact reason was why second opinions were required before high risk surgeries.

“They do when their livelihood is threatened by an unqualified person throwing their Quirk around. It was quite the scandal in the industry news. Some of the submissions to the inquiry are included in that folder.” Izuku flipped to the back of the folder and found a substantial clump of papers held together with intimidating bulldog clips Izuku had only witnessed in Shū’s office.

Setting the mug down, Izuku rifled through page upon page of legalistic jargon unified by the subject matter of Recovery Girl’s actions already being considered illegal under law.

From the JMA: Upon consultation with the Association’s ethical board and legal team, it was reinforced that professional heroes have no greater scope for rendering medical assistance than any other citizen. Professional heroes are only permitted to render first aid in emergency circumstances. At no other time should a professional hero render medical treatment unless under a suitable licence and corresponding professional indemnity insurance as is common to all medical practitioners. Patients should always be commuted to hospitals for adequate treatment (unless in the unlikely event that a hospital is unable to provide for patients) when possible. We refer to the Medical Board of Japan’s Code of Conduct and Guidelines...

Another, from the woman All For One had mentioned: My son died because of the sort of conduct that follows pro heroes around, this idea that they don’t have to follow any other rules. It’s a wonder that boy didn’t die from secondary infections when no officially sanctioned sterile operating theatre was used in his treatment. Why was this allowed to happen and why weren’t the police there to supervise the transfer from the school campus to the hospital for treatment when school staff refused? It’s a matter for the parents to decide, not the school.

Ken Yuasa’s response wasn’t much better: It’s an absolute disgrace that Chiyo Shuzenji, or Recovery Girl as she’s more widely known, be allowed near hospital patients when she is patently unable to respect the hierarchy of treating medical teams and instead inserts herself into the provision of unqualified medical advice to vulnerable patients who should be giving informed consent to a specific procedure.

There was more, Izuku counted seventy-eight pages of complaints before he finally gave up and shoved them back into the folder. “I caused this?”

“No, Recovery Girl caused it by not following the law for mere non-pro heroes,” All For One snidely commented, leaning on one arm. “In turn, after your public maiming, the JMA decided to put their foot down and campaign for greater enforcement of the existing rules. It’s something she could have avoided. Your mother decided to take advantage of the investigation,” All For One nodded, sipping his tea.

“I don’t believe it, that’s too much to be a coincidence at this exact point in time.” Izuku dropped his mug to the table with more force than strictly necessary. “I’m being sent for surgery that mum now agrees to while you’re coincidentally around? I’m not taking your word for it and not the submissions either.” And I’m not going along with it.
“Intuitive as always, because this isn’t a coincidence,” All For One grinned with entirely too many teeth. “It does though coincide with your mother’s negligence action against U.A. for breaching their duty of care to you, which I understand will involve seeking compensation for the surgery. After all, why risk an argument with you which she’s had before when I can take care of you while the matter is filed with the courts?”

Izuku slowly stirred his mug of coffee. “The pre-filing statement All Might mentioned to me,” Izuku whispered. “It wasn’t just for the school security or a threat, was it?” Izuku felt the last embers of hope fade.

The whole school knew that Izuku’s mother had threatened to sue U.A. into the ground. There’d even been news articles from industry publications in addition to the tabloid and non-tabloid press about the fact of a legal threat. If no one had reported on the filing then, it was probably because the court registry hadn’t publicly listed the matter yet.

“You can read the submissions on the website. You can call your mother and ask for yourself if you like.” All For One waved a hand and shrugged. “You can tell her my entire life story and that I’m a serial killing prison escapee, but none of that will detract from her wanting you to reach old age pain free or deter her intense dislike of U.A.’s misanthropic principal. It’s not about the lawsuit…” All For One nodded with a winning smile.

“It’s about the principle of it,” Izuku groaned.

“And setting a precedent, since Japan’s undertaking of the common law approach to negligence has made it possible,” All For One cheerfully added. “After the introduction of the hero system, common law principles were adopted for tortious matters to cut down on the seven-year long court delays for matter resolution. I bet they’re regretting it now.” If only Izuku had his notebook to write this all down. Who knew that taking a shortcut for accelerating court resolution time would possibly cripple the hero industry two centuries later? Who knew that All For One would care about it?

“How long am I meant to be here for?” Izuku asked out of obligation more than anything else.

“All in all, for full recovery, you’re going to be here for around three to four months. You might not like the idea Izuku,” All For One stood and within a moment he was at Izuku shoulder with a hand resting on it. “But you can’t blame me for this one.”

“I blame you for getting married,” Izuku shot back.

All For One laughed at him and offered the informed consent form for Izuku to read again.

Well, Izuku probably wasn’t going to be allowed back into his mother’s house until it was done and so, with great reluctance, he took the form. “I’m not calling you dad and I'm still calling mum.” Izuku had never felt more resolute about anything in his entire life.

“Fair enough,” All For One shrugged. “Still better than what Endeavor’s on the receiving end of I suppose.”

"Do I at least get my phone back?"

All For One smiled sinisterly.

It was going to be a long four months, provided Izuku didn’t escape first.
Toshinori’s apartment had never been so still. Toshinori and Tsukauchi stared blankly at the sheet of paper in front them. Genetically speaking, All For One was hardly himself, but a match was a match. At least 99.99% between the two samples. Somehow he thought, given the overwhelming similarities of the father and son in question, that the 0.01% wasn’t going to have much weight in being a denial.

“So, does it count as a kidnapping if the kid’s mother said yes to it?” Toshinori coughed from around a lump in his throat.

“Depends on whether or not there’s reason to believe that Midoriya was taken in less than honest circumstances,” Tsukauchi sighed. “With who his father is and the history with the Noumu… Do you think there’s such a thing as an honest visit to a surgeon?”

“It’s hard to say, but I wouldn’t be surprised if the surgery was just an excuse to have young Midoriya at hand.” What was left of Toshinori’s stomach gurgled uncomfortably. “After what happened a month ago and the condition he left Satou in, it’s not the actions of someone who doesn’t have an interest.”

Tsukauchi shuddered and swigged at his alcohol laced tea. “The guy’s not all there – look at Shigaraki. It’s a godsend that he wasn’t involved in Midoriya’s life from the start. As it is, the younger Midoriya didn’t need to be a career criminal to tarnish Endeavor’s reputation. It’s not like he needed the additional influence.”

Toshinori attempted to ignore the taste of bile. “Young Midoriya is far too kindly for him to have changed even if his father had’ve been involved from the beginning,” Toshinori snorted. “Personality wise, he’s very like his mother.”

“He’s definitely got his dad’s encyclopaedic knowledge of Quirks and strategy, though. Seems a bit weird that he didn’t know anything about either of his parents that well but he was still drawn to heroes and Quirks. What a coincidence, especially when his dad also has that same toe joint.”

Tsukauchi’s face was drawn into a frown.

Toshinori gave Tsukauchi a sideways glance then choked on his own blood. “You don’t think…?” It couldn’t be…

“No,” Toshinori whispered, “they’ll assume that he was a plant and then it’s all downhill from there.” Toshinori dumped the cheap china cup onto the coffee table in front of him. “We can’t get away without saying why he was taken either, not with Inko Midoriya being so convinced that his father was taking him in for surgery. With All For One not shutting up about injuries, he probably is taking him in for surgery.”

“Why is this never easy?” Tsukauchi groaned. “Every step of the way there’s something. First it was his Quirk and the Noumu. Then it was Shigaraki. Then it was destroying most of Kamino Ward. Then Midoriya’s the only person he’s willing to talk to. Then it was the paper trail for the doctors. Then he broke out of prison and murdered a series of people so brutally that it’s almost broken our standard DNA tests. We had to get in a specialist lab to even obtain remotely accurate results. Now,
to make matters worse, he’s probably abducted his own son.” Tsukauchi sucked in a deep breath between points. “And, to make it worse, he’s a media baron that owns the *Mirror.*

“Would he still be in prison if he hadn’t had contact with young Midoriya?” Toshinori asked, eyes on the ceiling.

“The prison break for the guy we scraped off Midoriya’s alleyway wall happened before any contact with Hisashi Midoriya,” Tsukauchi gestured. “Midoriya visiting got All For One a lot of leeway from the prison. He wasn’t allowed to make demands to speak to anyone before Midoriya came along, but afterwards the place was willing to let him use a Quirk when he couldn’t have done anything beforehand.” Tsukauchi arched his neck backwards. “As much as I hate to admit it, I think they would’ve just shot All For One if he had’ve tried to retrieve Midoriya without the visits and Inko Midoriya would’ve lost her entire family without anyone ever knowing about it.”

“So we inadvertently saved young Midoriya’s life…” Toshinori faded out.

“And lost an entire prison worth of experienced staff and a sizable amount of Tokyo’s underworld in process so far as well as whoever All For One’s been preying on in the meantime. That’s not even future losses.”

“We can’t save everyone,” Toshinori murmured, thinking of young Midoriya and Tenko Shimura.

“Nobody really expects us to, but we need to do something to mitigate him being out in the wild again.” Tsukauchi rubbed at his temples, almost clipping Toshinori as he did so. Picking up a marker off the table, Tsukauchi cracked his knuckles. “Our options are fairly limited. We can report the entire truth to my higher ups, but that’s the life and career of Midoriya and his mother over and there’s no guarantee that it’ll do anything about All For One.” Tsukauchi dot pointed it on Toshinori’s purpose bought white tablecloth.

“It’s the legal thing to do, but…” Toshinori left hanging.

“It’s not the right thing to do with Midoriya’s life practically over. All it’d do in reality is not give him a place to run to even if he does escape All For One,” Tsukauchi concluded.

“Thanks,” Toshinori sighed.

“You’re welcome, but ultimately, we only have a suspicion of wrongdoing as far as Midoriya is concerned, because if Hisashi Midoriya really *is* taking his son to a doctor, with his wife’s consent, then we don’t really have a leg to stand on for kidnapping specifically unless we somehow got a complaint from Midoriya about it. He’s a prison escapee, but if we sent a team after them…”

“He’d obliterate them and call it a day, that bastard,” Toshinori grunted, stretching over with his own marker to add the observation to the tablecloth. “It’s not worth it.”

“As much as I hate to admit it, they’d be more likely to arrest Midoriya than treat him as a victim, so I think we can rule out setting an AMBER alert for him specifically, but an alert for All For One?” Tsukauchi smiled without humour. “We can definitely do that.”

“Meanwhile, we can harass Hisashi Midoriya through more legal means by coordinating attacks on his business. The more time he spends cleaning up after that, the less of a grip he’ll have on young Midoriya.” Toshinori grit his teeth.

“I can’t help with that, unfortunately. Not without making the link between his identities,” Tsukauchi sighed.
"I was thinking about proposing a joint project between the students of the various Departments," Toshinori explained leisurely. "You know, to give them some real world experience about handling public and press relations after what happened at Endeavor’s ball."

Tsukauchi stared at Toshinori with a slightly perturbed expression. "Will Principal Nedzu agree to it?"

"I wasn’t aware that I needed to ask him for permission when it came to setting group assignments provided the other teachers agree to them," Toshinori offered, grinning broadly.

"Sounds like something Midoriya would do." Toshinori hadn’t seen Tsukauchi look so apprehensive in years, but that wasn’t going to stop him now.

"Young Midoriya does like indirect solutions, doesn’t he?" Smiling fondly, he saw Tsukauchi assent with another note on the tablecloth.

"After what he did to Endeavor, that’s putting it mildly."

"You know what?" Toshinori asked Tsukauchi, a mental lightbulb blinking on.

"What?"

"Do you think Hisashi Midoriya’s going to appreciate his son’s running commentary about his criminal activities?" Toshinori asked as casually as he dared.

Tsukauchi gagged on his tea and sputtered. "Oh my god, he actually seemed to like Midoriya’s feedback didn’t he?"

"Since Hisashi Midoriya is All For One, it really makes you wonder if he’s going to have the same conversation topics for his son as his wife." Toshinori waited patiently for it to click for Tsukauchi.

Nothing. Nothing. Then–

"I need to organise armed protection for the senior bureaucrats in Law Reform, don’t I?" Tsukauchi asked faintly and allowed his head to fall into his hands.

It was all Toshinori could do to pat the shaking man on the back. At times like this, Toshinori was glad he didn’t have to deal with reporting paperwork anymore.

Now, to get his old mentor in on the action.

Chapter End Notes

Happy New Year!

(I never said which Happy New Year, did I? =D)

A huge thanks to sen for fan art as well! :
https://kevoutt.tumblr.com/post/168984855624/i-read-this-amazing-fanfic-called-conversations

As well as all the wonderful and hilarious comments you've all given. I appreciate all of
them.
Operating a Cryptid

Chapter Summary

Operating a cryptid is problematic when no records exist for said cryptid.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

At Izuku’s insistence, All For One casually handed over his phone. “Do you have anything on here apart from mum’s and my number?” Izuku stared at the two names on the contact list. Unnerving. There wasn’t even a weather app on it and this phone was so new that it could have operated the International Space Station.

“I haven’t been able to enjoy mobile media in recent years, Izuku. I’ve lost the habit,” All For One shrugged and gestured to his eyes. “I’m glad the first time I saw you with natural sight was after Eri provided her assistance,” the supervillain tacked on, features twisted slightly.

“Huh?” Izuku’s thumb hovered above the call button. “Why would it matter if you could see me before that? You were fine with ignoring me for sixteen years.” Regretfully, it had only lasted sixteen years instead of a doubled time period. Izuku could’ve done without the stress, anxiety or palpable terror that now underlined every single one of his interactions with or without another human being.

“Why do I have the feeling that All Might and company failed to stress upon you the severity of your injuries?” All For One dropped into the seat next to him. Izuku shifted back, edging away as subtly as he was able without prompting a bear trap effect.

Arguing with All For One, especially after waking up to All Might and Kacchan’s fraught discussion, wasn’t an option. Whatever had happened was bad enough for everyone to remain totally silent apart from the admission it had left him brain damaged to the point of life support. Proving All For One’s point, Izuku couldn’t imagine what the outside of himself would’ve looked like… and that was probably for the best. “Nobody wanted to talk about it.” To the point where Kacchan had been conscripted to give the summary. Izuku was at a loss as to why Kacchan was aware of what happened in the first place, but the thought counted.

“All Might did less damage to me than your kidnappers did to you,” All For One clarified, pulling an escaping Izuku back to him with a casual hand, which then constricted. “Then you can understand why I didn’t want my first visual memory of you in seven years to be that one.”

Izuku’s thumb hovered over his mother’s number. “Is that why mum never came to see me before you showed up?”

“Your mother’s never been particularly fond of hospitals.” With a proprietary air the man didn’t deserve, All For One anchored his hand back to Izuku’s shoulder. “Remember what I said about ignorance being bliss?” Thin and unpleasant, it wasn’t the friendliest smile Izuku had ever seen. More like a visual filler to conceal what was truly whirling in All For One’s warped brain.

All For One was alien, created by a context so far removed from the modern age that Izuku floundered with putting together what he’d uncovered. There was no real reference point that Izuku
could reliably use to judge the man’s motives. He wasn’t like Shigaraki’s mess of ideas and malice. All For One had bothered to give his brother a Quirk, which isn’t something that would be done if the two truly hated each other. Two centuries later, the man had gone off and gotten married. Twisted by the passage of time, it was distinctly possible that All For One himself couldn’t remember the exact source of his grudge, but it seemed to go well beyond a mere problem with government policy or One For All.

Shigaraki’s brain, in the alternative, whirled with an army of symbol clanging monkeys, fumbling to piece together a coherent idea in the chaos of the noise and flying simians. There was no direction, just a massed storm of childish anger and energy over something no well adjusted person would feel to be an issue. Shigaraki was predictably malevolent, cutting Overhaul apart to limit access to a Quirk after Overhaul had rightly pointed out that Shigaraki was a scrub as far as criminals were concerned. No motive, no real reason to pursue All Might, nothing but senseless emotions. It left Izuku wondering if Tenko Shimura had always been an entitled brat and if, perhaps, All For One had only made it worse instead being the root cause. Shigaraki was petty, but with none of the aptitude for planning that made All For One so dangerous.

Shigaraki could be held back with a stern word and a slap to the knuckles by the right person. Even if the right person at the moment was hardly going to do much of anything to restrain the problem. All For One, in the alternative, was a force of nature that needed a nuclear warhead dropped on him and more munitions than what Japan’s GDP covered in a year, before it’d even trigger a staple contingency. Then the government would have to rinse and repeat to keep him down.

Dislodging All For One’s hand, Izuku hit the call button and listened to it ring.

“Hello, Inko Midoriya speaking.”

“Hi mum!” Relief, while an old emotion, almost felt new. “When were you planning on telling me that, uh, Hisashi was coming?”

“She wasn’t,” All For One mumbled in the background.

“Um, I wasn’t?” Izuku’s mother confirmed. “I wasn’t sure how you’d react to seeing him after so many years, so I asked him to pick you up and work it out. I thought it was for the best that you sorted it out between yourselves since you don’t know him the way I do.” Izuku's mother, naturally, had no way of knowing who she’d married or what did to people who upset him, otherwise she might've hesitated in asking the man to sort anything out.

“And the surgery I knew nothing about?” Izuku asked, desperately wanting her to know nothing about it.

“Oh Izuku, you said before that if I came up with something that you’d keep an open mind, remember? I know you probably aren’t fond of your father, but before you bite his head off, you need to know that it wasn’t his idea. I contacted the doctors and asked them about it first.” His mother sounded so earnest… yet she’d also unknowingly handed Izuku over to Japan’s reigning criminal mastermind.

“See?” All For One mouthed and Izuku waved an irritated hand at him.

“Do I have to? It’s not that important is it?” Izuku tried not to whine, he really did.

“Sorry, Izuku, but this really has to be done unless you want chronic pain for the rest of your life. Your Quirk causes you enough problems without that making it worse.” Apologetic, but she didn’t know what she’d done. No one did and Izuku was trapped. “Your father will take you to meet with
the specialist tomorrow, since Doctor Yuasa warned me that you can decline the procedure even if
we agree to it. Promise me that you’ll keep an open mind?"

“Fine. I’ll try. The appointment’s tomorrow, right?” Izuku replied faintly, his brain screaming. No
escape.

“Yes. Tell your father to behave himself,” his mother added. “I still remember what he was like
when we went to the obstetrician. It was unbearable. We had to throw him out the room so we could
get the appointment done.”

“Mum says that if you don’t behave at the appointment that she’s throwing you out,” Izuku told All
For One.

“What’s one more excuse on the list?” All For One shrugged.

“Mum, I think you should get ready just in case.” His mother laughed at him and a moment later they
hung up.

“You didn’t tell her about me,” All For One raised an eyebrow.

“No, because you’re going to tell her,” Izuku clarified. “You’re not getting out of it that easily.”

“Even Shigaraki isn’t this petty.”

“Shigaraki has other problems. Thanks to you.”

All For One sniggered and rose to his feet. “A fair assessment. Would you like to see your room?”

Izuku groaned and shuffled after him.

The next morning, Izuku was ushered into the spacious office by a friendly looking man with a face
that seemed set in a semi-permanent grin. All For One slunk in after them and positioned himself on
an inconspicuous chair, flipping open a dogeared copy of *Quirk Focus*. Not one of the recent issues
either.

“Hello, I’m Doctor Yuasa. I’m coordinating the surgery on your right arm with some other specialists
who’ll be assisting me on the day.”

Izuku dropped into the seat. “I don’t know why I need to agree to it,” Izuku stated bluntly, shooting a
look at an obfuscated All For One.

“That’s reasonable, please let me take you through it…” Izuku paled, the doctor spoke of
conventional surgery involving plates and screws and an amount of surgical metal that was going to
give Izuku nightmares. Risks of nerve damage, risks of aspirating into the lungs if fasting wasn’t
done properly, risks of allergy to the anaesthesia, risks of infection and the list went on. Something
about malunion fractures and having to rebreak Izuku’s hand to make sure it realigned properly and it
was then Izuku interrupted.

“Is this all necessary?” He asked in a small voice. It sounded horrific.

“It’s necessary to realign and position the bones, yes, but we have the assistance of another surgeon
who’s licenced to at least partially set the bones with their Quirk once they’re in alignment. The
screws won’t be in once you go home, but we do need them in to make sure that the bones line up nicely before we partially set them,” the doctor explained. “Unfortunately, the government has been reluctant to licence us new medical technology which would limit the invasiveness of the procedure, but that’s a complaint for another day. We aren’t in a position to get an exemption at short notice and the longer we leave the injury the more trouble it’s going to cause you as you grow.”

“And the recovery time? Will this make it any shorter?”

“We aren’t sure yet, because you’re something of a special circumstance, but we’re looking at two months at the absolute minimum.” Two months of forced cohabitation with Japan’s nemesis and no school.

Izuku shuffled in his seat and gazed towards All For One who had, thankfully, kept his mouth shut as promised. “Uh, can I talk to you about it without him here?” Izuku jerked his head towards All For One, catching a glimpse of the man in question as he lowered his magazine with an affronted expression.

“Certainly,” the doctor asserted, giving All For One an almost stern glare.

“Fine, fine. I know when my presence isn’t wanted.” Almost before Izuku could blink, he was out the door without a single complaint. What had Izuku’s mother done to cause that sort of response in All For One, he wasn’t sure he’d ever know.

“He’s not one of the most clueless,” Yuasa noted. “But I suppose he means well, because there are plenty of other methods he could’ve used without consulting a qualified specialist.”

“Does he though?” Izuku’s question was met by a raised silver eyebrow. “Mum didn’t say anything about this surgery until he picked me up without warning yesterday. Do I really need it? I told him that’s he’s not getting anywhere without me agreeing to it and he didn’t seem to care.”

“Ahh, I see,” Yuasa smiled grimly. “Not on great terms with your father?”

Izuku winced and nodded. There was no hiding the discomfort it seemed. “He doesn’t want me at U.A. at all or any other hero school, so I think he’s using this as an excuse to get me kicked out.” All For One’s goals with the surgery were straightforward and normally Izuku would’ve been in a position to put his foot down and refuse. Unfortunately, his mother’s stern and non-negotiable form was blocking the leg room to take a step forward, let alone act in opposition. He wondered if this is what her subordinates had felt like back when she was working.

It was then, in the middle of Izuku’s reflections, that Dr Yuasa exploded. “Well, I have no idea about the hero school, but the concerns raised by your parents are entirely legitimate.” Izuku could only nod in response. “Forgive my frankness, but you as the victim here should be told as bluntly as possible what should’ve happened. Recovery Girl should have worked as part of a specialist team, so that we could set the fragments of your limbs back into their appropriate positions before any mending took place. She’s not a qualified anaesthetist, nor was one on the premises, something which can quite easily result in death. There were no paediatric or adolescent medicine specialists involved, even though you’re not through puberty and there should have been a consult prior to any operations. Come to think of it, we don’t have any scans, MRI, CT or otherwise for the injuries she treated which means that she had no means of identifying the appropriate procedure. We do have current scans that your father graciously gave to us. There wasn’t any neurological follow up, or tests, or physiotherapy ordered for god’s sake! Absolutely no referrals in relation to pain management or rehabilitation.” Yuasa almost spat, his face a flustered pink. “All because she thinks her Quirk is somehow a replacement for conventional treatment.”
Izuku leaned back as the doctor’s composure shattered. Of course there were licencing requirements for certain procedures, but Izuku hadn’t known that even with the hero licence that Recovery Girl was still subject to the emergency medicine hierarchy. Like most other areas, a pro hero with a Quirk seemed to have authority above everyone else in the area, with the government’s say so, but Izuku’s injuries weren’t treated during imminent danger. Without imminent danger or involvement in threat management, the hero licence wouldn’t cover treatment in such a situation.

Recovery Girl was qualified in general medicine, but what were her other qualifications? It’s not like there’d ever been an urgent need to check the register. “So my parents…?” Izuku trailed off, feeling something heavy well within him. All For One and his mother had been right.

“Should be far firmer in their lawsuit, because the treatment of you by that woman has been appalling from a professional standpoint. Her pro hero registration does not permit her to act in numerous specialty fields.” And there it was, the confirmation that Recovery Girl had acted outside of the legal scope of her licence. At least as far as a stickler like Yuasa or his colleagues at the JMA went for following the rules. They seemed to be very keen on a zero-tolerance approach from the submissions Izuku had read. “Fixing a simple broken bone during a villain attack is one thing, but acting alone in a sophisticated crush injury is beyond absurd, especially when she never conducted appropriate diagnostics. Every surgery without proper consent is plain old grievous bodily harm and the woman should be charged.”

“Would charging her fix anything though?” Recovery Girl, even if she was acting in breach of the licence had still helped countless people and saved All Might’s life.

“Yes,” the doctor stated without hesitation. “Your arm would already be mended or well on its way if she hadn’t mangled the mending. Those of us who are licenced for it specifically would’ve still been involved, but with the requisite oversight. Convenience is not an excuse and punishment is a deterrent for such disgraceful behaviour. Are you convinced that your father might, for once, be acting in your best interests?”

All For One was acting in his own best interests, as always. Izuku’s mother on the other hand… “I guess, even if I’m not happy about it.”

Yuasa smiled sympathetically. “Speaking from experience, even some truly deplorable parents can have a good idea once every couple of decades. So, if you would?” Yuasa offered Izuku another informed consent form, this time one with room for another signature. After reading it carefully and finding it identical to the first, Izuku added his name.

“He’s still going to hold it over me though,” Izuku grumbled, rising to his feet with the doctor.

“Ah, not to worry. You can always hold it over his head that you were right about the surgery needing your consent.” Yuasa’s smug smile said a lot about the doctor’s bedside manner.

“If… you don’t mind me asking, why are you so angry about this?” Izuku asked, watching Yuasa’s forehead crease. Dedicated professionals weren’t as dedicated as people liked to think, as Izuku well knew from his own profession. Yuasa was a bit of an anomaly.

“Chiyo Ibuka’s son was one of my patients. We did what we could…” His shoulders twitched. “It wasn’t enough, but we did learn that her son never should’ve been in that position to begin with. Ever since I’ve been raising awareness and doing my part to make sure that children are treated like children, regardless of the government’s policy.”

Maybe All For One's views weren't as isolated as Izuku initially thought. “I get it, thank you for your time.”
“My pleasure, Izuku Midoriya. Remember to reread the information sheet, we don’t want any complications from the anaesthesia.”

Bobbing his head, Izuku left the room and found All For One loitering near the water filter, nose firmly lodged in a copy of Quirk Focus. “How did it go?”

“Mum was right,” Izuku sighed.

“She usually is, in my experience,” All For One added.

“So, when she divorces you for lying to her?” Izuku couldn’t help but snidely insert.

“I’ll nod agreeably and beg for forgiveness,” All For One replied without a hitch. “I think that’s the standard procedure for an upset spouse,” followed in an undertone.

Izuku stared. “Are you aware that, for the purposes of mum’s Quirk, that internal organs count as small objects?”

All For One tucked his magazine away and gave Izuku a clap on the shoulder that was probably meant to be reassuring. “I’ll cross that bridge when I come to it, but first you need to fast, unless you want stomach acid in your lungs…”

In hindsight, Izuku’s mother being who she was in the first place was probably the only reason All For One had bothered to marry her. Izuku almost felt sorry for him, but, then again, he had signed up for it in the literal sense.

On the bright side, if it wasn’t for the Yuasa’s stark honesty and refusal to partake in illegality, Izuku doubted he’d even have managed to get a clarifying appointment with anyone All For One would’ve picked for the surgery. If it wasn’t for his mother’s primary insistence, Izuku doubted he’d have met the doctor carrying out the surgery at all, if All For One had his usual way.

“HE. DID. WHAT!?” Gran Torino roared across the coffee table, giving the abused wood a solid whack. A cup of tea bounced along the table. Toshinori watched it arc up and down. Neither Tsukauchi or Toshinori blinked. “How the hell does someone like that bastard even have a kid?”

“Well, when a lying, deceptive, centuries old fiend is interested in a member the opposite sex very much…” Toshinori found himself morbidly trailing off. God, that wasn’t a mental image he needed. Poor Mrs Midoriya.

“This isn’t a time to joke, Toshinori!” Toshinori ducked, shuddering at the force of the gale that brushed his hair. “Here we are thinking that Shigaraki’s the problem and we’ve got another potential All For One running around. This is a disaster.” WHACK. The cup arced again. “Why didn’t you tell me sooner?”

“We only just found out. Had to run a DNA test before we were sure,” Tsukauchi explained through a mouthful of ham sandwich, nursing his own cup on his leg. They probably should’ve had some more decorum, but after the previous week, both of them were going to live with it. Plus, no one had had lunch yet and they might as well be pragmatic about it.

“Even a suspicion is something that I should know about,” his sensei growled.
“In all fairness, his kid’s almost nothing like him,” Toshinori hummed. “Apart from the fascination with Quirks, scheming, colluding with criminals, affiliation with media outlets, disregard for rules and the scary family resemblance. He’s a good kid overall,” Toshinori asserted.

“That’s not making me feel any better,” Gran Torino huffed. “Does Midoriya know about this yet?”

“Uh…” Toshinori looked at Tsukauchi. Tsukauchi jerked his shoulders, biting into another triangle of sandwich.


“Young Midoriya thought that interviewing All For One would go towards helping us out more about the Quirk All For One and what happened to the victims.” With that, Toshinori launched into a summary of the previous months, from young Midoriya’s initial idea to its now seemingly logical conclusion. Toshinori hadn’t thought it was possible to stir a cup of tea so menacingly, but his sensei was doing an impressive job of expanding his life experience.

“Let me get this straight, you willingly exposed your student, the inheritor of One For All, to the archvillain of One For All wielders… for what, some backstory? Who cares? Nana Shimura was my friend, but her grandson isn’t her. Shigaraki’s a lost cause and now Midoriya’s gone and probably dead because of it,” Gran Torino practically screeched across the table. “Now you find out that the bastard has a son, who’s probably as much of a bastard as he is.”

“Well, there’s good news and there’s bad news,” Tsukauchi offered, clearing his throat of crumbs.

“Being?”

“The good news is that Midoriya isn’t in any degree of mortal danger.”

There was a lingering, pregnant pause. “And the bad news?” Gran Torino rumbled ominously. This was going to be really, really bad.

“Midoriya’s not in any degree of mortal danger, because he’s the son of Hisashi Midoriya, who we better know as All For One.”

Toshinori dove forwards to catch Gran Torino’s cup as it fell. “What?” His sensei slowly croaked. “How? Is…?” Is Midoriya in on it? Toshinori mentally finished. Not that it was something Toshinori had ever considered, because Izuku Midoriya, while crafty and cunning in his own right, was by no means malicious. Maybe slightly petty, but he was nothing on his father. Using a childhood cutesy nickname on a bully was hardly in the same league as weaponizing the grandchild of a passing enemy.

“Nope. From what Inko Midoriya told me, young Midoriya would’ve found out after he was taken for surgery. He had no idea.” And Toshinori hadn’t been there to help him through it. Just imagining young Midoriya’s response to that discovery made him want to retch. All For One didn’t deserve a son like the one he had. That bit of pond scum didn’t deserve Shigaraki’s loyalty either.

“My god, that poor kid.” Gran Torino’s expression was something that’d haunt Toshinori. “What are we doing about it?” Gran Torino then snapped. “We can’t leave him with that bastard.” That was more normal.

“I completely agree with you here, but here’s the problem…” Tsukauchi, through sagging eyes, explained the exact problem both of them had noted earlier.

“What I’m hearing is that we’re up the creek.”
“That’s what we think, at least from a policing perspective.”

“From a heroics perspective, All For One’s going to turn anyone who takes young Midoriya into a new coat of paint,” Toshinori grimaced. “I don’t know how we’re meant to check up on young Midoriya with his father being… proprietary at best and causing a massacre at worst.”

Gran Torino’s head shot up. “What about a schooling perspective? Midoriya is still enrolled, yes?”

“As far as we’re aware, yes,” answered Tsukauchi. “The lawsuit being run by his mother makes me question if it’s only a matter of time before he’s withdrawn, but we really don’t know what’ll happen.”

“Part of the school’s procedures for ill or suspended students was to conduct at house checks to make sure that they were coping with their homework. We’d also send student around to tutor them if need be,” Gran Torino hummed. “The problem here, Toshinori, is that neither of you morons bothered to tell anyone else about All For One’s involvement to get staff involved to look for clues and we can’t risk exposing a student to a fiend that steals Quirks.”

Toshinori snorted. “And what would they have done about it? Organise another rescue attempt? What’s that going to achieve when even the current number one can’t hold a candle to him? He's not a cripple anymore. No, we can’t send in pros without a massive amount of collateral.” Who knew what would happen to young Midoriya as a result as well and his quality of life. Right now, All For One had preserved enough of his anonymity to pose as Hisashi Midoriya and, by extension, protect young Midoriya’s capacity as a normal person of normal parentage. The best scenario, as much as it galled him, was hiding it.

Disgruntled mumbling aside, there was relative silence as Toshinori retrieved the tablecloth he’d been writing on earlier.

“… I might have an idea for checking up on young Midoriya,” Toshinori explained through a cough. Gran Torino’s scornful expression wasn’t encouraging, but so far he hadn’t come up with anything better. “Mei Hatsume was recently suspended for a lengthy amount of time after one of her delivery platforms had an AI malfunction and it demolished the Heroics Department’s classrooms.” Gran Torino looked like he was rearing up, but Toshinori soldiered on. “What if we sent her to make sure that he’s okay? As long as young Midoriya’s there, All For One has to play happy families to keep young Midoriya at least vaguely on side, right?” More likely, to keep him from demolishing the building. Minor details. “Not to mention that someone’s going to be sent eventually. All we do if we try to delay it is make the faculty suspicious and risk someone telling the police.”

The old hero deflated. “You want to organise a random playdate between Midoriya and another student? Midoriya won't let her enter the moment he realises what she's there for.” It was bleakly amusing to Toshinori, that it could've applied equally to either Midoriya, but for very different reasons.

“It’s not random, Mei Hastsume and young Midoriya participated in the Cavalry Battle together and her Quirk is more passive than anything All For One would have any interest in,” Toshinori eagerly nodded. “She can also help him with any of the general subjects that are shared between the Departments. I'm also in the middle of organising a group project that should place some heat on Hisashi Midoriya's public job to give young Midoriya some breathing space.”

“Using the mandatory reporting requirements for her suspension, we can also get her to brief us on how he’s doing without sounding any alarms. Do we have Hisashi Midoriya’s address?” With a dawning expression of realisation, Gran Torino turned to Toshinori with an almost feral smile.
“We can get it off Midoriya’s mother if need be,” Tsukauchi’s voice floated in. “My sister’s been wanting to speak to him again, along with her friends, so we can get Mei Hatsume to ferry in some more general messages.” Spoken or not, Tsukauchi’s idea of slipping in third parties to also suss the place out had merit.

“We’re sending in a child though. I don’t have any confidence in how All For One’s going to react,” Gran Torino sighed, tugging at his beard. “What leverage is keeping him from just bumping off anyone we send over?”

Toshinori smirked, feeling far more vindictive satisfaction than was generally reserved for heroic deeds. “His wife, since we know the surgery and taking care of young Midoriya was her idea.”

Toshinori outright laughed when he saw his teacher bunch together and wince.

"Yeah, that'd do it. Hell if I know why though."

Chapter End Notes

I’ve been notified that this story has a TV Tropes page:
http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Fanfic/ConversationsWithACryptid

And we have some fan art!

Recovery of a Cryptid

Chapter Summary

Recovery takes time, patience and tolerance.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Wretched. That was the word for it. What he felt. Izuku regained awareness with a sense of irritation at whatever was resting on his face. With effort, Izuku opened laden eyes and glanced around, eyes sagging as he did so. His vision fixed itself on a distinct point between his nose.

“Oh, that’s an oxygen mask,” Izuku exhaled, watching it fog up with mild interest.

“Not to make a statement of the obvious, but you’re awake,” a deep voice noted. Dark skinned, tall and a literal chameleon, Izuku probably should’ve have been surprised that the Recovery nurse had blended in with the navy curtains surrounding his bed. “That mask can come off, then.” Without ado, it was removed and Izuku heaved in a gasp of stale air.

“Thanks… How long was I?” Everything felt… distant. Why was he so weak feeling? Why did his head hurt? It was then Izuku chose to look down at his arm. Wrapped in white, Izuku couldn’t see what had been done, but it felt… strange.

“A few hours, but your doctor will give you the details once you’re back in your room,” the words flicked out.

Vitals checked, another dose of morphine and Izuku’s bed was being wheeled away to his room in the surgical ward. Where All For One sat with his nose in yet another issue of *Quirk Focus*.

“How do you feel?”

The bed was parked and Izuku was left to his aching fate. “Is the ditch still an option?” Izuku groaned, unable to move. From under half closed eyes, he watched All For One shuffle his chair closer and place a hand on Izuku’s uncovered left hand. And the pain was gone. “Wha? Which Quirk was that?”

“The usual one, albeit I’ve been having trouble with such a fresh Quirk targeting the areas I need it to and pain management is a complex area at the best of times,” All For One provided. Whatever All For One had stolen from that public servant, it did more than suppress Quirks. Why did his head still hurt so much? The rest of the pain was gone, but why not that?

“Ruminate later, Izuku. Thinking too hard while coming out of anaesthetic isn’t a pleasant experience for anyone in our family.”

“All For One didn’t reply verbally, but the furious rustling of Izuku’s hair was all the answer he needed.
“I think I preferred having mangled bones, even though Recovery Girl refused to treat serious injuries after the Sports Festival thing,” Izuku sighed.

“She did what?” An aggravated voice bit out, Dr Yuasa storming through Izuku’s curtains. “She did, did she?”

“I quite agree. She. Did. What?” All For One asked, his tone low, deceptively friendly, but his face was filled with malice. A narrowing of the mouth, pinching of eyebrows...

_Uh oh._ Izuku could only sink into his pillow with his aching brain as Dr Yuasa and All For One began the unlikeliest tag team interrogation Izuku had ever seen. “I just came out of surgery,” Izuku attempted to deflect.

“We’ll be quick,” All For One encouraged and Izuku didn’t think he’d seen a more transparent lie in his entire life. Whatever All For One had in mind for Recovery Girl was going to be anything but quick.

After that harrowing experience being picked on every other word Recovery Girl had spoken in his presence, Izuku was given his discharge summary, instructions for care and extremely lengthy lecture about reporting inept medical practitioners, before Dr Yuasa rushed off to another patient. Without any ado, All For One picked up Izuku while carefully avoiding his right arm, and they vanished from the hospital corridor.

Upon arrival back at the apartment, Izuku could only gaze mournfully at the blank walls of his room. “Them being empty doesn’t feel right,” he said to All For One.

“It’s your room, decorate it however you want.”

“What about a giant painting of All Might?” Izuku wryly asked.

“As I said, Izuku, it’s your room. If you do happen to want to go ahead with it, as I know you’re a perfectly capable artist, I’m happy to acquire materials for you,” All For One smirked. It was only the lingering narcotics that prevented Izuku from shuddering at All For One’s knowledge of his notebooks.

“What about a giant portrait of Endeavor? I mean, I could put a plate over it and some scoring marks on it for darts. The Mirror offices had a really nicely one decaled on it,” Izuku idly reflected.

“But you’d have to wake up it to every morning,” All For One grimaced.

“Yeah, that’s a good point. All Might it is,” Izuku nodded.

If it wasn’t for the healing surgical wounds and Izuku not quite feeling like he was still on planet Earth, he was fairly certain that All For One would’ve dropped him with a noise of disgust.

"Can you get my laptop and external drives for me?" Izuku asked as he was deposited in bed. "I need to look at notes for school."

"I'll see what I can do."

Two days later, Izuku found himself camped on one of the lounges, nestled in a pool of silky
blankets while an inane gossip channel ran rampant on the television. Two days of pampering and the mortifying discovery that his mother had taught All For One all of her recipes. The katsudon almost tasted like a betrayal, with just a smidge of extra heat added to it, probably for All For One's own preference. Not that Izuku could complain about the food, given that he wasn't dead yet from food poisoning. More exciting had been his mother demanding a performance review of her husband's culinary prowess over the phone, which Izuku had reluctantly given a nine out of ten for recipe similarity. All For One looked as though he'd been robbed.

Something chimed and never before had a doorbell heralded in such dread.

“Oh, would you look at that… We have a guest,” All For One drawled as the chime faded.

Izuku, in an oxycontin induced haze, struggled to sit up. “Who?” Izuku was pushed back down in an almost casual motion. Limbs far too heavy to resist, Izuku could only watch the perpetrator stroll past his slumped and then tucked in form.

“Stay,” All For One scolded and Izuku scowled at his back as he passed. “I wasn’t expecting anyone.”

If All For One wasn’t expecting anyone, then who was it? Kurogiri and Shigaraki were probably unlikely, but who else would attend a highly secretive archfiend’s house? Surely no one who knew All For One would be stupid enough to turn up at the guy’s home while the fully regenerated owner was at the premises. That left either someone with a death wish or someone who had absolutely no idea who lived at the premises. Any chance of the guest leaving the apartment with all of their limbs, sanity or even Quirk still attached seemed slim.

With no small amount of palpable terror, Izuku heard the door swing open.

“What brings a U.A. student to my humble abode?” All For One’s cool voice asked and Izuku’s stomach dropped through the floor. Frantically, he tried to shove away the blankets.

“I’m Mei Hatsume, Support Department at U.A. I was suspended due to a malfunction that really wasn’t my fault, so I agreed to be Izuku Midoriya’s school liaison. If I do this the faculty said I can get back into the labs,” spilled through the room at speed. “I’ll be coming a couple of days a week to make sure that your son’s on top of his homework and acing it so they reduce my suspension faster. Also, this place is the least humble I’ve ever seen and I’ve seen what the Yaoyorozu household looks like,” Mei Hatsume tacked on with a tapping of footsteps.

For a long, agonising moment, there was silence. “You are blunt, aren’t you? I’m Izuku’s father. I’m thrilled to see the school’s finally lifting a finger after nearly two months of total inaction.” If All For One had’ve laid on that sarcasm anymore heavily, Izuku was fairly confident that Hatsume would’ve left with an injury.

Izuku snorted loudly before he could stop himself.

“That sounds like him lurking,” Hatsume pointed out, far more shrewdly than Izuku would’ve liked. Rushing footsteps and Hastume skidded to a halt within inches of Izuku’s face. If she hadn’t already done it once before, Izuku had a feeling he would’ve found it far creepier. “Hello, Mr House Arrest Prisoner Who Doesn’t Like His Father! I have your homework!” Hastume waved a hand in front of Izuku blank face. “Those must be some really strong painkillers, because your reflexes are gone. Don’t worry, we’ll make it work. For access to the labs!” Hastume gave a fist pump and dragged Izuku into a seating position.
Izuku blinked and turned to face All For One, whose expression could only be called dumbfounded. An eyebrow slightly raised and every other feature blank, Izuku could only imagine what was going on inside All For One’s twisted head.

“Hi, Hatsume. I’m guessing you got the blame for the explosion in the Heroics Department,” Izuku assumed through a shooting pang of pain. Aizawa-sensei had said that it’d been someone from the Support Department who caused the explosion months back and Hatsume would never voluntarily leave the labs. Izuku wouldn’t be surprised if she slept there instead of the dorms.

“Exactly! I got the blame, but it wasn’t me!” Hatsume stomped a foot angrily. “They took me away from my babies when I’m the victim. Someone took my beautiful logistic platform for a joyride and they blamed me for the explosion. Power Loader-sensei kicked me out of the labs. I demand vengeance!” Hatsume snarled, flinging herself and her overflowing bag into the seat opposite. “And you are going to help me.” She nodded intensely.

That was… quite interesting, if Izuku was frank about it. Hatsume had blown up the labs plenty of times, and beyond reducing Power Loader-sensei to tears on a few occasions, she’d never caused so much damage. Causing such a large explosion when engineering a design for safety, as was the standard practice of the Support Department, was almost unheard of short of total supervisory negligence. Power Loader-sensei would’ve stomped on it at the blueprints phase before they even got to implementation.

“Yeah, that makes sense,” Izuku agreed. “You’re more tactful when you blow things up.”

“Exactly. How do you get this and the teachers don’t? I’ve never been so insulted.”

“Well, I did grow up with Kacchan. Can’t not know about explosions after knowing him,” Izuku idly reflected, still feeling his stomach practically curdle. Was Hatsume even going to leave the room in one piece? From All For One’s expression, he seemed content with looking at Hatsume as though she were a particularly deviant lab specimen… which hopefully wasn’t a bad thing. “Do you know who blew it up?”

“Nope, hadn’t done the security features yet. It was just the prototype flight module, so a lot of fuel and the test weights,” Hatsume explained, extracting a small mountain of paper from her bag and slapping it onto the coffee table. “There was nothing on the security feeds either and nothing on the keycard logs, so I got blamed.”

“Sounds like they did it for insurance reasons,” All For One’s voice floated from the kitchen where the kettle had started to boil. “No doubt using the money to pay Cementoss and friends overtime for their efforts and slandering Hatsume in the process.”

“No one asked you,” Izuku bit back. Izuku knew brownie point scoring when he saw it from years of primary and middle school. “It’s just as likely that they blamed her for not implementing security in the prototype or for not leaving it disassembled if it was so high risk.” Though why someone had crashed it into the Heroics classrooms and not the far more vulnerable dorms was another mystery. Without knowing the spy’s identity, Izuku was at a loss to ascribe motivation.

“You wound me. I’m only trying to be helpful.”

“Yes, to help yourself. Be more helpful and make tea instead.”

“Or what? You’ll hobble back to your mother’s house?” All For One… teased? That being said, Izuku could hear the distinct clink of three china cups and three teaspoons being laid out. Maybe he actually was teasing him.
“No, but I’m sure I can have an “accident” with the frying pan that’ll get me back to mum a lot faster,” Izuku snipped, irritation only growing as the fog of medication weighed upon his mind. It wasn’t morphine, but it felt just as nasty. Swimming through mud was more enjoyable.

Hatsume’s head bounced between them. “Sorry Mr Midoriya, but I have to side with your son who doesn’t like you on this one, because they’ll never let me back into the labs if I don’t. I’ll never sell my babies if they don’t let me near the labs.” Hatsume waved her hands up and down. “On the topic of my babies, if you don’t do your homework I’ll never see them again. You’re right handed, right?” Hatsume leapt from her seat to stare at Izuku’s bound arm from an inch away. “You’re not going to be doing much writing while down an arm.”

“I could type still, but that’ll be really slow with only one hand,” Izuku shrugged. Feeling himself float backwards in time, Izuku remembered Hatsume’s part brilliant, part insane sets of powered armour. “If only we could borrow the motion translation from your power armour and make a prosthetic with it,” Izuku speculated aloud. “We could have a hand rig read neural input and independently carry out writing or typing. If we could licence it, it could probably be attached to someone to replace a limb as well and carry out normal functionality.”

Izu knew he’d made a horrible, horrible mistake when a tiny bit of drool slid from the corner of Hatsume’s mouth. “Midoriya Junior, my compatriot, my muse, my pilot of new ideas! Let’s do this!” With that, the previous small mountain of paper was swept sideways in favour of the largest scroll of graph paper Izuku had ever set eyes on. “Let’s talk functionality.”

And talk functionality they did: from the motion of the hands, to the design, to the power supply, to the weight concerns, to materials, to the availability of neural technology, to licencing, to how Hatsume would access materials in spite of a ban. In a very short period of time, Hatsume’s preliminary industrial design had exploded across the paper in a neatly headlined series of dot points. “Midoriya Junior, I want dibs on your brain.”

“Excuse me, I already have first dibs.” Up until that point, All For One had been a hovering wraith in the background noise, appearing only to deliver an escalating amount of tea and biscuits.

“You waived that after you weren’t there for thirteen years,” Izuku rebuked, adding another extremely wonky sketch of a potential “glove” for enhanced sensory feedback while Hatsume critically watched on. Having absolutely no idea about implementation, Izuku could only really assist in brainstorming or troubleshooting from his own general knowledge. Rather unsettlingly, Hatsume had brightly explained that it was those exact qualities that her classmates lacked, which was why she was still talking to him instead of them.

“Parenting doesn’t work that way.” Izuku heard a rustle and knew what was coming.

“Family court does,” Izuku said under his breath, feeling his right-hand burn in protest. Painkillers only did so much and, if Izuku had his way, he probably wouldn’t have gone with the oxycontin due to the side effects.

“Medication, Izuku,” All For One prompted, presenting tablets and a glass of water to Izuku.

“I feel worse with the medication,” Izuku resisted.

“Better to have the medication than potentially end up with complex regional pain syndrome,” All For One chided.

Feeling miserable, Izuku took them and gulped them down, attempting not to gag on the taste.
“That looks like it tasted nasty. No sugar coating on the tablets?” Hatsume asked with only a glance upwards.

“No, enteric coatings aren’t used on these tablets. The coatings are only used to shield the composition from stomach acid. Why be subject to additional costs and potential absorption issues when you can avoid them?” All For One explained. Why did All For One know that off the top of his head? The Noumu had also been modified with drugs like Trigger, as well.


“He should get a geriatrician, because he’s so old,” Izuku added.

“I got over my health issues,” All For One called from the kitchen. “Not the ones you care about, but the point remains that it happened.”

Hatsume looked at Izuku with an oddly intense expression. “Midoriya Senior is an exceptionally strange person.”

“He’s like two-hundred-and-fifty-years-old. Dementia, maybe?” Izuku mumbled, knowing full well that the sharp set of ears in the kitchen wouldn’t miss it. He was rewarded with a faint, insulted noise and Hatsume’s contemplative expression. Sailing his ship towards safer territory, Izuku hastily changed the subject. “Hatsume, why aren’t powered prosthetics used more often? Ectoplasm-sensei lost his leg ages ago and there’s no real reason for him not to have one all the time for quality of life reasons. Batteries are good enough to give a day’s worth of charge.”

That was another mistake on Izuku’s part. “THANK. YOU.” She exclaimed, banging the table with a fist and sending a rubber skittering along its length. “I’ve been saying it for years, but everyone says that it’s too expensive and that your average person doesn’t need it. Why not let the market decide on the supply and demand aspect? We have the technology and have had it for years. My babies are special, don’t get me wrong, but they’re built off the back of years of design, engineering and science.” Hatsume grit her teeth. “And what does the government say? The government says that just about everything that’s not a peg leg is a Support item and needs licensing and paperwork, which stops people from buying my kids.”

“Ectoplasm-sensei can’t use a powered prosthetic… because of bureaucracy?” Izuku asked, catching All For One’s animated nodding from the corner of his eye as the man stealthily navigated the room.

“Exactly. It creates a false market. We could’ve been extracting iron from Mars by now without these restrictions. Without the school labs, no one would be allowed to even test my babies let alone use them long term. Every time you smash something up, I make it bigger and better than before, because the school covers me,” Hatsume gesticulated.

“No school, no testing,” Izuku finished. “That sounds really, really unsafe.” It explained the platform demolishing the classrooms. Whoever had blown it up probably had no idea how to fly it from the aeronautics and engineering perspective, which meant that whoever the spy was, they weren’t from the Support Department. They probably saw it in the lab and assumed it was functional. It was a really bad idea to assume anything that Hatsume made was functional.

“If the laws were changed, it wouldn’t be a problem.”

“But the problem is always changing the laws,” Izuku and All For One said at the same time, with Izuku shooting him a glare.

“Ahuh,” Hatsume hummed and checked her phone. “Right, that’s my time up. Have a go at the
homework, it's pretty self-explanation and I'll see what I can do about your writing problem.”
Shoving a ridiculous amount of stationary back into her bag, Hatsume bounced to her feet. “Alrighty,
bye bye Midoriya Junior, bye bye Midoriya Senior.”

“Providing I’m not dead first,” Izuku snarked, eyeing off All For One’s particularly distant
expression, as he felt the drug induced haze start to creep over him again.

“Don’t worry, Midoriya Junior! If anything happens to the rest of you, we can put your brain into a
robot and still work on my babies.” Waving energetically, Mei Hatsume skipped from the room with
All For One leading the way.

“What a shame,” All For One sighed after snapping the door shut. “Just as we were getting to the
good bit.”

Izuku stared at him. “You have problems,” Izuku stated solemnly.

“Unfortunately for you, it runs in the family from what I’ve seen.”

Izuku could only roll his eyes.

It was a fairly small fifteen-minute lunch break, but Toshinori had no intention of letting his
opportunity go to waste before they rushed back to class for the big announcement.

Mei Hatsume bounced eagerly before Toshinori and Aizawa. Whether it was some product of
technology she’d smuggled out of the lab or her own excitement, he didn’t know, but she visibly
bounced up and down in her seat in the tiny side office. Toshinori cleared his throat. “So, young
Hatsume, how did the meeting with young Midoriya go?”

“Please be thorough. This is just a much a review of you as it is Midoriya,” Aizawa interjected. That
was a bit of an overstatement. Power Loader would conducting his own review straight after this
one, so it’s not like anything Toshinori or Aizawa said would be the death knell for Mei Hatsume. It
was a bit much. Maybe Aizawa was just worried.

The young woman opened her mouth and a fountain of information shot forth. Toshinori struggled to
keep his jaw closed as she concluded her summary of the meeting. By all accounts, had young
Midoriya been anyone else, they likely would have found his body in a ditch somewhere for the
sheer degree of casual disrespect towards the resident bastard. All For One’s seeming amusement
was something else and uncharacteristic to boot. All For One had never really tolerated people
looking down on him, but young Midoriya’s personalised essay of the old man’s flaws seem to get
the younger man an exemption from the usual response. Toshinori wasn’t willing to believe that
blood relation alone was a reason when All For One hadn’t gone to any great personal effort until
after speaking to his son.

By all accounts, young Midoriya didn’t seem to be suffering any huge degree of duress beyond a
normal patient being subject to the doctor’s orders.

“You met young Midoriya’s… father.” Toshinori swallowed down an awful taste. “How did he treat
young Midoriya, generally? I know there’s been some… negative history between them,” he
prompted. And the rest of the Japan and every other person Hisashi Midoriya’s ever had contact
with.
“Midoriya Senior gets on with Midoriya Junior like a house on fire,” she beamed. “And by that, I mean Midoriya Junior literally said he’d set the apartment on fire if the dad he doesn’t like didn’t stop butting in.”

Toshinori suppressed a cough and exchanged a significant look with his offsider. “Not the best first impression I’ve ever heard,” Aizawa deadpanned.

“Midoriya Junior really doesn’t like Midoriya Senior. He took cracks at his age, mental stability, parenting, tea making, just about everything really,” Hatsume brightly explained. “If he could take a dig, he did, but it sounds like Midoriya Senior hadn’t been around for a while, so it’s open season.”

“I’m somehow not surprised,” Toshinori sighed. “Was there anything else?”

“Yep. Midoriya Junior said he’s going to need a writing assistant because his dominant hand was operated on. Can I get limited access to the labs to get one of my babies ready for him? We worked on the plans while I was there and if I start now it’ll definitely be done in time for our next meeting.” Mei Hatsume was painfully transparent to everyone who met her. Any excuse to get back into the labs she’d been kicked out of, rightfully or otherwise. They still didn’t have any evidence that it was actually her, not that the insurance company cared.

Mei Hatsume’s bluntness was likely the only trait which had saved her from All For One, which is what Toshinori had privately warned the girl of after the initial debriefing. Izuku Midoriya’s father wasn’t visited for any reason that could be considered good. Risk of death be damned, the girl had still gone in an attempt to regain her access to the labs. Toshinori could only feel the same sort of helplessness he felt when dealing with young Midoriya where their goals trumped all attempts at reason.

He could only hope that All For One’s tolerance of young Midoriya’s rapport with Mei Hatsume would last. It also said a lot about the collective lasting impression of the Midoriyas that she seemed to remember their names.

“Talk to Power Loader about it. After hearing this debrief, I’m satisfied enough to make the recommendation to him that it’ll help our student,” Aizawa grunted from his sleeping bag. “That’ll be all, Hatsume.” She was out the door and probably already nagging Power Loader before Aizawa had finished his sentence. “She’s keen.”

“Not being able to use the labs hit her hard,” Toshinori observed.

“You seem worried about how Midoriya’s managing with his father,” Aizawa bluntly stated. “You got history with the guy?” Toshinori tried not to choke on his own tongue and a globule of blood.

“Too much,” Toshinori admitted, before an idea dawned on him. “He’s a tabloid owner.”

Aizawa winced. “Say no more. Tabloids aren’t fond of pro heroes.”

“Yeah, it’s a source of friction for them,” Toshinori nodded, holding in his sigh of relief. “Ready for the announcement?”

“You know All Might, it’s pretty clear from what you just said that the announcement is just an opportunity to cause trouble for Midoriya’s father,” Aizawa noted, mouth in the rough shape of a smile.

Toshinori considered it. “Hmm, yes and no. After the hammering we’ve had in the media in recent months, I thought it’d be a good idea for the students of all departments to know what they’re up against and make friends in other Departments.” It was also an excuse to keep students visiting
young Midoriya while he was trapped with All For One. “Let’s tell the students.”

Aizawa grunted and made his way to the classroom next door, before he paused, his face an expression of fury, as he made it to the window. “Mineta!” Aizawa barked. “What are you doing?”

Toshinori gazed over the top over Aizawa’s head and saw young Mineta leap backwards from Tsuyu Asui’s chest. “Nothing, sensei!” It was the least convincing nothing Toshinori had heard in his entire life.

“Is it really? What have I told you about respecting your classmates?” Aizawa growled. “Outside. Now.” Aizawa’s capture device shot forward and young Mineta hurtled out the door with a girlish shriek.

“I’ll take care of the rest,” Toshinori offered as Aizawa stalked past with a pale faced Mineta in one hand. Turning to young Asui, “are you alright?”

“It’s alright All Might-sensei, I would’ve smacked him with my tongue if Aizawa-sensei hadn’t got him first,” she almost seemed to… comfort Toshinori? Weird. Her face, as per usual, gave absolutely nothing away.

“You don’t have to defend him. His behaviour around the opposite sex is unacceptable,” Toshinori explained. "We don't need our own variation of Captain Celebrity."

“I know, but I think he needs a few more smacks before it sticks. Maybe if the schools he went to did something about it sooner it’d wouldn’t be a problem in high school,” she nodded.

“I can’t disagree with that, but I’m sure Aizawa’s got it managed. Are you sure you don’t need anything?”

“No, I’m fine,” she shook her head. “I’ll go to my seat now.” With a slight dip of her green head, she made her way back to the utterly silent mass of students. That was also strange, even young Ida was silent and normally Toshinori would’ve expected a small riot to start from Mineta's actions. Indeed, no one blinked at it.

Aizawa still wasn’t back, but there probably wasn’t going to be enough time in the day to wait for him. Might as well start. “Alright class, I have an announcement. Unlike previous occasions, I’ve received permission for a joint group assignment between the Departments.” Whispers immediately broke out.

“Why the fuck do we need a joint project?” Young Bakugou’s voice rose just above the murmur.

“Manners aside, that’s a fair question, young Bakugou. In the recent months there’s been a public relations problem with the media and tabloid press in particular. As they’re wont to doing, the media have been focusing on the negatives to an excessive degree instead of the positives of the industry.” Toshinori saw the sceptical expressions and elaborated further. “I’m not just referring to the fields covered by Heroics, but the Support, General Education and Management Departments have too been targeted by the tabloid press across the whole of Japan. Normally, only the Department of Management would be all that interested this process, but this is starting to damage the student’s prospects from the negative association.”

“Then this project, sensei?” The vice-president asked.

“This project is all about wrangling the media and seeing how they treat the subjects of their reporting and how to respond to it both behaviourally and legally. We’ll assign you to groups of three and have you research the media’s coverage of your topic of choice. Not just the initial
coverage, but an analysis of the fallout, the general impact and the type of management you can use to get around their less ethical practices. When Aizawa gets back, we’ll hand out a sheet with more details.” Resurging in volume, the mumbles grew as Toshinori’s project sank into the student body.

“This is gonna be a fucking cinch,” young Bakugou bragged to anyone who’d listen.

“There’s a catch,” a gruff voice coughed and Toshinori saw Aizawa step back in while Mineta slinked behind the yellow form to his desk. “You might get to choose the topic, but we’re assigning who you can work with and are the ultimate authority on whether the topic’s appropriate. Since all of the Departments are involved, don’t think you’ll be picking whatever you want. It’s by group consensus.” There was a collective groan, the sound of Aizawa’s signature style in progress.

By the time Aizawa’s summary was given, the class was on the verge of collective tears at the thought of randomly allocated groups. Toshinori found himself wincing in sympathy, even though the exercise was meant to be out of their comfort zone by design.

Toshinori managed to make it out of the classroom first and 1-A stampeded out the room to follow Aizawa to the project assembly where groups would be allocated by the staff. As Toshinori left the classroom, he glanced back over his shoulder to see young Mineta and young Asui high five before parting ways and Toshinori shook his head in wonder. Young Midoriya’s absence was having unintended side effects on the other students, it appeared.

And the best part was that neither Nedzu or All For One had any idea what was coming. Toshinori chuckled.

Chapter End Notes

As always, thank you for the comments. I read all of them, even if I'm once again mortified of replying. That TV Tropes page has exploded as well.

I'm trying to get these out every two weeks but this weather really doesn't agree with me.
Gaining All For One’s agreement to finally leave the nastier forms of painkiller behind should’ve been a relief. To some extent it was, the infuriating fog which had floated about Izuku’s brain gave way to the sharp stabbing pains that traced the nerve paths in his hand.

On one hand, he could think clearly. All For One’s shadowing was more evident, with the fiend in question always loitering within arm’s reach. Under the haze, Izuku would’ve called it invasive, but his more rational mind remembered a slip and fall as he’d left the shower only the day prior and All For One seemingly on call for the event. If he hadn’t been, Izuku would’ve cracked his skull against the tiled floor. Izuku was fully aware that painkillers and anaesthesia could contribute to falls, but this seemed beyond even the expected symptoms of the drugs.

Lazing about wasn’t an option either, with the anti-coagulant injections stopping after Izuku left hospital. All For One had some exceptionally gory recollections of the consequences of blood clots, which had rapidly persuaded Izuku that shuffling around even in his miserable state was the better option. Some of those gory stories included All For One explanations of exactly what Tartarus would’ve done had All For One not had a stockpile of regenerative Quirks up his sleeve. Izuku almost forwent dinner after that particular conversation, especially when he’d found the correlating medical information on the topic which bluntly stated the sequences of stroke, heart attack and general death.

Whatever was in All For One’s past, he wasn’t devoid of experience surrounding healthcare. Whether that was from his own two centuries of tyranny related mishaps or his potential previous experience as a doctor, Izuku wasn’t sure. There was enough knowledge of the human body there for All For One to develop bioweapons, but not enough for him to engineer his regeneration through a cocktail of regenerative Quirks. Dr Tsubasa, presumably, had some role in the management of the Noumu, given that All For One had been bedridden after his injuries and the nature of Hachisuka’s activities in testing various configurations of Trigger.

A type of Trigger which had the effect of making its victims more suggestible, larger and with blackened skin reminiscent of the first Noumu. Why Dr Tsubasa took cues from All For One was anyone’s guess, but Izuku deeply regretted taking the news as quietly as he did back then with what he knew now. If Izuku could spin back through time, he was fairly certain that seeing Dr Tsubasa a second time around would’ve resulted in a heartfelt attempt at a pre-emptive violent strangulation or maiming.

Whatever the gap of missing knowledge involved, it’d left All For One seemingly petrified of anaesthetic and its side effects. Something that must’ve affected both his brother and him for All For One to have expected Izuku to suffer similar misery. Allergies and intolerances could be hereditary, but if it was an allergy Izuku would probably be dead and if it were an intolerance then Dr Yuasa would’ve mentioned it in his debrief. Headaches could be a side effect of anaesthesia, but not the
type Izuku had been given, which left Izuku wondering once more what exactly had caused the splitting pain which made his brain ache. Maybe it was due to the chunk of All For One’s family genetics hovering about Izuku in the form of One For All or maybe it was simply the family’s misfortune. He really did have to wonder too, because nothing he found online could explain the exact mechanics of anaesthetic on the brain, just that it worked, and a very lucky person would be up for a Nobel Prize if they discovered the mechanism.

All For One had outright laughed at Izuku’s grumbling, following Izuku snapping his laptop’s lid down in a moment of frustration. The laptop and its collection of external drives that had been recovered and given to Izuku without complaint. Normally, Izuku would’ve suspected a struggle, but All For One handed it over with hardly a complaint. Indeed, he’d outright given Izuku the wi-fi password and told Izuku not to do anything that he wouldn’t do. In this case, Izuku expected a translation to be along the lines of, “don’t invite anyone I wouldn’t invite unless you want to bear witness to the methodology of the Warehouse Incident”. With that implication in mind, Izuku reluctantly shelved the idea of emailing U.A. on its staff email and begging for help.

On the downside of being free of painkillers, the main edge killer for the splitting pain was now gone, leaving Izuku acutely aware of what he hadn’t been missing out on. A debilitating pain tracing his hands and skull, which left All For One far more tolerant of Izuku’s haze of irritation, it seemed. Instead of being planted facedown in a cushion, Izuku found himself shifting restlessly, eyeing off his empty walls and watching All For One’s kitchen technique in action. It hadn’t gone unnoticed, a cooking spoon being offered to him so he could stir.

That night, Izuku shuffled into his room under All For One’s watchful gaze, changed without All For One’s gaze and flopped into bed. After staring at the ceiling for longer than advised, Izuku drifted off. Then, pain. White hot, stabbing pulsating pain and a shriek. His own shriek, Izuku realised, closing his jaw with a snap. It was only after that he noticed that he was lying on his right arm and rolled off it with another pulse of agony. Blinded by it, Izuku couldn’t do much more than wince when he was lifted into the air by a set of arms and hoisted from the room.

In hindsight, that fact that All For One didn’t stop at the living room should’ve been a red flag. The fact that Izuku’s head was buried into his chest where he could hear something that sounded suspiciously like an elevated heart rate also should’ve been a red flag. It was only after Izuku was tucked into a bed that definitely wasn’t his, with his pain abruptly vanishing that he realised what had happened. His right arm had been left carefully above the sheets.

“Uh…” Izuku stared blankly at All For One’s dim and naturally dark room. A single desk lamp was on and Izuku knew exactly why All For One had been so meek in his retrieval of Izuku’s laptop. Izuku’s hero journals were arranged in numerical order, on the shelf above said desk, from their diagonal skew. “Why do you have those?”

“Night reading,” All For One responded without the slightest amount of shame.

“Night reading,” Izuku repeated dumbly. He struggled to sit up. “But why those in particular? Lots of people analyse Quirks better than me.”

All For One snorted softly. “No, they don’t. You’ve been writing these journals for years and your accuracy has had almost no increase as far as predictions for functionality, Quirk synergy and strategic applications are concerned.”

Izuku glared at All For One.

“Don’t mistake my intent, Izuku. I mean that you have always been stunningly accurate, to the point of uncanniness, even as a very young child,” All For One explained, perched at Izuku’s feet. “Your
problem, like mine, lies with application, not understanding. You know how they work, but you struggle with the practical management of something that was never originally yours as your handling of One For All readily shows.” It was all Izuku could do not to squirm at All For One’s intense stare or the comforting pat on the leg he received from the man. “It’s not a criticism, so much as an explanation for why Bakugou’s cohort were so utterly terrified of you.” Terrified? That didn’t sound right to Izuku, but All For One had… exposure to Tsubasa and Bakugou’s other associates that Izuku would never have seen for good reason. No one apart from All For One knew what he drilled them for as he subjected them to the experiments. “It speaks highly of you,” All For One complimented, “and poorly of them,” he concluded in a far darker tone.

Brushing off All For One’s malice, Izuku reached for the obvious fruit. “Is that why you said Transmission was fresh? You have a learning period, don’t you?” Izuku realised. “That’s weird, All Might didn’t seem to have any problems with One For All.”

All For One shook his head. “One For All was given to Toshinori Yagi at a far younger age than your fourteen as became the standard for passing on One For All. He had more time to adapt, a—”

All For One grimaced, “—more skilled instructor and a drive that only ideologues possess. You’ve had none of those benefits and nor do I when I obtain Quirks.” Obtain Quirks, that was a strangely passive way of putting it. Izuku honestly didn’t think he’d ever have the stomach for what All For One did, having seen Ragdoll’s broken, limp, form or the stories from the darkweb and All Might’s aura of despair at his inability to help people the way he once did. He’d never considered the possibility for the simple reason that he had no right to deprive someone else of something so essential to benefit for himself. The old man’s lingering cries of “he took it” may as well have echoed into Hisashi Midoriya’s fire breath with what Izuku knew about the origins of the Quirk.

“How young is young, exactly?” Izuku asked instead, suppressing a shudder.

“He was sniped early on, perhaps even before middle school, I suspect. I only became aware of his existence after Nana Shimura’s demise and his subsequent crusade against me,” All For One shrugged.

“Well, you did violently murder her,” Izuku pointed out with a sigh. Why was this such a difficult concept for both All For One and Shigaraki? Of course All Might would be out to get them if they ran around killing people.

“She tried to kill me first,” All For One answered in a bored tone of voice. “As has been the case with every One For All wielder apart from you.”

“All of them?”

“My brother’s instructions were specific, that One For All’s prime purpose was for the takedown of me. Weren’t you read the instructional pamphlet?” All For One drawled.

Izuku shook his head. “I had no idea that you existed when All Might gave it to me.”

All For One froze, like a deer in the headlights. “You didn’t know about me at all? He didn’t tell you? The entire point of One For All was to hunt me down and he didn’t tell you?”

“Not until after run in with Stain. And that was only because Stain’s Quirk involved consuming DNA. I didn’t even think of that until he spoke to me about it,” Izuku laughed nervously.

“What I just heard is that All Might had absolutely no intention of telling you about me, in spite of that fact that you having One For All alone would make you a target by default.” All For One’s hands clawed into the sheets, causing them to constrict around Izuku’s toes. “The first suspicion I
had of it being passed on was from Shigaraki’s reports of a boy with speed similar to All Might, but you didn’t exhibit the typical traits of the Quirk. One For All’s effects were far more pronounced and less damaging with its previous wielders who received it far earlier on in their lives.”

“You never told Shigaraki about me or One For All, did you?” Izuku was fairly certain that if All For One had, that Shigaraki would’ve been far more intent on the horrific murder aspect of the pair’s antagonistic relationship.

“There was no need for Shigaraki to know,” All For One dismissed.

“You know that the moment he finds out that he’ll trace himself straight back to Nana Shimura and the fact that you killed her in the first place. All Might was told to stay away from her family because of your actions,” Izuku pointed out. “You can’t call Shigaraki a successor when I know more about why you’re you than he does, and I know hardly anything about you.”

“It depends on the specifics of the succession, doesn’t it?” All For One asked, light toned. “All Might should’ve died the first time and this wouldn’t have been an issue,” he then dripped venomously.

“Careful what you wish for, because if it wasn’t for you and All Might’s conflict, I might’ve still been involved in that Sludge Villain’s attack and not walked away from it. Whether it was the first, second or third time,” Izuku noted, feeling fatigue creep up on him. Without bothering to wait for a response, he sank down into his requisitioned pillow, hearing a noise of derision.

He tried to ignore the fact that he’d woken up numerous hours later in the middle of the night with an arm that wasn’t his tightly curled around him.

Izuku had just about fled from All For One’s room, the occupant already thankfully being absent upon Izuku’s awakening.

After staggering from the bathroom to his usual lounge, Izuku flipped open his laptop and plugged in one of his more recent hard drives. He stared at the open folder which didn’t contain his backup of school notes. Absentmindedly, he clicked on a randomly name video file. Video without sound played from a file from months ago, an ancient bank vault emptied two hundred years prior in a flash of light.

Uneventful, until Izuku opened the scan of the list of the First Generation written in clean, flowery handwriting spreading down the page. Hisashi Midoriya stood out in stark black on the white page, the only name Izuku could recognise in the sprawl. Izuku froze.

It’d been there the whole time, within hand’s reach. Sitting there. Before Izuku had even had his first meeting. If Izuku had’ve checked, he would’ve known.

Hisashi Midoriya was All For One’s real name and there was enough evidence in the wild for someone else to work it out, so long as they had this document and this video and some vague knowledge of All For One’s businesses. It was there for anyone to find.

Once something was on the internet, it stayed on the internet. If anyone put those clues together, the life of Izuku’s mother would be over. Clues which freely existed if the right people looked in the right place.

Izuku tried not to cry, but felt the tears fall down his face as the scale of the situation clocked him.
about the jaw. Could something like this be hidden? Was there any point? Why hadn’t anyone noticed this earlier, or was this why All For One was so content to exist as an urban legend, the bogeyman of Japan’s underworld?


Izuku snapped the laptop’s lid down. He could deal with this, maybe. Hiding it was impossible, but maybe it didn’t need to be hidden…

“Izuku,” All For One’s voice cut through his thoughts. “Are you alright?”

“No.”

“Can I fix it?”

“Not without making it worse, no.” Izuku took another shuddering breath. “I’ll be okay. I’m just an idiot,” Izuku attempted to deflect.

“Acts of idiocy generally don’t result in panic attacks,” All For One poked Izuku in the shoulder. “From the racing of your heart, it’s not a simple act of stupidity, either.”

“It’s the type where mum’s probably going to kill me,” Izuku explained. And you, he silently added.

“Ah, parental terror. Let me know if you need help.” All For One paused. “Or I’ll give it anyway whether you like it or not.”

Izuku laughed almost hysterically, because All For One’s help would probably involve a decimation of Japan’s population and the obliteration of all digital media. There was no way to hide it, none.

Then, a solid THUMP at the door.

“Midoriya,” Mineta’s distinct voice wailed through the door. “Help!”

All For One made his way over and raised an eyebrow. “Another U.A. student. We’re reaching endemic proportions of U.A. students here. I take it you didn’t know that he was coming?” All For One asked Izuku, who had followed him over.

“No, I don’t know why he’s here,” Izuku grimaced, mopping away his tears. Hatsume had only just been here, why was Mineta here as well? “We should probably see what he wants…?” Izuku finished uncertainly. “Where did the address even come from? Even I don’t know where you live.”

Izuku watched as All For One opened the front door, grabbing a purple headed blur by the shoulders as it attempted to race in. “Before you throw yourself into my son’s arms, please remember that one of them is broken,” All For One conversationally explained to Mineta as the purple headed boy dangled three feet off the ground.

“Yes, sir,” Mineta squeaked and was unceremoniously dropped. “Ouch!”

“Whoops,” All For One murmured and vanished back towards the living room.

“Is he always like that?” Mineta groaned from the floor.

“If they’re not me, I think,” Izuku laughed nervously, fully aware of the set of ears listening from the next room. He offered Mineta his good arm and helped him to his feet.

“My condolences,” Mineta said in a stage whisper.
Izuku winced. “How did you even know I was here?”

“How did you even know I was here?” Mineta nodded exuberantly as he was led to Izuku’s designated lounge. “The brief is to investigate how the media outlet reports on different aspects of the hero industry, from outright heroics to support, to management, to general subject matter,” Mineta exploded. “Aizawa-sensei set the groups. Since you’re sick, Hatsume and me are both suspended, we were pretty much the key picks for it without ruining someone else’s schedule. It’s not straightforward either.” Mineta’s face fell.

“Wait, you’re suspended!? What did you do?” Izuku exclaimed.

Izuku had been gone for two months. Two. Months. Two months in which Mineta was one step closer to having himself permanently kicked out of U.A. “Please don’t tell me it was…” So help Izuku, if Mineta had been suspended for doing anything unsavoury to the girls in the class… All For One lurking in the kitchen would be the least of Mineta’s problems.

“Yes and no!”

Izuku glared at him.

“I can explain! It was deliberate!” Mineta huffed with an expression last seen in his first practical with Midnight.

“You deliberately got yourself suspended?” Izuku confirmed, feeling a twinge of pain run through his right arm as his hand attempted to form a fist.

“Hey, it was harder than it looked, you know. You have no idea what I went through,” Mineta… wept? Oh boy. “We knew that something was planned and that students who got disciplined would be partnered with you, so we mighthavetotallyengineeredmegropingTsutogetmesuspendedandpartnereddwithyou,” Mineta finished in a rush, glowing red.

“Tsu let you grope her,” Izuku repeated dumbly. Izuku heard a furious cough from the kitchen and hoped that it wasn’t as nasty as it sounded.

“We spent months trying to get someone to walk in on us. Months! But Present Mic came in the first time and didn’t care, then Midnight came in and just about encouraged it, then Cementoss came in and pretended that he didn’t see anything, then Mount Lady came in and gave Tsu tips… It was horrible!” Mineta wailed, thumping the abused table in front of him. “It took two months for Aizawa-sensei to walk in on us and even then I had to be really obnoxious before he suspended me.” Mineta held his head in arms. “I’ve never been so scared in my entire life.” Izuku wondered if Mineta would change that view if he knew exactly who had just dropped the teaspoon in the kitchen.

“Why are they so lax about that? You were pretty much sexually harassing her by any definition of the phrase,” Izuku grimaced and watched Mineta twitch. “If that had’ve been for real…”

“I know!” Mineta waved his hands in the air. “We were expecting me to get caught on the first occasion, but nope, nothing. It had other… uh, side effects.” In anyone else, Izuku might’ve been tempted to laugh, but there was something deeper set in Mineta’s face that didn’t suggest anything remotely humorous. “I’ve… lost a lot of my interest in the fairer sex,” Mineta whispered, sinking into the seat, head in his hands.

Izuku paused, uncertain. Oh. OH. “But Mineta, isn’t your Quirk…” Izuku struggled for the words, “based on biological functions working… as intended?”
Mineta outright sobbed and Izuku felt his own frown deepen. Without a word, Mineta pulled a ball from his head and stuck it to the table. He gave it a gentle flick and the ball rolled along the table. Oh no.

Izuku stared. “How long have you…”

“Oh no.” Izuku stared. “How long have you…”

“Since the end of the first month. We tried everyday and at the end of it, it just wasn’t there anymore. Then my Quirk…” Mineta explained through watering eyes. “I’m going to get kicked out for real if I can’t fix it. Help!”

Help? Izuku didn’t know how he could help Mineta. It was such a personal issue and not one Izuku could remotely assist in now that Mineta had been so thoroughly desensitized by the scheme of the class. Pop Off worked based on Mineta’s overall health and Izuku knew enough from his health classes that Mineta’s… preferences, could contribute to a healthier body. But to dominate it to the point of Mineta’s Quirk almost ceasing to function? Izuku wasn’t exceptionally well versed with the biology of mutation style Quirks, but something felt very, very wrong with this situation.

“Mineta,” Izuku broached as carefully as he could. “Are you sure that the problem is with you… losing your interest in women?”

“Huh, what do you mean?” Mineta went to grip Izuku’s shoulders and found a foreign hand holding him back.

“Excuse me.” All For One shoved Mineta back with one hand and deposited a tray with another. “What Izuku is trying to say is that if your Quirk is a mutation, it’s based on more than simply your libido. Mutations are part of the overall person and reflect the health of the person. If your Quirk only functions as part of an artificial high, then the problem isn’t losing your libido, it’s whatever caused you to develop the libido in the first place,” All For One dropped with the force of a bomb and then stepped away as though he hadn’t said anything in the first place.

Mineta stared at the space which had previously contained All For One.

With his face twisted into a grimace, Izuku could only say, “basically what he said”.

“You agree with him? You traitor!” Mineta cried again.

“Mineta, why exactly do you like the ladies so much?” Izuku attempted to dig and if he got what he suspected, then he was woefully unqualified for this conversation.

“They make me feel good,” Mineta whispered.

And there was Izuku’s answer, which only made a sinking feeling form in his stomach. “Are you sure it’s not just a coping mechanism for any… depression?” Izuku asked as cautiously as he could. This was worse than asking All For One about his nightmares in the months gone by. “Uh, those thoughts can release endorphins which make you happy right? And you being in a good mood contributes to Pop Off’s effectiveness, right? If you’re not in a good mood and going after women made you feel better, then that’s probably why your Quirk doesn’t stick anymore. Your coping mechanism isn’t there anymore.” Which did wonders to explain Mineta’s obsessively perverted behaviour. It filled a gaping void in Mineta’s emotional state.

Mineta stiffly nodded, sipping at his tea. “So, you’re saying…”

“I think the only help I can give you is telling you to go see a therapist, because the problem isn’t that you’ve lost your interest in women. The problem is that you’ve been in such a bad way that you’re using it as a coping mechanism and with it gone, you can’t function anymore.” Izuku was certain
that, if he checked Mineta’s academic records, he’d find that Mineta had slipped from ninth in the class to something far lower down the list. This went well beyond a joke. Mineta had been inadvertently crippled by a seemingly innocuous scheme to get 1-A insight into Izuku’s living circumstances with the mystery father even Kacchan didn’t know about.

“I don’t want to see a therapist.”

“Your parents should’ve already seen the warning signs and directed you to a therapist anyway,” came All For One’s cutting addition. “If you had’ve continued in the manner you were, all that would have happened is you replacing Captain Celebrity as the whipping boy of the tabloid press for sexual harassment related class actions.” All For One smiled in an unpleasant manner. Izuku wondered if that was from his personal experience. The court coverage of Captain Celebrity had been outstanding in the quality department. “And we all know what happened to Captain Celebrity.”

“We don’t actually,” Izuku remarked. “All we know is that he disappeared off the face of the planet once his court cases were given verdicts.”

Mineta’s teeth chattered. “I don’t want to be a loser like him!”

“Then see a therapist. It’s all you can do to fix your Quirk.” All For One gave Izuku an exasperated look as he passed. “In more pertinent news, you mentioned a group project?”

“Oh, yeah. We have to pick a topic in the industry which has been covered by the media and explain why they chose it, the consequences of it, how to manage any fallout from it and the stakeholders involved in the reporting,” Mineta sighed. “We can’t just pick an easy topic either, because Aizawa-sensei needs to give his permission. With Hatsume the way she is, we can’t just pick any heroics topic and expect her to do her part in it. It needs to be something she cares about as well.” He threw his hands up. “Can you at least help with what she likes? You’re the only person she gave the time of day to at the Sports Festival.”

Izuku inclined his head. “Well, she was complaining about Support items not getting enough coverage in mainstream use.”

“But I don’t know anything about Support items!”

“She was also complaining about heroes with disabilities not being allowed to use Support items off-duty,” All For One’s voice floated from the kitchen.

Mineta blinked between the kitchen and Izuku. “Maybe that’ll work?”

“We have to talk to her about it, I think. She’ll be here the day after tomorrow. Let’s just work it out then,” Izuku shrugged. “So what did I miss at school?”

As it turned out, Izuku hadn’t missed a terrible lot at school. Kacchan was being harassed for information about Izuku’s parents, only to answer with a resolute “GO FUCK YOURSELVES” at the top of his voice followed by death threats and an exploding recycling bin. That didn’t surprise Izuku, Kacchan didn’t know know much about any of Izuku’s family members. Mainly due to Izuku’s own lack of knowledge. An unforeseen blessing if there was ever one.

Todoroki had been one of the nosey people prodding Kacchan, apparently spooked by his own experience with an undesirable parent and fearing the worst. Endeavor had been loitering around the school as well, which only seemed to heighten Todoroki’s parentally attuned sense of paranoia.

In an act of pure sadism, Aizawa-sensei had assigned Shinsou to a group with Kacchan and Todoroki, two people born with so-called perfect Quirks. Izuku didn’t envy anyone who had to deal
with that group dynamic. Ida in particular seemed to fall into a deep despair at the resulting arguments over who got where with what Quirk. Ida was no doubt thinking of his brother and how his Quirk and experience still hadn’t saved him from Stain.

Uraraka, Yaoyorozu and Ashido were going full steam ahead with the fashion label, Izuku’s mother almost gleeful in her marketing strategies. The first order has been dispatched with a critical success hailed in the newspapers, but a spectacularly large order from one customer left Izuku with a sneaking suspicion. Especially after coverage in the newspapers. On the whole, they wanted permission to expand the product line, which Mineta had passed on. Izuku shrugged and gave his assent. Whatever they did in his absence, his mother would no doubt have an efficiency maximising grip on it.

Everyone else had been about the same as usual, Mineta oddly silently as he’d frantically pushed the conversation along. Then, with a pointed comment by All For One, his patience at its end, Mineta was directed to the door.

As Mineta left the apartment, with an expression of decidedly less terror, All For One turned to face Izuku. “That went surprisingly well.”

“I was expecting him to be crying until he left. What a thing to happen…” Izuku glanced around awkwardly, before his conscience made a pointed ahem noise. Dragging his feet, Izuku found the words he needed. “Thank you for helping. I wasn’t sure what to tell him without making it worse.”

“What am I here for, if not to play tag team good cop, bad cop?” All For One reflected, with an odd expression.

“And that’s how it went,” Mineta concluded.

Toshinori blinked at Mineta. “Young Midoriya’s father told you to see a therapist?” Why in god’s name hadn’t Shigaraki been sent to a therapist if All For One directed Mineta to one? Was All For One trying to score brownie points with his son? It sounded like it to Toshinori.

“Well, Midoriya tried to word it tactfully and his dad just basically finished the job. They both said that the problems with my Quirk came from an older problem.” Mineta picked at his sleeve, looking down. “His dad’s brutal though.”

Toshinori grimaced. “He’s quite possibly the least pleasant person you’ll meet in your entire life. If you don’t see young Midoriya with him, don’t go anywhere near him. There’s no pretences with that guy.”

Mineta trembled. “If he’s that bad, why didn’t the school send teachers in?”

“He’s a tabloid owner and a nasty piece of work,” Toshinori explained. In some ways, All For One’s choice of business ownership made hiding his real profession so much easier. Nobody in the industry liked the media and the media sure as hell didn’t like them. Not unless they were making packets off of disasters, villain attacks or scandals. “Young Midoriya knows it, Hisashi Midoriya knows it and young Midoriya most definitely does not approve. Students don’t have a degree of popularity that Hisashi Midoriya can use, so we don’t have to worry young Midoriya that something will happen if a student is sent.” Or provoke All For One into lashing out and retaliating with more than the media.

Mineta nodded. “I don’t know if I want my parents to know about the therapy.”
“Don’t worry, we can organise something through the school channels with full confidentiality.” Something that involved a fully qualified psychologist, and more if need be, that was external to the school. Inko Midoriya was vicious in her claims and had the evidence to back it up. The last thing U.A. and Nedzu needed was to give the woman and the JMA more rightful ammunition. As it currently stood, U.A. had stood Recovery Girl down and had instead a small team of medical professionals now stationed in her old rooms. JMA hawks, all of them. One Dr Yuasa seemed particularly vindictive when he reviewed the facilities for the Association.

“Thanks… Is this available to the other students?” Mineta asked.

“Are there other students with problems, young Mineta?” Toshinori really hoped not, but with what 1-A had been exposed to in the last year alone…

“Nobody involved with any of the bad stuff sleeps particularly well.” Mineta leaned forwards to whisper. “Bakugou’s anger management isn’t as bad as what it used to be, but he’s taken Midoriya’s absence pretty badly after two months ago. So did Kirishima, Uraraka, Tsu and Ida. Togata found out that something happened to Midoriya from that little girl they know, Eri, and he almost tore the door to the classroom off its hinges looking for him in a hospital gown. Todoroki almost set the kitchen on fire when someone mentioned Midoriya’s dad and Kaminari’s hair caught fire.” Mineta leaned back into his chair. “But you didn’t hear it from me.”

Toshinori stared, his stomach dropping through the floor. “I think I need to organise a staff meeting with Principal Nedzu.”

“Remember, you didn’t hear it from me!”

Perhaps if they had’ve heard it from Mineta sooner, Toshinori wouldn’t have the feeling that another hole had just been blasted through his stomach.

The children weren’t sleeping and absolutely no one had bothered to ask why, with Aizawa himself snoozing through his own classes as the poorest of examples. When had this happened and why hadn’t anyone done anything about it?

More importantly, how the hell had Hisashi Midoriya of all people prompted a staff meeting about therapists?

Chapter End Notes

Better weather, more chapters! Thanks again for the comments and we’re finally sinking into the plot. :)
Balanced precariously on a ladder, Izuku painstakingly pencilled in All Might’s outline with an uncooperative left hand. Something with a thicker outline than what he usually had in his sketches. Hopefully it’d hide the tremor. He supposed he could use tape to mask the outline when he painted it. It didn’t particularly matter if it bled a bit into the internal colours, but the outline itself had to be crisp or Izuku was going to lose hair each time he woke up to it of a morning.

Mineta left without fanfare, but All For One was lurking more than usual. Hovering about the doorway with a sceptical expression every time Izuku made the mistake of looking towards his doorway. “I’m not going to fall,” Izuku commented, hearing a scoff from below. “The mobility exercises at school need more balance than using a ladder.”

“You didn’t have a broken arm when you last had mobility exercises. Unless there’s something else you haven’t told your mother.” All For One’s snide voice came closer.

“You’re just upset that there’s going to be a ten foot All Might on the wall,” Izuku sighed. “Why does he bother you so much? He’s no different to every other One For All wielder that’s come along.”

“It’s more the fact that he exists,” All For One hissed. “He destroyed everything I worked to build.”

“Please, you don’t actually care about any of your minions. They’re a means to an end. Even if you used to care back then, I doubt it’s the case now.” Izuku grit his teeth, carefully pencilling in All Might’s eyes. “Anyone remotely involved in Shigaraki’s case is going down in a blaze of flames. The moment his confidence in you cracks…” Izuku sighed for a second time.

Izuku still wasn’t sure on the specifics of whatever happened to Tenko Shimura, but after the murder of Shimura’s grandparents, Izuku was willing to put money on All For One’s involvement. Off the anti-villain parents, take their child, pin the blame on All Might in the system and have a disposable pawn ready for action. Shigaraki was a scapegoat for someone who had the time, resources and ability to persist for a very long time and was blind not to see it.

Never had Izuku been more thankful that All For One hadn’t been part of his childhood. This level of attention was bad enough, but the enhanced prowling left Izuku with an elevated heart rate that wouldn’t fade.

“How would you know?”

“It shows.” Izuku really didn’t feel the need to say anymore. Shigaraki alone was an indication of All For One’s using behaviour.
exploded into a blinding ache. Izuku didn’t even scream when he slipped, silently tumbling from the top of the ladder straight into All For One’s waiting arms.

“This,” Izuku heard through a thundering heartbeat that wasn’t his own, “is why I’ve been hanging around since the boy left.”

Izuku struggled and was deposited onto his feet. “What was that?” Izuku demanded.

“What was what?” Izuku wasn’t half asleep this time and All For One’s taut expression gave him away.

“You’re afraid.” Izuku stared at him, feeling vaguely nauseated, thinking back to the previous night. All For One’s erratic heart, the speed he’d arrived at… The desk lamp being on well before Izuku had been taken back to the room. All For One had already been awake when Izuku had cried out. “Why?” Afraid. Afraid of what? All For One was perfectly fine with Izuku doing all manner of stupid things unsupervised during Izuku’s childhood. All For One was perfectly fine with his wife being miserable and unsupported in taking care of a son most of society would see as being disabled.

“You almost lost your arms, Izuku. Are you aware of what they do to limbs when they’re paralysed?” All For One asked with more than a slight edge, eyes narrowed. “They’re dead weight, useless. Then pressure sores develop… ulcers follow on, becoming infected due to the exposed flesh. Then they remove the infected dead weight entirely. They would have amputated your arms after a fruitless attempt to maintain them,” All For One spoke slowly, enunciating each sound carefully. “Then what, Izuku? Your life would be functionally over. For what, for who? For a worthless society that turns on people at the slightest opportunity?”

“And? It could’ve just as easily been over when Kacchan told me to take a leap off a building,” Izuku shot back. “I didn’t see you doing anything about that back then, and now I’m meant to believe that you care now all of a sudden?” All For One response of a slight incline of his head didn’t inspire confidence.

Perhaps I should be blunter and educate you on what exactly I was party to thanks to Ragdoll’s Quirk.” All For One, without any preamble or effort, snatched Izuku from solid ground and in a blink they’d crossed to the living room. Izuku was subsequently placed into his lounge of choice, while All For One loomed over him. “You’ve already died, Izuku. Many. Many. Times.” Izuku froze, leaning as far away from All For One’s cold features as far as was humanly possible. Some people turned red, veins bulged, eyes flicked. All For One wasn’t one of those people. All For One’s humanity evaporated into the ether.

“No, I didn’t,” Izuku shakily denied. Not with Eri helping him at least.

All For One furiously shook his head, hair swaying. “First, your bones began to crack and fracture. You knew that your physiology couldn’t handle it and you endured your bones starting to shatter, because those around you were too inept to deal with the problem. Too proud of their stupidity to see the imminent danger. Then your leg shattered, turned to powder by a loss of control as you absconded with the girl. She used her Quirk to revert it, didn’t she? But then she couldn’t stop, so you improvised.” Izuku didn’t think that Shigaraki ever would ever had the degree of loyalty to All For One that he did if he could hear the man now. Prowling, animalistic almost. It was all Izuku could do to keep breathing in an apartment awash with malevolence.

“And you let loose. The Quirk itself killed you again. And again. And again. Crushing your organs and you carried on through the pain, through the sensation of being erased, when you could’ve avoided it entirely by letting go of the girl. Instead, you died. You refused to let go.” All For One practically shook with what Izuku took to be suppressed rage. “When you never should have
received One For All, when you weren’t meant to be there, when other people were meant to be responsible for you, when it wasn’t your problem. And. You. Died.” All For One again spoke lowly, clearly, spitting out each word with a dose of venom. “And you have absolutely no problem with dying, do you Izuku?”

All For One’s burning stare prompted an answer. “Of course I have a problem with dying,” Izuku almost squeaked.

“All For One again spoke lowly, clearly, spitting out each word with a dose of venom. “And you have absolutely no problem with dying, do you Izuku?”

All For One’s burning stare prompted an answer. “Of course I have a problem with dying,” Izuku almost squeaked.

“Then why are you so eager to run to your death?” All For One snarled. “You went after Bakugou with nothing to defend yourself while the pro heroes did nothing. You obliterated your arm to force Todoroki to use his Quirk. You went after Stain knowing about his body count. You crippled yourself to protect an ungrateful brat from Muscular, risking paralysis and amputation. You came after Bakugou, knowing that he was held by a seasoned group of kill happy criminals, risking action from me in the process. You lied to your mother about being there. You died numerous times taking on Overhaul for a child that could’ve easily been snatched at a later date.” All For One lunged forward, dragging Izuku back into his arms. Izuku could only hang there limply, with ice for blood.

“Why do you constantly throw your life away for people who don’t deserve it? Why do you think that you’re worth less than them? What happened?” Something else had crept into All For One’s voice. It wasn’t Aizawa-sensei or All Might’s exasperation, or the middle school staff’s contempt, or his classmates or mother’s worry. It went beyond any response Izuku had ever seen, had ever had pointed at him.

Izuku was starting to understand how Tsubasa had become a target.

All For One’s grip wasn’t relenting. Izuku couldn’t breathe. “I can’t breathe,” Izuku whispered, feeling tears slip down his face. All For One’s grip marginally relented, but they were moving again. Izuku could hesitate a guess as to where they were going.

“At no point have you ever considered your own wellbeing. At no point has anyone ever stressed to you your importance,” vibrated through All For One’s chest to Izuku’s ears. “How can a military school be allowed to enrol a child that patently doesn’t care about whether or not they leave an incident alive? Why do they sit there and tolerate their children being slaughtered?”

Who was All For One to comment on children being slaughtered? It wasn’t like he had any concern for people based on their age. Not that he cared about the atrocities he committed.

“I do care,” Izuku attempted to voice through the fabric of All For One’s shirt, still frozen in place.

All For One snorted, “I’ll believe it when I see it.”

For someone who could warp, All For One certainly took his time whenever he carried Izuku. Izuku couldn’t bring himself to struggle free, his right arm with only a slim margin of clearance before it’d be knocked around in any strenuous movement.

“Why weren’t you asleep last night?” Izuku blurted out before All For One could repeat the previous night’s ritual.

“All Might, and, more recently, you,” All For One murmured. Nightmares then. But what about Izuku?

Without any further explanation, Izuku was once more tucked into All For One’s bed, where he watched as All For One plucked journal #1 from the shelf.

Izuku blinked at All For One.
“Knowing that you could’ve torn Bakugou’s arms off at any time you so desired is comforting,” came All For One’s serene response to Izuku’s silent question.

Nope. And Izuku buried himself face first into the pillow, hoping that he wouldn’t wake up with All For One wrapped around him again.

Unfortunately, that wasn’t the case.

“Izuku, are you coming shopping?” Izuku opened crusty eyes and glared at All For One’s retreating back. All For One grocery shopping. All For One in public. Alone. Unsupervised… Exposed to other human beings. Yeah, that’s not happening.

“Yeah, I’ll come.” As Izuku struggled out from the bed, his gaze found its way to All For One’s desk. A dim glow of a LED blinked rapidly, a familiar faceplate of a computer tower that Izuku’s mother had owned all those years ago when Izuku used to watch videos of All Might’s debut. It wasn’t identical, but there was enough similarities for it to have been the same brand or built by the same person. How far did All For One’s surveillance go in the Midoriya household? Shigaraki certainly hadn’t been spared and he was a simple pawn.

Shuddering, Izuku hobbled off to his bathroom.

Following the usual struggle of showering one handed, Izuku almost fell out the door with All For One. “Are you sure that you should be coming?”

“You’re not carrying me,” Izuku grumbled. “Plus, I trust you with the general public about as far as I can throw you.”

“We’ll be talking about this later, Izuku. Your health comes first,” All For One sighed.

“Vitamin D,” Izuku replied shortly, making their way through a leafy and overgrown park.

On the whole, the event itself had been… uneventful. Enough for Izuku to realise that his fitness levels had plummeted through the floor and that All For One’s method of shopping probably stemmed from being a wanted criminal. They were in and out with the bags in seven minutes, where at some point they’d magically skipped to the front of the queue in spite of the long line of people. It could only be a Quirk, but what sort of Quirk allowed for an entire line of people not to notice that someone had stepped in front of them? Something to think about for later that night.

It was too peaceful. Too… clean. All For One had come to the conclusion to go shopping, but why now?

His question was answered, a voice floating across the grass as Izuku and All For One made to recross the park.

“Listen here, you fucking emo shitbag. We are only here because you were carrying on like a fucking asshole in the dorms. We could’ve been somewhere with fucking wi-fi, instead we’re in the middle of nowhere, on shitty mobile because you fucking argue with everyone,” a familiar voice yelled through the landscape. “You made Round Face fucking cry for no reason. She offered you food, you rude shithead. All you had to do was smile and fucking nod.”

Izuku looked at All For One. “Was that…?”
“I’m more amazed that he sees no problem with commenting on another person’s manners,” All For One remarked over his phone.

“Yeah, because you really had the best manners in the Sports Festival address, didn’t you?” Another familiar voice sneered. “One paragraph and everyone was after 1-A. Guess having everything handed to you on a plate for your Quirk from birth probably didn’t help, everyone thinking that you’re special. We all know that Todoroki was the real winner.”

“I’m right here, and no, I didn’t deserve to win. I couldn’t use my Quirk properly,” Todoroki’s voice irritably cut in. “Can we just work on the project? Aizawa-sensei isn’t allowing double up topics. If we’re not quick, we won’t get a good one.”

“Fuck off, Icy, if this shithead wants his ass kicked then we can do it right here,” Kacchan snarled back. “Every time he says something he has a smartass reply instead of contributing. Can’t do property damage, because dickhead here forgot how his Quirk works. Can’t do ethics because shithead thinks it’ll get him stigma. Can’t do shit because shithead thinks this project is all about him.” That… sounded a lot worse than what Mineta had described. Kacchan couldn’t afford to get in trouble. None of them could. It might’ve been a few months long gap now, but all of them were still on the brink of expulsion. Apart from Shinsou, Izuku hoped.

Izuku rushed forwards, footsteps following behind. Rounding the corner, Izuku squinted at Kacchan, Todoroki and Shinsou’s distinctly purple head as they crowded around an improvised crate table on the grass. “You know, when Mineta told me that you guys were at each other’s throats, I thought he might have been exaggerating a bit. But I heard you arguing from the other side of the block,” Izuku frowned.

“Holy shit, Deku, you’re fucking alive.” Kacchan was on his feet and stalking over. Izuku felt All For One’s hand squeeze his shoulder and his brain screamed. Nonononononono, go away. Why did I walk over?

“Midoriya, we heard from Mineta that you were sick,” Todoroki nodded, eyes never leaving All For One.

“Hey, Midoriya. Been a while,” Shinsou shuffled over.

“Well, yeah,” Izuku answered all three with a degree of awkwardness he hadn’t felt since middle school. “Apparently it was mum’s idea to get my arm fixed.” Izuku’s eyes frantically flicked to All For One.

“Right, so this is your old man, then?” Kacchan jerked his head at All For One, ignoring Izuku’s signal.

“What of it?” All For One asked so snidely that it was a wonder that no one fled.

“You know, when I walked over here, it wasn’t so that the two of you could have an argument.” Izuku dropped his groceries and hurriedly placed himself between them.

“The fuck’s wrong with you, Deku?” Kacchan barked.

“I was going to ask the same of you Bakugou, calling him useless. According to the media, you’re the most useless person in U.A., but here you are thinking you’re anything more than a spoilt child,” All For One drewled. “Pathetic.”

“What the fuck do you know about me? You weren’t even in his fucking life until five minutes ago and you think you’ve got the right to talk shit about me?” Kacchan screamed back.
All For One examined his nails, casually and all Izuku could do was frantically gesture to Kacchan with a throat slicing motion. “Oh, and what a *great* influence you were in his life. Tell me, how would the admission board react to knowing that you partook in suicide baiting throughout middle school, hm? Like how you told my son to jump off a building for supposedly being Quirkless.” Izuku was fairly certain that the sub-zero temperatures they were experiencing weren’t because of Todoroki. “Like how you beat him to the point of desensitising him to pain. What about that, Bakugou? Do tell me.”

Shinsou and Todoroki were edging away from Kacchan as All For One began to advance on Kacchan. Izuku, a lone rock in a river’s advance, the only one with the comprehension as to what was going to happen if he moved. Maybe All For One would opt to torture Kacchan to death… but he might also opt for the instant gratification of a quick splattering.

“The fuck are you gonna do about it?”

Izuku didn’t reach Kacchan in time. Kacchan dangled from All For One’s iron grip. Kacchan’s choking, wet gasps could hardly be heard. His face red, blotchy, desperate.

“Put him down!” Izuku frantically tugged at All For One’s free arm, his Quirk stubbornly refusing to work.

Todoroki and Shinsou attempted to move forwards, only for All For One’s hand to constrict, Kacchan immediately changing colour.

“I will when I’m done,” All For One answered far too casually, eyes empty and fixated on Kacchan. “As for what I’m going to do, Bakugou, perhaps I should utilise some of my son’s early notes? He had some remarkably detailed on the presumed joint weakness to your wrists and shoulders due to the recoil of your Quirk. Shall we start there?” All For One might as well’ve been inviting Kacchan to tea for the tone of voice being used. All Izuku could do was frantically gesture to Todoroki and Shinsou and wrench at All For One. An entirely unmoved All For One. “You know, my son had prospective takedowns for each. And. Every. Single. One. Of you and your spineless accomplices and… funnily enough, the ones prescribed for you are the only ones I *haven’t* seen in action. I’m sure we can fix that….” Izuku didn’t need that information as he tore at All For One.

“Ughhh…” Kacchan garbled. Izuku renewed his wrenches. For a moment, Izuku saw what exactly Kurogiri saw in his mother’s apartment and repressed the urge to vomit.

“Stop it! Stop!” Izuku ducked around to where Kacchan’s feet hung limply and readied a blow to All For One’s solar plexus. Immediately, he was shoved back, sent stumbling by a deceptively heavy tap. His right arm twinged unpleasantly.

“I’ll stop. As soon as Bakugou understands that if he ever calls you useless, implies as much or even lifts a finger in your vague direction, that I’ll proceed to tear all of his digits clean off. Or perhaps something… more karmic, can occur.” All For One suggested lightly, flexing his left hand. Izuku could feel the blood drain from his face.

“He understands, just let go!” And All For One did.

Kacchan crashed to the ground, with a ripple of ice cushioning his fall. Kacchan was still breathing. “Thank god. Ambula-”

“Already done.” Shinsou gave a thumbs-up, phone in hand.

“What the hell is wrong with you?” Izuku screamed at All For One. All restraints flew away, lost in
the furore.

“Please, we both know your mother would’ve done worse,” All For One snorted. “He had that coming for years.”

“So when I tell mum that you brutalised a teenager in public, you think she won’t have anything to say about it?” Izuku growled, catching Shinsou and Todoroki exchange significant looks, before the latter moved to Izuku’s side. “You can’t run around maiming everyone you have a problem with. You don’t do that!”

“I will maim them when the authorities allow a violent delinquent to run around unchecked with the school’s blessing,” All For One responded promptly. “They had years to deal with his behaviour and his parents clearly did nothing. They only have themselves to blame.”

Izuku laughed hystERICally. “You’re going to call him a violent delinquent when—when, that’s just unbelievable coming from you.” Izuku paused, taking a breath. “You know what? I’m done.” And Izuku walked, One For All still stubbornly absent.

There was a rush of feet behind him and a rustle of bags. “Midoriya!” Todoroki called. “Are you okay?”

“Do I look okay?” Izuku asked, attempting to force down the urge to bawl his eyes out. He never should have walked over. If he kept walking, Kacchan wouldn’t… “What about…?” Shinsou was one of the last people Izuku ever wanted to be left alone with All For One. Izuku could only hope that the Quirk All For One didn’t have a shared immunity to Brainwashing.

“He’s fine. You know, I wondered why you took it so personally back when you said people shouldn’t be judged on their blood…but this is…” Todoroki shrugged and left the bags at Izuku’s feet. “I’d say it’s old man level, but he’d just call me weak for not defending myself if someone bullied me. Then organise a brutal training session,” Todoroki grimaced.

“I can’t take him anywhere. Everywhere he goes, something like this happens,” Izuku groaned. Children tortured, experimented on and weaponised. A prison emptied of all staff. A warehouse full of criminals massacred. All Might brutalised. Who did these things as a matter of normality? Where did he think he was to think no one would object to his behaviour? “A normal person would’ve told Kacchan off and called it a day. But oh no, Mr Absent Parent Extraordinaire has to go off and maim someone sixteen years too late,” slipped out before Izuku could stop it. “He just can’t leave it alone.”

“That’s rough,” Todoroki sighed. “Ice?” Todoroki opened his hand to reveal dolphin shaped ice cubes.

“Dolphins?” Izuku asked, feeling more blank than ever.

Todoroki shrugged. “I can make camels too. But seriously, where’s your mum?”

“Mum has no idea that he’s like this when he’s away from her,” Izuku explained, taking a dolphin and crunching down on it. “She’s busy suing U.A. into the ground and even if I did tell her, what’s she going to do about? Well, she could dislodge an organ, but what situation would it take for that to happen? Izuku didn’t want to risk it.

“I feel you.” Todoroki patted Izuku on the back. “My old man said ages ago that he was going to make me proud.”

“Has he?” Izuku didn’t know why he even asked. He knew what the answer was going to be.
“Nope. He hasn’t visited mum in hospital yet, no apologies to me or the rest of the family. Just carries on being married to the job, even if he’s less of a bastard in public. I suppose that’s something, it’s just not something any of us really wanted.” Todoroki bit into an ice camel. “I don’t think he understands how he made people feel, the hopelessness, the disregard… Maybe if he was stuck in hospital for years he’d understand what it’s like to ruin someone’s life.” Todoroki shrugged. “But what are the odds of that happening? He’s not a pushover, he’d have to upset the wrong person for that to happen…” Izuku really hoped that, for once, All For One’s overly active ears weren’t listening. “Anyway, the old men need to listen to what people tell them if they want to get anywhere. As it stands, I’ve already been uninvited from my old man’s funeral.”

“Is that because you uninvited yourself?” Izuku asked blankly, hearing footsteps approach. He wanted to be sick.

“Pretty much,” Todoroki shrugged. “Do you want us to visit you at your old man’s place?”

“No, he might just outright murder someone then if he doesn’t like them,” Izuku exhaled.

“That’s harsh, Izuku,” All For One’s cool voice washed over them. “Hit pieces aren’t literal things.”

“They are when you’re involved,” Izuku grumbled.

“He’ll live… in extreme pain and off school for numerous weeks, but he’ll live,” All For One carried on.

“Not. Helping.” Izuku turned to Todoroki. “You know what? I’m going to take Serial Killer home and then attempt to drown myself in the shower. I’ll try to VOIP you later to let you know if I managed it or not.”

“If you’re sure,” Todoroki answered doubtfully, edging past All For One without turning his back. “Talk later? Bye!” And Todoroki sprinted back to Shinsou.

“Why won’t you let me deal with the problem? Wouldn’t it be easier if he wasn’t there to harass you?” All For One immediately cooed, as if he hadn’t just caused Izuku severe distress.

Izuku shook his head, a bubble of nausea rising up his throat as he picked up the bags and again began to walk. “It’s not that simple.”

“Why not?”

“You can’t just kill all of your problems. Why do you need to be told this?” Izuku was on the verge of tearing hair out in frustration. Children understood this, but why didn't All For One? Or did he just not care?

“Well, it has solved a lot of my problems with the government…”

“No! Stop treating it like a joke. I’m not one of Shigaraki’s mindless idiots who’s just going to sit there bobbing my head to every atrocity you carry out,” Izuku snapped.

“Ah, but that’s part of your unique charm, Izuku,” All For One smoothly commented.

“You still own a frying pan,” Izuku threatened and All For One laughed. With what had just happened, Izuku was sorely tempted by a spot of arson. If only to prove a point. “You attacking Kacchan isn’t going to fix the source of what made him.”

“Bakugou has agency, Izuku. He’s responsible for his own actions,” All For One drawled.
“Yeah, but he’s not responsible for being brought up by a parent that beat him,” Izuku sliced back, stopping All For One dead in his tracks. “Todoroki’s not the only person at U.A. who dealt with a violent parent. All Might said that the whole time he was visiting that Kacchan’s mother kept hitting him.”

Izuku immediately knew that something had gone wrong from the rapid and miniscule shift in All For One’s expression, the slight raising of an eyebrow, the downward tweak of a lip. “Oh, you know how I’m always eager to hear about child abusers.”

“Do you want your biography now or later?” Izuku threw at him. “I’ve got plenty of material.”

“You know what I mean,” All For One waved a hand. “Are there any other circumstances explaining his behaviour?”

“When Todoroki and Kacchan did the supplementary provisional exam, Kacchan told Todoroki that he was brought up with violence,” Izuku grunted, shifting the bag of groceries in his left hand.

From his quick calculations, Izuku had expected a potential myriad of responses. All For One’s extended, curiously empty expression as he paced along beside him hadn’t been one of them. Silence for a while longer, then he spoke. “His bullying of you started when you were only four or five, Izuku. Have you considered what must’ve happened for him to have been exhibiting those behaviours at that age?” No, Izuku hadn’t, but All For One apparently did.

Inhale. Exhale. “All Might told me… that Kacchan’s mother said he was kidnapped because he was too weak to not be kidnapped.” Izuku cringed at the shadow which crossed All For One’s face.

“Oh, that makes a great deal of sense. Bakugou was kidnapped because Shigaraki saw in him a common spirit limited by the system. From what you’ve suggested, her treatment of her son directly resulted in the kidnapping.” All For One spoke slowly and clearly. It could almost be called disbelief, probably at what he thought was an act of immense stupidity. “In which case causation takes effect and she is the real reason for Shigaraki targeting Bakugou, not any weakness though it may be present. That being said, for someone meant to be intelligent, he was foolish and stupid for thinking that his lacking treatment of others wouldn’t come back to bite him.”

“How is that any different to All Might maiming you for killing his mentor?” Izuku asked. He’d rather be drilled about another NDA by Shū in legal jargon than listen to All For One’s petulant behaviour.

“I don’t think Kacchan knows how to express himself beyond yelling and being violent…” Izuku threw his hand up, making his groceries clank together. “Before I wondered why he wanted to be a hero if it was just about being the strongest.” Izuku took a moment to collect himself while All For One had opted for a pained expression, as if cutting someone some slack was a grave offence. “But, what if he doesn’t really know why he’s attracted to it? All Might’s the objectively strongest legal option, the sort of thing Kacchan’s mother would recognise and maybe hold over him. I don’t… I don’t think either of his parents put a lot of emphasis into self-reflection. His dad’s fairly quiet and I can’t see him being all that involved… but after what Todoroki and All Might told me… Kacchan isn’t the source of the problem and unlike Todoroki, he can’t see the source of the problem.”

“An argument for sterilisation if ever I heard one,” All For One scoffed.

“Why don’t you lead it by being a volunteer?”

“It’s a bit late for that, Izuku.”
“I can find a cliff or building and fix it for you,” Izuku offered with less sarcasm than he would’ve liked. His throat was sore and all he wanted to do was collapse into bed.

Izuku didn’t get a reply, All For One stubbornly refusing to look at him let alone return fire.

Toshinori, Tsukauchi and Gran Torino skidded into young Bakugou’s hospital room, where he quietly laid. To his side were young Todoroki and young Shinsou of the General Department. Tsukauchi’s driving was terrifying, but Toshinori wasn’t about to complain. That didn’t stop Gran Torino’s choice words after Tsukauchi elected to handbrake turn into a parking spot as it approached dusk.

“What happened to young Bakugou?” Toshinori wheezed, doubled over from the sprint.

Todoroki spoke first, deep rings under his eyes. “We met Midoriya’s father,” he began to explain with a grimace.

“Shit,” slipped through Toshinori’s lips before he had a chance to stop it. All For One had been in the wild. “Where?”

“At the park near Musutafu’s public library. I… got us kicked out by starting an argument with Bakugou,” Shinsou admitted, scratching the back of his head and avoiding eye contact. “Before that we got kicked out of the dorms by Ida, because I was rude to Uraraka.”

“We used a crate as a table on the grass, but they kept arguing instead of working out our question for the group project,” Todoroki added. “Midoriya and his father were nearby, looked like they’d just been grocery shopping. I think he heard the yelling and Bakugou threatening Shinsou, so he came over to try and distract us.”

“Then?” Gran Torino leaned forwards. “How did this brat end up getting strangled by Midoriya’s bastard of a father?”

Toshinori suppressed a cough. All For One didn’t need an excuse to strangle Bakugou. With what he’d heard in the interviews, All For One had been salivating at an opportunity to dispose of the one that got away. Young Midoriya’s attempt to prevent a public brawl had inadvertently given All For One that opportunity.

“Bakugou was rude to Midoriya,” Shinsou muttered, looking up. “It was so fast. His father attacked Bakugou for calling Midoriya useless and Bakugou attacked Midoriya’s father for not being there… It was so fast. I couldn’t see him move, I couldn’t do anything. I blinked and Midoriya’s father had Bakugou by the throat.” Toshinori swallowed unpleasantly. Shinsou didn’t have the experience of 1-A in dealing with constant villain attacks. Nor the reflexes.

“It wasn’t just you. My Quirk wasn’t working,” Todoroki added on. All For One had a Quirk suppressor. Great. Exactly what Toshinori wanted to hear. “I tried to move closer and he just clamped on even harder around Bakugou’s neck. Midoriya tried to get his father to let go, but he just held on.”

“Did… Midoriya’s father say anything?” Tsukauchi prompted.

“Yeah, he threatened to torture Bakugou to death with his Quirk’s vulnerabilities. Said that Midoriya’s notebooks had a takedown manual for every Quirk he came across in them,” Shinsou
explained, an apprehensive expression on his face. “It… sounded like Midoriya’s dad has the same hobby.” Putting it mildly if ever Toshinori had heard it. All For One jumped for joy once he realised that his son had the same brain for Quirks that he did.

“Then?” Toshinori prodded again. How was young Bakugou still alive?

“Midoriya’s father said that if Bakugou ever called Midoriya useless or attempted to harm him again that he’d remove all of his fingers. That wasn’t just it either. He said that failing that, he’d have something more karmic waiting in the wings.” Todoroki’s disgusted expression didn’t tell the whole story. “Midoriya tried to hit his father, but he was pushed back. We couldn’t see by what, but that guy’s no pushover. After that, he let go and I caught Bakugou with my ice.”

Young Bakugou bullied young Midoriya for being Quirkless. All For One had enough means and mean-spiritedness to have young Bakugou live through the same experience. If it wasn’t for the witnesses, All For One would’ve taken it upon himself to do it onsite. A lasting message for his son’s final bully.

Young Shinsou had called an ambulance and made sure that young Bakugou was still breathing as paramedics arrived. Young Todoroki had sussed out young Midoriya’s living circumstances only to find something far worse than Endeavor lurking in the neighbourhood. Young Midoriya was trying to contain All For One, but his influence was limited, dwarfed by the explosive cloud of his father’s grudge.

“Hey, Todoroki, Endeavor’s on the news!” Shinsou’s voice cut in and they look up at the screen.

“Breaking news! The number one pro hero Endeavor has been found inside of a dumpster on Tokyo’s city limits. Initial witnesses report that Endeavor's injuries were consistent with a sustained attack by nine different Quirk users,” the female reporter hurried out. “He was loaded into an ICU ambulance and conveyed…” Toshinori tuned it out.

“Kids…” Toshinori began slowly. “Did anyone mention Endeavor while you were with young Midoriya?”

“Yes?” Todoroki offered hesitantly, his jaw hanging open. Todoroki’s phone rang and he fled from the room. “Hey, sis. Yeah, I just saw, I’ll be right over.”

“Shit,” Toshinori heard Gran Torino whisper and did a doubletake. “Do you think…?”

That it was All For One’s idea of a peace offering for his son? Toshinori silently concluded. Not just a peace of offering, but a taste of what was to come.

He really, really hoped not. For the sake of the students.

Chapter End Notes

And here's one I prepared earlier~

Thank you as always for the comments. I'm thankful that so many people understood why Mineta's scene was the way it was.
All in all, it could’ve gone far worse. Toshinori and Tsukauchi had practically flown over to Endeavor as soon as the man was coherent enough to speak. They weren’t allowed within Intensive Care, but Tsukauchi had it on good authority that Endeavor would be able to speak as soon as he was moved to High Dependency. Until then, family only. Toshinori supposed that Endeavor had plenty of family to prospectively visit, even if young Todoroki and the boy’s big sister were the only ones to visit in reality. Toshinori definitely didn’t see himself getting in with the close friend card when he attended to warn Endeavor about young Todoroki’s altercation with Hisashi Midoriya. If only there was a professional courtesy card, Toshinori hummed to himself, idly flicking through a dogeared copy of *Quirk Focus* which had been carelessly tossed onto the waiting room coffee table. It was the only copy there, strangely enough.

Whoever maimed Endeavor, they wanted him to feel every moment of pain from every broken bone. Sans the opening blow to the head, every broken bone screamed of a career ending injury, neon signs blaring wildly from the lack of mortal wounding. A degree of almost surgical precision applied to the wounding. Every ligament shredded and bone broken like a sadistic kid pulling wings off a fly. Every part of it just about smelled like All For One.

The timing was too convenient. All For One had months in the lead up, but only now something happened after young Todoroki complaining within the fiend’s hearing? All For One was already aware of young Midoriya’s distaste for Endeavor. Fresh from an attack on a still speechless young Bakugou, it wasn’t much for Toshinori to draw the conclusion that All For One was acting on the same impulse that sent him after Bakugou.

“Do you think he knew about Endeavor seeing young Midoriya as a stepping stone for young Todoroki?” Toshinori found himself asking Tsukauchi in an undertone, who appeared to be drooping into his second cup of coffee.

“Would he still be alive if he did?” Tsukauchi slurred, bumping his jaw with the paper cup and spluttering.

Toshinori thought for just a moment. “Nah.”

“The family are going to let us speak to him first. Apparently, the son has something to do before he visits his father,” Tsukauchi sleepily nodded.

Toshinori suspected young Todoroki would have to get a great deal of victory dancing out of his system before being in public let alone seeing his father. Young Todoroki might also still be in shock, so maybe the victory dancing was unrelated. “Alright then.”

“Gentlemen, he’s ready for your visit now,” a quiet voice murmured and Toshinori blinked upwards.
With the nurse’s strict oversight, they finally walked into Endeavor’s room after hours of waiting.

“Heh, finally,” Endeavor grunted, practically mummified from the amount of dressings and bracing covering his wounds. Thankfully, he didn’t have a host of protruding cords, tubes and lord knows what else hanging out of him. Toshinori had seen enough of that to last a lifetime. “Tsukauchi, All Might,” he nodded. “I suppose you want the report?”

“It’s what we’re here for, but I’m still surprised that you’re still capable of speaking,” Tsukauchi agreed.

“They weren’t aiming to kill me, I think,” Endeavor snorted. “If they were I wouldn’t have been able to do anything. I started my patrol near the agency building and then I don’t remember anything else. It’s blank.”

Toshinori could only watch Tsukauchi pull out his notebook and listen. Endeavor didn’t remember anything about the attack or the dumpster. Sounded like a blow to the head first, from Toshinori’s experience. All of the damage had been done while Endeavor was out of it, probably because his screams would’ve attracted attention. All For One still wasn’t entirely comfortable with being seen then, even if he didn’t seem to care that the police would immediately suspect him after his escape.

Then again, no one apart from Toshinori, Tsukauchi and Gran Torino and young Midoriya even knew that All For One was Hisashi Midoriya. Unless told, Toshinori doubted they’d draw the connection between young Bakugou’s strangulation, young Todoroki’s complaint and Endeavor’s maiming.

Young Bakugou still wasn’t able to lodge a formal complaint, but the other two members of their study group were insistent that he had to be around to give a statement before they’d serve as witnesses. That young Bakugou knew something about the Midoriya family that he had to tell them before they even looked at going after All For One. It was unusual, for sure, but Toshinori was all about delaying the inevitable these days. Normally Tsukauchi would’ve powered through and submitted it to the prosecutor, but it was an excuse for a delay that they were happy to take.

Eventually, Tsuakuchi concluded his almost fruitless effort and staggered off for a strong coffee, leaving Toshinori and Endeavor in an awkward silence. Toshinori shouldn't have been hoping for a lack of CCTV footage of the incident, but was anyway.

“I can’t believe that you’re awake after that,” Toshinori managed to edge out over a heavily chewed lip. “There was so much blood they weren’t even sure that you were going to pull through.”

“I don’t remember what happened in the lead up,” Endeavor seemed to grudgingly admit, his limbs heavily wrapped and his customary fire extinguished. “I was patrolling and then I was here. Whoever got me, they were fast. And spiteful.”

“I agree that they weren’t trying to kill you. It was too easy for them to go too far or just finish you off while you were out of it.” Because if that really was All For One then you’d be very very dead with a wiggle of his little finger, Toshinori thought to himself. All For One played with his food and it was perhaps the one of two things that saved Endeavor from death. Endeavor still had his Quirk, but like a bird with clipped wings, having the potential to fly didn’t mean that a bird could fly. Endeavor was very much so grounded.

Endeavor would most likely lose his ranking as a result of incapacity. Quirks were off limits when healing from such severe injuries. The added strain was to be avoided. Not that Toshinori had ever
personally bothered to follow the doctor’s orders, but Toshinori also didn’t have a family to feed and he wasn’t about to tell Endeavor. Not when there was still the possibility that Endeavor was never going to walk again.

“What isn’t much of a difference,” Endeavor snorted. “You know from experience that even if I ever do recover that I won’t be the same as what I was before.”

“That’s always the case with any severe injury,” Toshinori nodded. “I do have something else to tell you though that concerns your son.”

“What happened?” Endeavor growled.

So Toshinori did tell him, leaving out the part about Hisashi Midoriya’s real job.

“How the hell is he allowed to keep a kid with him?” Endeavor immediately asked. “Where’s child services?”

Toshinori choked on a mouthful of blood. “It’s funny, he asked the same thing about you.”

For a moment, Toshinori saw a wisp of flame cross Endeavor’s enraged expression.

They’d returned to the house in complete silence. All For One was still stubbornly non-responsive, lips firmly sealed to every jab, prod or snide remark Izuku made on the way back to the apartment. Weird, All For One usually gave as good as he got, with his customary malevolent edge.

Izuku had elected out of screaming at All For One on the spot. Instead, in true teenage fashion, he stormed off to his room, slammed the door shut behind him and locked it. Not that it’d do much for someone capable of warping, but it was a test more than anything else.

All For One could tentatively be called a human being, but did he understand other human being like a normally functioning human being? If he didn’t, Izuku was fairly certain that he’d barge in at any moment, privacy be damned for the “conversation” that’d been promised earlier. But… Shigaraki was also a thing, which suggested that All For One’s understanding of human beings was utilitarian in the furtherance of sadism more than anything else.

Silence. No padding of footsteps. The quiet on the way back had followed them into the apartment. All For One must’ve understood, to some extent, why Izuku would never approve of his behaviour… but why did he carry on doing it anyway? Was it impulse? Was it a grudge? Was Kacchan on some designated list that All For One was crossing off? If so, what had possessed him to do it in public with witnesses? Who else would be on the list?

Unless… was that the point? Had All For One attacked Kacchan knowing that if the police and pro heroes came that they’d be slaughtered? Was Izuku just bait? Only All Might had stood a chance against All For One’s weakened form and All Might didn’t have the Quirk to do it anymore. Izuku had nowhere near what was needed to take All For One in a straight up fight. Intellectual and petty verbal jabs maybe, but All For One dominated the physical field, especially with a Quirk that could completely negate other Quirks. Izuku might’ve improved since he started attending U.A., but All For One was in his own league and he knew it.
If there was no All Might and Endeavor had been swatted like a fly by an injured All For One at Kamino Ward, then what hope did the rest of the pro heroes have? In a blink of an eye they’d be obliterated. All For One knew it… and now the investigating police likely knew it the moment they started to plan for his arrest. They could make the token effort of taking on All For One, but All For One also didn’t hesitate to level city blocks… unless Izuku was present.

Izuku being present also seemed to compel All For One to behave… strangely. Why can’t we just go back to trying to kill each other? Izuku lamented to himself, picking up his laptop and typing into an empty document. Back when life was simpler and Izuku didn’t have to worry about anyone in his immediate vicinity being maimed for looking at him sideways. Making a regular attempt to dropkick All For One through the nearest building was so much simpler at an emotional level, but the problem, as always, was that buildings tended to be populated and Izuku wasn’t about to inflict that on anyone.

There wasn’t anything Izuku could do to act as a physical deterrent, but there was another idea that he had in mind. It relied on him being able to slip away to contact Shū and Zach. Zach who was less of a mystery the more Izuku dug into his oddly selected editorials and media appearances. All For One couldn’t blame Izuku for what was going to happen. Not when he’d given Izuku the idea in the first place.

With a long-suffering sigh that felt like it lasted an eternity, Izuku stuffed his laptop into his bag with a carefully selected set of notebooks and crashed into his bed. Hopefully, whatever time he woke up at, All For One wouldn’t be there to greet him.

Unfortunately, All For One was there to greet him in the morning and Izuku awoke to the smell of pancakes wafting through the entry of an unlocked door.

“You know,” Izuku groggily grumbled, “the door was locked for a reason. Do you even need to use doors?” U.A. could probably teach a class on All For One’s potential Quirk usage. They could call it Door Mechanics and hopefully it’d leak back to All For One so he could learn how to use one like a normal human being. All Might had managed it on his first day of teaching, after all.

“Do you want pancakes, or not?” All For One’s voice wafted from around his retreating back.

Izuku ignored him. “You know, even All Might could use a door like a normal person.”

“Not when he tore mine off its hinges in his attempt to murder me.” All For One’s distant voice almost sounded offended.

“I feel sorry for the door,” Izuku bit back, struggling from his sheets.

“Aw, no sympathy?” All For One’s voice seemed to tut.

Izuku didn’t dignify it with an answer, struggling through his unlocked and thoroughly undamaged door towards the kitchen. “I don’t know how you’ve made it this far in life behaving the way you do. Two hundred years. Two. Hundred.” Izuku carefully stressed the words. “And somehow you’re still here. Strangling people, murdering people, trying to overthrow the government, experimenting on children, experimenting on everyone else, indoctrinating a child, abandoning your wife, having a kid you probably didn’t want and being completely unable to use a door correctly.” Izuku savoured the look of mild horror on All For One’s face as he added three generous scoops of ice cream to his morning pancakes. “You wouldn’t be here without your Quirk.”
“Neither would you, Izuku,” was All For One’s subdued answer.

Izuku shrugged indifferently at him from around his mountain of pancakes. “And you think mum wouldn’t have benefited from that?”

All For One stared at Izuku. “You don’t mean that.”

“After what happened yesterday, I think I do,” Izuku mumbled. Izuku didn’t even know if Kacchan had survived the experience. Kacchan wouldn’t have been a target if it wasn’t for Izuku’s proximity. Who knows who else had been targeted because of actions towards Izuku? “What do you think’s going to happen when she finds out?”

“If I had been around for his initial behaviour, I probably would’ve been told to stay with you while she spoke to Bakugou.” All For One smiled fondly. “Maybe Bakugou would have escaped hospitalisation, but that’s not much of a mercy with your mother.”

That’s right, Izuku’s mother worked in corporate and was specifically hired by All For One… “Why did you hire her in the first place?”

That question was a mistake, a dreamy expression clouding All For One face midway through flipping a pancake. “Why not?” An expression that Izuku recognised from description alone.

“Uh, I’ll be… watching…” Izuku looked at the time. “The morning news if you need me.” Izuku fled before he could hear the details. He’d already heard one perspective of how his mother had gotten married and he could wait a bit longer before hearing All For One’s commentary. Maybe he’d find out on his death bed if he was lucky, because there were some details that Izuku didn’t want to know. All For One’s expression really said it all.

Izuku prodded the remote and went for his plate.

“Breaking news update!” Drawled a nasally voice through what was most definitely surround sound speakers. “It has come to the attention of this broadcasting organisation that Endeavor has been moved from the Intensive Care Unit to the High Dependency Unit following emergency surgery. This comes after Endeavor was found in an industrial garbage receptacle with serious injuries sustained from what appears to be nine different Quirks. Police have provided information suggesting…”

Endeavor. Serious injuries. Nine different Quirks. All For One’s silence for that afternoon and night.


“If it makes you feel any better, I was going to do it before your surgery, but I was busy.” All For One shrugged and Izuku heard a pancake being flipped out of sight. “Finding a Quirk to prevent you from injuring yourself was surprisingly difficult.” Sure, Izuku was really going to believe that excuse.

“How is that meant to make me feel any better?” Izuku held his head in his hands. This isn’t happening. “We only just had this conversation. You can’t run around maiming people!” God, what had happened to Todoroki? His mother was in hospital. Did either him or his sister have access to money? Where was the rest of the family?

“It’s Endeavor.”

“No! That’s not a justification. You don’t maim people. Outright. No!”
“If it wasn’t me, it would’ve been someone else,” All For One pointed out. “The criminal population holds a wide a varied dislike for him as well.”

“The criminal population doesn’t know that his income is the only thing keeping his wife in housing.” Unless they also religiously read the *Mirror*. That was a scary thought. “Did you forget that he’s paying for her hospitalisation? Do we even know if he trusts his kids enough to give them access to his bank accounts?” Endeavor’s injuries obviously weren’t life threatening, but career ending… It’d be months before the family knew if Endeavor could keep working or if whatever All For One had done sunk the number one’s career permanently. He’d already happily done it to All Might, after all.

After that, it’d be a dispute with the insurance company acting as agent for the government’s hero insurance fund. A notoriously tight-fisted and remorseless set of insurers, who wouldn’t hesitate to accuse Endeavor of failing to mitigate the injury or insisting that he be rehabilitated into some other inappropriate and unrealistic field. With what had caused the injuries, Izuku didn’t see that happening, which meant it’d default to a messy settlement for a lump sum payout. Settlements which took years of petty back and forth between lawyers with countless expert opinions who were more likely to use boilerplate than actually read the medical files.

“I haven’t forgotten,” All For One nodded. He probably knew exactly what happened to heroes maimed while at work. Nevermind that he carried out most of the maimings.

“Let me guess, if I check the *Mirror*, he’s going to be on the front page,” Izuku managed to get out following an agonised groan. Not only would All For One physically attack someone, but now directly influencing the media was back on the agenda. All For One was free to roam and it didn’t take a genius to understand exactly what that was going to entail. It didn’t matter that All For One himself had gone off and horrifically injured someone, the story would be reframed as “New Number One Not Up to Scratch” and run as if Endeavor, while deplorable, didn’t already have an absurd record for successful arrests. Up until Shigaraki’s incursion at the ball, Endeavor’s record had already been almost spotless as far as not abusing his family was concerned, which was why it was a scandal in the first place.

All For One was saved from responding by a knock on the front door.

“All For One was saved from responding by a knock on the front door. 

“I’ll get it,” Izuku insisted, already halfway to the front door. Upon opening, he was met with a splash of red and white. “Todoroki?”

Todoroki raised his hand in a half-hearted wave. “Hi Midoriya. Can I come in?”

Izuku paused for a moment, then turned around to call behind him. “Hisashi, if Todoroki comes in, are you going to maim him too?” Izuku tried to ignore Todoroki’s miniscule grimace.

“Has he ever told you to jump off a building?” All For One’s voice floated back.

“No. And I wouldn’t tell you even if he did.”

“Then he’s welcome to come in. If he hasn’t eaten, there’s still extra.” Izuku snorted.

“If it’s an inconvenience then you don’t need to worry about it,” Todoroki hurried out, twitching his head between Izuku and the location of All For One’s voice. “It’s fine, really. My sister’s downstairs, I was only going to be quick…”

“No, it’s okay. Hisashi needs to be housetrained anyway.” Izuku ushered Todoroki into the living room before All For One could do any hosting. “I saw what happened to Endeavor. Is he okay?”
“He’s out of surgery now, but being okay is debatable.” Todoroki shrugged and eyed the act of savagery present on Izuku’s pancake plate. “We haven’t spoken to him yet. The police asked if they could speak with him first so they could gather information for the investigation and we agreed. Last night we spoke to one of the doctors, because none of us have access to his accounts. He’s not leaving any time soon.” Todoroki seemed… lost, his face blank and empty. As if the attack on his father hadn’t quite hit him. “Too many broken bones and Recovery Girl’s been suspended from giving treatment.”

Izuku could see a smug All For One lurking in the corner of his vision and shot him a venomous glare.

“Then, no one knows the specifics yet?” Izuku asked, one eye still on All For One.

“Not really. He’s not getting out any time soon and, while we’re not poor, it’s not helping with my mother,” Todoroki flatly explained from around a plate of pancakes. “Before he was injured, we were making independent living arrangements for her. He wasn’t involved, but he wasn’t stopping us either.”

“It’s good to hear that she’s getting better.” Izuku redoubled his furious glare at All For One, who beat a hasty retreat into the kitchen with Izuku’s used plate.

“Midoriya,” Todoroki whispered. “If you keep glaring at him like that, you’re going to injure someone.” Izuku caught a hint of a snigger from the vicinity of the kitchen.

“Fine,” Izuku said shortly, dearly wishing he had a slipper nearby to throw at All For One. “Uh, Todoroki?” Izuku scratched his head. “Why exactly are you here with your sister?”

“The old man’s awake and Fuyumi has to take care of household if he’s out of commission. After what you pulled off at the PR ball, I figured that a repeat performance would stop him from getting any ideas.” With a decidedly more apprehensive expression that sent chills along Izuku’s spine, Todoroki continued. “She’ll drop us off and keep going. Then you’re invited for dinner.” How convenient, Izuku thought to himself with a surge of relief.

“I read about that,” All For One’s called from afar. “It was an unmitigated disaster,” he gleefully added.

“Nobody asked for your opinion,” Izuku snapped back.

“I’ll be good,” All For One raised his hands in a peaceful gesture. Maybe it was for Todoroki’s benefit, because Izuku was all too well aware of what a show of hands meant from All For One.

Izuku raised a single hand in a single gesture and saw Todoroki’s jaw drop. “I don’t buy it. Stop interrupting. Todoroki has better things to do with his time.”

“Yeah,” Todoroki stumbled, eyes flicking between the two of them. “If you want to get a bag you can just come downstairs now…”

“Real-”

“What did I just tell you?” Izuku flicked a piece of Todoroki’s pancake at All For One who ducked. “You don’t get an opinion.” Slowly and carefully, Izuku delivered his ultimatum. “I’m going, and I’ll be back when I’m back. If you have an issue with that, you can explain to mum why you’re not letting me visit my friend’s ill father in hospital. In fact, I’ll make that phone call for you.” Izuku hadn’t seen All For One pale so fast before, but it was progress. “And if I hear so much as a whisper of you doing anything else while I’m gone, I’ll make sure you’re held to an attractive standard of
care.” Izuku hadn’t wanted to threaten anyone with his mother before, but with results this instantaneous…

All For One winced. “I’ll get your phone for you.” And he vanished.

“I was wondering why you weren’t responding to your texts,” Todoroki muttered.

“He’s had it since we got here,” Izuku sighed.

“Sounds familiar,” Todoroki grunted.

With All For One’s momentary absence, Izuku changed and packed a bag already filled with essential supplies from the previous night. His phone came sailing through the air and Izuku snatched it mid tumble.

“If you need anything, call,” All For One insisted.

“Or you’ll turn up and murder someone?” Izuku sighed.

“If need be.” All For One inclined his head and smiled chillingly.

“I’ll deal with you when I get home.”

Then Izuku just about bolted out the front door with Todoroki being dragged along behind him, hearing All For One’s quiet exhalation behind him as he went.

They piled into a bright red car without further ado.

“Fuyumi, this is Izuku Midoriya,” Todoroki said to a woman with white hair peppered with red. “We’re rescuing him from his father who is a controlling psychopath that dominates the media,” Todoroki carried on in complete and casual deadpan.

“Hello, Midoriya. Shouto says that you’ve got similar gene donor problems to our family,” Fuyumi Todoroki called from the front seat. Izuku smothered a hysterical laugh.

God, if he was here to hear it, Izuku thought with a shudder.

“Midoriya, this is my sister Fuyumi. She’s our getaway driver.”

Then it clicked. Izuku paled and blinked. “You came to… rescue me?” Nonononoono, badbadbad. “You’ve seen firsthand what he’s like. Do you want him to kick in your front door?” And worse. Much much worse. What would they do if he just dived out and ran for the hills?

“He can try, but we’ve got a full media scrum at home so he’s going to make himself extremely popular for the cameras if he attacks any of our guests,” Fuyumi chirped from the front seat. “Now, can I call you Izuku?”

Izuku nodded, jaw hanging slightly open. Was this what they’d been like when Izuku was in hospital? If this was Todoroki’s family, then what was everyone else doing?

“Right, Izuku, we’re busy today. Before we see dad, we need to visit mum, go grocery shopping, get some new clothing for Shouto, visit your friend from school in hospital who was attacked and then we should make it to dad just before dinner. After that you’re coming back to our place for dinner and you’ll probably have to stay the night because it’ll be too late to drive you back,” Fuyumi delivered without taking a breath. “Oh, they’re also all in different hospitals, so it’s going to be a bit of a rush. You’re coming, right?”
Izuku nodded dumbly. They had it all worked out. If anything, Endeavor's injuries were icing on the cake.

“We’re also going to have some of your school friends over for dinner,” she continued.

Izuku turned his head to face Todoroki and was thoroughly unsurprised to see him smirking broadly as Fuyumi zoomed away at a far more leisurely speed than Tsukauchi had ever managed.

Izuku had no doubt that if he had’ve looked over his shoulder, that All For One would’ve been somewhere in the morning crowd, watching and waiting.

Todoroki’s mother was the first on their list. They needed to speak to the hospital about her living arrangements.

“The courtyard’s nice and has wi-fi,” Todoroki explained. “We don’t want to drag you in for the meeting, but it should be a quiet spot for you to catch up with anything you need to do since you’ve got your phone back.”

“That should be okay. I’ve already spoken to mum, but I should ring work,” Izuku agreed. "Never did get around to picking a penname."

“Good luck. We’ll be quick,” and Todoroki jogged off to catch up with his sister.

Without a phone on hand, it was akin to being caught naked. Izuku, in the spare moment of time he had in the hospital courtyard while he waited, he dialled Shū’s number.

“Little Midoriya?” Shū’s voice bounced across the line. “How are you?”

“I’m staying with Hisashi,” Izuku winced.

“Oh, you poor thing. My condolences. Has he started on the Quirk Regulation Act yet?” Shū asked.

“No?” Of course All For One complained about Quirk regulations.

“Oh good,” Shū noted with relief. “Run when he does, he’ll trap you there for hours. Some days, even taking a leap of faith from the fourth storey was tempting.” Izuku could almost hear the shudder. “But, more importantly, what can I help you with? You called for a reason, yes?”

“Yeah, do you have Zach’s VOIP details? I need to talk to him about work stuff.” Izuku shuffled the items on his lap and managed to prop up a notebook.

“Of course!” Shū carefully spelt out the account name and Izuku wrote it down.

“I can’t remember, but did you ever get around to dinner with mum and me?”

“No, but we’re going to have to exclude your father when we do, or he’ll cause a scene,” Shū laughed… nervously. “We can talk about it later at any rate.”

“I don’t doubt it, but hopefully we can work it out when he’s not around then. Thanks, Shū!”

With the last of their goodbyes out of the way, Izuku added Zach’s contact details on his laptop and waited for the contact icon to go green. Then, with only the slightest amount of hesitation, Izuku hit the call button.
“Hi, Zach.”

“Izuku Midoriya, haven’t see you since you left hospital.” Zach’s voice cheerfully greeted over the VOIP connection. “How’re you doing with the boss man?” Izuku made a face.

“He makes me regret existing a little bit more every day,” Izuku groaned. “You know what he’s like, don’t you?” And Izuku was almost positive that Zachary Smith knew exactly what All For One was really like beneath the layers of media subterfuge. Zach had mentioned his boss sending his regards, which meant that Zach answered to a male higher up the food chain. Mai Maki was ruled out by the pronoun, unless Izuku had missed some workplace dynamic between them. The Heroes Mirror also didn’t need an Australian publishing platform, not when the Japanese wing didn’t even bother to follow the media laws in the first place. No, the Australian arm of the Mirror had a far subtler purpose behind it. No two editors would have to attend the one non-industry event unless the two editors weren’t from the same publication.

“Do I?” Zach asked, instantly guarded.

“You’re the editor of Conspiracy and I suspect you’re the one who wrote the article about All For One,” Izuku dropped without a shred of pretence. “I suppose it’s easy enough to write about him when you work for him.”

Silence.

“You are a sharp one, aren’t you? Just like-”

“Please don’t ever compare me to him,” Izuku shuddered. Kacchan and Shigaraki hovered in the back of his mind, both gasping for air.

“Fine, fine,” Zach chortled. “So, what do you want? Just confirming your suspicions or what?”

Izuku took a deep breath. “I want to submit a contributor article.”

“Alright then, what’s it about?” In that moment, Zach sounded vaguely professional.

“Here, I’ll just send you my draft and synopsis.” Izuku dropped in the file from the previous night.

“Lemme look…”

Silence again. For a minute. For another minute. Five minutes in Izuku heard a hacking noise, followed by silence again as Zach muted his microphone. Then, a few moments more and he was back.

“Mate, this is a fucking beauty. We’re both gonna probably be murdered, but holy shit will we die happy. Who the fuck suggested this idea?” Zach wheezed.

“Believe it or not, he sorta did,” Izuku confessed.

“Fucking amazing.”

Izuku couldn’t complain about Conspiracy’s editorial feedback.

Chapter End Notes
This is a smidge late because the weather has been abysmal. Please enjoy.
Toshinori was tempted to pass out on his doorstep. Sorely tempted. Endeavor had cooperated as best as he could, but All For One had done his homework and done it well. There wasn’t that much to talk about and both of them had left once Tsukauchi drew up short. Dissatisfaction didn’t quite cover the feeling. Toshinori hadn’t felt so helpless since Gran Torino had given him the fateful news so many years earlier or when young Midoriya had been taken…

Then he unlocked the front door his apartment, stepped in and he knew.

“Who’s there?” Toshinori barked into the darkness, pulling out his phone.

Then his feet left the ground and he was dragged along by a familiar set of feelers. Slapping face first into his kitchen floor, Toshinori heard the bubbling of his kettle.

“You certainly took your time. It’s not like Endeavor had anything of value to say,” All For One tartly commented from above. “I’d know.”

Toshinori hacked up what was almost certainly blood. “Can’t you knock? Doors are there for a reason.”

“I knock.” All For One dropped two teaspoons into two teacups. “Sometimes,” Toshinori heard mumbled.

“Pfft, aren’t you just going to string me up in a public place after some prolonged torture?” Toshinori growled. “I didn’t realise that you were so inefficient.” If All For One was here to cross off another person on his list, then there wasn’t much point in delaying the inevitable.

“I’m not here to kill you, Yagi,” All For One stressed. Then, to Toshinori’s shock All For One leaned over and threw him into a nearby chair. “I’m seeking a professional opinion about a sensitive matter,” was the prompt and malice lacking follow up. As it was, All For One wasn’t his normal, immaculately groomed self, but slightly tussled.

“And you seriously expect me to believe that?” Toshinori snorted, a teacup being slid in front of him. “If you haven’t noticed, I’m not exactly an expert in being criminal scum.”

All For One sighed. “Yagi,” All For One stressed again, “let me make myself clearer. I’m here for your professional opinion on a certain… ethical aspect of professional heroics.”

Toshinori coughed. “Alright, Midoriya, which aspect?”

All For One took the seat opposite and there was no sense of elation or glee or anything that remotely resembled previous encounters. No smile, no mockery. “How do you save someone who
doesn’t want to be saved? Do you act… or leave them to their fate?”

Toshinori gagged on a mouthful of tea that was probably poisoned. “What brought this on? You’ve never been interested in preserving life.”

“To the contrary, I’ve always been interested in preserving life,” All For One corrected, not looking in Toshinori’s direction. “It’s taken a backseat in more recent years though. I’ve had recent exposure which has made me… question the wisdom of my attitude.”

“Alright, pretending that you have something vaguely looking like a heart, go for it.” Toshinori had no idea why he was entertaining the lunatic. All For One was a sick person who played sick games. Yet, Toshinori wasn’t dead yet… and he did want that at least answered before he was nailed to a skyscraper in Tokyo’s CBD.

“I was around at the beginning and I was there to see the pro heroes system heralded in as the saviour of civilisation,” All For One accentuated his sarcasm with the wave of a hand. “The majority of people at the time were… decidedly unhappy with the Japanese government choosing a system from America which hadn’t been tested. It was invasive and breached their rights.”

“History books have entire chapters dedicated to those riots,” Toshinori grunted. Of course not everyone had been happy. All For One was one of them and look at how he behaved.

“They don’t have chapters dedicated to the concentration camps they used to contain the voices of dissent, though, do they? The unending use of emergency powers to contain the new threat,” All For One hissed.

Toshinori shook his head. “No…” He couldn’t really say much else, because he’d never heard about concentration camps. If All For One wasn’t outright lying and that was always a possibility.

“I’d expect not, since the government likes to pretend that pro heroes were always the vaunted and blessed members of society. They pretend that they don’t remember their sordid roots.” All For One sipped his tea. “Originally, they were paramilitary thugs dropping the jackboot on those of us who wanted the freedom to be ourselves. Heroes in name, but not in deeds,” he sneered.

“What’s your point?” Toshinori tapped impatiently. “Times have changed since then.”

“Of course times have changed, but not for the better. Pro heroes used to be military minded adults with that knowledge and qualification of the experiences they would see in their role.” All For One’s face darkened. “Now, instead of recruiting adults, they set their sights on children who’ve been subject to a century of indoctrination about the wonders of self-sacrifice. Children who later go to their deaths, while the government half-heartedly denounces U.A., as if the school’s security is why they die.” All For One raised a hand into an exaggerated shrug. “Perhaps if children weren’t involved in military matters, there wouldn’t be the increased risk of their death.”

“It’s been like that for a long time, now,” Toshinori grudgingly admitted. “I didn’t see you leaving Shigaraki out of that equation. You seem pretty happy to brainwash kids when it suits your needs,” Toshinori snorted over the edge of his teacup. All For One was full of it. Always had been, always will be, regardless of how much time passed him by.

“Tomura chose to be involved when he was an adult,” All For One drawled. “But you’re not in that category, are you? You too, are a pawn in that system, Yagi. An archetype crafted by a system that sees its citizens as expendable in a centuries long dispute to remain in control of the unknown. A system that churns out child soldiers and tells them that they’re worth nothing unless they’re in service of their glorious government.” Toshinori watched All For One’s teacup settle with a force.
that jostled the table.

“I chose to help people.” Toshinori shifted uncomfortably. For all of the disputes they’d been involved in over the years, All For One had never once implied that Toshinori was anything but a perpetrator. Toshinori was always emblematic of All For One’s hatred of the government. What was he angling at?

“But was your choice informed?” All For One insisted. “Did you have a full understanding of the woes that would befall you when you were fourteen years of age or younger? Of what an encounter with me would truly entail?”

If Toshinori was going to be honest, he had absolutely no idea at age fourteen that he’d be spending his latter years sans so many organs. All For One’s threat had only really registered once it happened. Until then, All Might, the number one hero had been invincible.

Then, All For One looked to be gone and so was his purpose and that of One For All. All For One had been the central cause of society’s troubles. At least so Toshinori had thought. Overhaul had been something of an alarming wakeup call, because kicking All For One from his position only gave rise to another evil that was perhaps even more incapable of humanity.

“No,” Toshinori reluctantly admitted. “I was already at the endpoint of smashing your face in.”

“If we were to head back two hundred years, you would not have said yes to taking One For All when Nana Shimura offered it to you,” All For One stated with far more certainty than Toshinori felt he had any right to use. He didn’t know anything about Toshinori’s teacher. “The propaganda and promotion of the pro heroes system tainted the public opinion throughout the years. Society has forgotten that the heroes and villains system was manufactured by the state, for a problem that didn’t exist. You became a mascot for government control and you, being the poor, clueless fool that you are, were utterly ignorant to it.” All For One folded his hands on the table, staring at some point over Toshinori’s shoulder.

“Versus what? Shigaraki running around, throwing tantrums and trying to kill everyone he doesn’t like? That’s not any better,” Toshinori pointed out, dripping with disbelief. “You’re saying that the pro heroes system sends kids to their deaths, but he’s not any better off than they are by your own words.”

“To the contrary, Tomura has self-preservation and values his wellbeing.” All For One’s head was bowed. “He has concern for his own safety.”

“I’m sure that’ll comfort the families of the people he’s murdered,” Toshinori growled. It wasn’t going to comfort Toshinori either with why Tenko Shimura was now Tomura Shigaraki.

“My son on the other hand, has no such issue with using his own death to further a communal good for people who will never care about him,” All For One carried on, ignoring Toshinori entirely, “and frequently expresses his ongoing regret for his continued living. And the longer I’m there, the less optimistic I am about saving him from himself.”

Toshinori fumbled to catch his teacup. “Wait wait wait, this is about young Midoriya?” Oh shit.

“Who else would it be about?” Irritation was now audible in All For One’s voice and furrowed brow. “Were you under the impression that I wouldn’t be concerned?”

“Yes,” Toshinori answered bluntly. And immediately took a blow to the side of his head, rocking him sideways. “You weren’t there for sixteen years, you bastard, that’s the natural assumption,”
Toshinori coughed through swimming vision.

“Because of you,” All For One snarled. “How do you think my family was being fed? Who do you think suffered when you tore through what I amassed?” All For One’s fingers were clawed and Toshinori edged slightly backwards. All For One already had tentacles, god knows what else he had.

“You killed Nana Shimura. What did she do to deserve that?” Toshinori spat back across the table.

“She, like you and her predecessors, followed the Chinese whispers line and not once questioned why I did what I did so long ago,” All For One sneered. “You never questioned why my brother had his Quirk. It was far easier for all of you to slap the label of villain onto me and call it a day, when that partisanship is why we’re both here in the first place. We’ve both been conscripted into a farce by a government that refuses to tell people what really happened.”

“You didn’t care about it before,” Toshinori pointed out.

“It wasn’t killing my son, before,” All For One admitted. “My brother made his choice with the full understanding of what it would entail. Izuku never had that benefit, that knowledge. He is the way he is because of idiots like you perpetuating myths and goals no child can meet without risk of death.”

“Your son wants to help people,” Toshinori stated. “Why are you so opposed to it?” All For One hadn’t done a single charitable act in the centuries he’d been on the planet and Toshinori wasn’t expecting him to start now.

“You utter hypocrite.” Toshinori was smacked a second time, throwing him from his chair to the tiled floor. “When he told you that he was Quirkless, you told him not to bother. You didn’t suggest anything like medicine, or engineering or law or any other field where he could better people without harm to himself. You didn’t suggest journalism, which he made it into on the merit of being himself.” Toshinori was lifted and flung once more. He hardly felt himself bounce. “You sent him into a field that was artificial, that would harm him for no reason when he could have achieved better results elsewhere. You are part of the problem.”

Toshinori could only remain where he ways, blood dripping from his mouth. Guess this explains why I’m here and not hanging from a building, Toshinori thought gloomily, can’t ream me for young Midoriya’s teaching in public. “You could’ve prevented it by being there for him.”

“No,” All For One refuted. “By age three and four he was thoroughly infatuated with your pathetic field. It was already too late when he was a toddler. Then,” All For One growled, almost animalistic, “the stupid children and their stupid parents drank from the same well of idiocy. Bakugou encouraged Izuku to leap from a building in the hope that he would have a Quirk in the next life.” He did what? Toshinori thought, mortified. Surely he hadn’t gone that far. Was that why All For One has targeted young Bakugou?

Silent expectant, All For One glared down at Toshinori from a shroud of wrath. “And where did you shatter his dreams, exactly, Toshinori Yagi?”

Toshinori wanted to throw up and it had nothing to do with his head trauma. “On the top of an apartment building,” he faintly whispered.

“And how close do you think you came to being responsible for his death?” All For One nudged him with a foot. “To finding his lifeless body on the concrete below?” Unrelenting, but the moment the thought had been planted, Toshinori didn’t need the bastard above him to know where it was going. “He doesn’t need to kill himself in this society, when the pro hero system is paid suicide for
children. All Izuku needs to do is die in the line of duty and he gets a heroic send off and a life insurance payout that’d make your accountant pale.” All For One spared no expense in enunciating every single word while grinding his heel into Toshinori’s aching ribs. “So tell me, Yagi, how do I save someone who doesn’t want to be saved?”

“You can start,” Toshinori grunted, “by not inflicting grievous bodily harm on everyone he or you have a problem with.”

“What other option is there when Bakugou was allowed to run wild for his entire life? Where do you think his contempt for weakness came from? Discrimination didn’t end overnight, it shifted targets and the government did nothing. You did nothing.” Toshinori was slammed back into the tiles. At least there wasn’t a great prospect of him having to clean the place up.

Toshinori didn’t bother with an attempt to get up. It was a wonder that he hadn’t been throttled yet. All For One, so full of glee and malice and mockery, was anything but, pacing back and forth in the confined space. “He needs therapy, then,” Toshinori gasped.

“Ah, yes, the same system that imprisoned Endeavor’s wife for his abuse of her. I’m sure that’ll assist Izuku,” All For One huffed. “Being locked away with no prospect of human contact for a decade. When I was young, inpatient care was a temporary solution. Now it’s prison in all but name. When was the last time Eri was taken out for a normal visitation anywhere?” All For One drawled, no doubt having a full understanding that Eri being in a secure facility meant that she wasn’t going anywhere.

“Endeavor was never going to be a great peace offering, you know,” Toshinori added on. “All it was going to do was upset him, especially after what you did to young Bakugou.” Even if All For One’s response was probably what many parents dreamed of doing to their kid’s bully.

All For One laughed, short, bitter, unhappy. “Didn’t I tell you, Yagi? Endeavor was never my peace offering. You are.”

Holy shi-

And darkness.

Zach’s glee wasn’t enough to mask the horrible feeling in Izuku’s stomach. There weren’t any complaints about the structure or grammar or the topic. In fact, Zach seemed rather smitten with the whole thing. “Do you mind if I translate it to English for simulpub?”

“Sure,” Izuku said somewhat faintly. Izuku had his doubts that Zach would take the article, but this response was far more than what he’d ever imagined. “Are you really sure about this?” Izuku might walk away from this, but Zach? Zach might not.

“Mate, with something this good, I can’t possibly say no. Just because we do some weird stuff doesn’t mean that we don’t do legit journalism as well,” Zach explained, slipping into English. “I know you must have a shitload of stuff in general from your main job. Even if Maki doesn’t wanna publish some of that shit, I can.” Izuku could almost hear Zach wink. “That way we won’t have to worry Noodles about any lawsuits.”

“Okay, I’ll send you some more later then? I’m having a day out with a friend, but I’m still worried about Hisashi turning up…” Izuku confessed.
“Don’t worry about that. I’ve got some business bullshit to talk about with him, I’ll see if I can buy you some time. Take care, little Midoriya!” Zach crowed and the call ended.

Izuku wasn’t quite sure if he’d made a mistake or not yet, but Zach would probably be very happy and very dead.

“Midoriya!” Todoroki called, almost springing down the path to the courtyard.

“How did it go?”

“We got approval!” Todoroki… shouted? The streak of red and white launched itself into the seat next to Izuku. “Mum’s allowed to leave!”

Izuku blinked and hurriedly shoved his laptop back into his bag. “That’s great, is she coming over for dinner?”

“No, we think she should stay away from the house and the doctors agreed. We’ve got an apartment lined up for next week, though and we can have a separate one there,” Todoroki explained, with the air of someone who was desperately restraining himself. “We need to do some shopping now and then we can see how Bakugou’s going.”

“I don’t know how Bakugou is still…” Izuku struggled.

“He’s alive, but unhappy. He woke up a bit ago. Your old man comes off as being a total sadist,” Todoroki shrugged and paused. “You know,” Todoroki looked away from Izuku, “if I knew that Bakugou treated you so badly before U.A., he probably would’ve been stretchered out of the tournament in the last round.”

Izuku felt himself turning red. Why did people keep talking about it? “You wouldn’t have needed to do that…”

“Of course not. I don’t entirely agree with what your father did, but clearly karma was having a delayed impact. It’s been one of those weeks,” Todoroki noted, tapping on his phone. “Fuyumi’s coming now for shopping.”

Izuku didn’t trust himself to respond. The last thing All For One needed to hear, know or have indicated to him that anything he did could be compared to a karmic event. All For One was perfectly capable of ruining lives without any further encouragement.

Shopping breezed past in a blink of an eye, Izuku caught with a bombardment of text messages which arrived faster than he could answer them.

Geez man, glad to hear you’re okay. We heard from AM that your long-lost dad showed up. Do we need to have words with him?

Midoriya, I’m relieved to know that you’re well after surgery. Please let me know if myself or the class can do anything to assist you in your recovery.

Big Boss, you’re alive! We need a meeting asap about the fashion line. Hatsume busted into the dorms and wanted some action. I have no idea what to do about her.

Midoriya, as soon as is expedient for you, please arrange for a meeting with Mei Hatsume. She wishes to undertake a role in our label. Your mother is happy for you to work out who is capable of
Deku, we made loads and loads of money! Your mum is a machine. I couldn’t believe what she said to the lawyer the other day. Product expansion is almost ready. Mum and dad are so excited.

Hey Midoriya, me and Hatsume will go over subject selection for the group project at dinner tonight. Todoroki gave us some warning, so don’t worry about us tripping over your father. Also, went to therapy last night. Not sure what to think of it yet, will keep you updated.

Midoriya Junior, you’ve been partaking in material sciences without me. I expect this to be remedied tonight. You’ve been warned.

Midoriya, glad to hear that Mineta got into to see you. We really weren’t sure if it was going to work. Everyone misses you.

Midoriya! I’m bringing cheese! Lots and lots of cheese! You’ve missed so many lunches.

Izuku, sweetheart, I’m glad to hear your father’s letting you go visit your friends. I’d be having some words with him if he said no. I’m glad he knows better, because it’s an improvement on how he used to be when we got married.

The list went on, leaving Izuku a gibbering wreck.

“They’re still texting you?” Todoroki asked, overloaded with numerous branded bags which he tossed into the back of the car.

“Yep.”

“Better not tell them you’re visiting Bakugou. I didn’t tell anyone what happened because the police were involved.”

With a great deal of effort, Izuku nodded and set his phone to do not disturb and they sped off to Kacchan’s hospital.

Kacchan grunted at them, sitting upwards in his bed, with his phone nearby. His face was twisted in a furious scowl that made Izuku wince as he entered.

“You’re awake! I’m so sorry, I had no idea that…” Izuku floundered for the words.

“Your dad would snap and be a psycho and land someone in hospital,” Todoroki finished. “It’s okay Midoriya, we know you wouldn’t deliberately do it to anyone.”

Kacchan nodded, made a talking gesture with one hand then extended the other hand towards it in a one fingered salute, before a small boom erupted from the talking hand.

“Is that… Shinsou?” Izuku hazarded a guess.

Kacchan nodded furiously, mouthing something foul no doubt.

“I think that was a death threat,” Todoroki observed. “It was a death threat, right?”

Kacchan nodded animatedly, slicing his hand in a vicious gesture.

“But, what about Hisashi?”
Kacchan shrugged and mouthed something unintelligible to Izuku’s eyes.

“Did you get that?” Izuku asked Todoroki, squinting at Kacchan.

“I think Bakugou called him a dick. I don’t know, I’m not great with lip reading. He’s a dick, right?”

Kacchan gave a thumbs up.

“You’re not going to… do anything are you? Next time he might actually kill you,” Izuku tried to convey, fidgeting with his hands.

Kacchan shook his head, drawing a “no” in the air.

“Really?”

Kacchan nodded.

“We don’t know what your father’s problem is Midoriya, but we don’t want him taking it out on you,” Todoroki almost seemed to translate. “Bakugou said he seems familiar, but he can’t pick from where, so he’s going to wait before upsetting him a second time.”

“Please don’t do it a second time.” Kacchan wasn’t going to survive a second time. “Did you guys talk about this before I was here?”

Kacchan pointed at his phone.

It made Izuku feel oddly warm and tingly as Kacchan rudely gestured at them then at the door as a team of stern faced nurses entered the room.

“Next stop, the old man,” Todoroki announced as they pulled into yet another hospital carpark.

“We should start a shuttle service,” Fuyumi sighed. “This is murder on the petrol.”

“I don’t think he’s going to expecting regular visits with school,” Izuku hesitantly suggested. “Hopefully today’s just a one off.”

“He’ll also have rehab to worry about and we won’t be allowed in for most of that,” Todoroki added.

“Don’t worry, we’ll manage. Everyone out!”

Izuku found himself glaring at a copy of *Quirk Focus* in the waiting room as they passed on their way to High Dependency. Todoroki had to be gently pushed into Endeavor’s room.

“Shouto, Fuyumi… Midoriya,” Endeavor acknowledged.

“Dad,” Todoroki said shortly.

“How are you feeling?”

What followed was the most awkward twenty minutes Izuku had sat through in his entire life, a conversation between father and son exchanged in irritated grunts and sounds that didn’t quite count as a formal language. It made Izuku’s retorts against All For One seem literary in comparison. Empty exchanges about school and the industry. Nothing like the interrogations Izuku had to endure about
his hobbies and personal life.

“Midoriya!” Endeavor barked.

Izuku jumped. “Yes?”

“Be careful. I don’t know who got me, but there’s been an increase in crime since All Might’s retirement. You already were on the receiving end of it once. Make sure you sleep, take care of yourself and be on the lookout in future,” Endeavor lectured.

That… almost sounded concerned. “I will,” Izuku confirmed. Not that Izuku wasn’t already trying to fix his sleep, but his rest hadn’t been peaceful for a long time.

“Shouto, make sure he takes care of himself this time. I don’t want to have to escort him through another crowd of savages.”

“That I can do.”

Izuku desperately wanted his chair to eat him. It was the most civil exchange between them all evening and it wasn't even about his own child.

Izuku had made a horrible mistake as the three of them bowled over a series of intrepid reporters stationed at the front of the house. The moment he crossed the threshold of the Todoroki household, he was bundled through the door in a swirl of excitement, hands, shrieks and cheers. With his feet no longer on the ground, he was hoisted deeper into the premises.

“HE LIVES!” Someone that might’ve been Kaminari screamed into his ear.

“Kirishima, put him down! He has a broken arm!” Ida yelled from somewhere nearby. “What is wrong with you people? Put him down, now! He hasn’t been gone that long.”

“Aw, no breakdancing, Boss Man? We had so much fun last time.”

“Where’s Bakugou? He up and vanished on us. He’s not answering his texts either. Does anyone have the number for his parents?”

“Maybe it’s better that he’s not here. Traditional housing needs more delicate care.”

Yanked back and forth, the voices blurred together into a loud cacophony of echoing sounds.

“How’s your dad?”

“He’s insane.”

“He can’t be that bad.”

“He is,” someone that must’ve been Todoroki called from somewhere in the house.

“Midoriya’s dad is terrifying,” Mineta blubbered as Fuyumi served the first course.

“Dude, you should have said something. We would’ve come over to run distraction.”
“How can you run distraction and be at school? Do you wanna repeat a year or what man?”

“Oohhhhh, tempura prawns!”

“Gimme!”

Izuku was starting to regret All For One not being slightly firmer in putting his foot down on the dinner. His head ached and his arm throbbed viciously from the rough handling from before.

“What’s next?”

“Some type of noodles?”

“Man, this is goooooood.”

The atmosphere itself was… comforting, but maybe it would’ve been comfortable if it was a week later when the pain had somewhat lessened. Izuku couldn’t blame Todoroki, because it was already a far better experience than being trapped with All For One. If anything, Todoroki’s rescue attempt had been enhanced by All For One’s attack on Endeavor, which naturally meant that All For One had brought this upon himself. No Endeavor to stop them meant that Endeavor’s children had full run of the house.

“What’s next?”

“We have homemade wagashi and dumplings,” Todoroki droned.

“You didn’t need to do that! They take ages to make!”

“Oh my god, sweets!”

“And tea!”

It was probably a good thing that the rest of class didn’t know that this was as much a celebratory dinner for Todoroki’s mother as it was Izuku’s escape. The last thing they needed was to have that conversation while the media was stationed outside. Attention on Endeavor’s wife the last thing the poor woman needed.

About forty seconds after the conclusion of dessert, a bloated Izuku was dragged into a spare bathroom by Mineta and Hatsume, the door locked behind them and the world outside was muted. The walls were covered with an impromptu display of plans and Mineta’s apprehension was almost tangible. Hatsume’s base for the evening.

“We need to pick a topic. Aizawa-sensei’s been making scary expressions and you’re the only one who’s not in trouble with the faculty. I don’t care what we pick anymore,” Mineta whimpered. Whatever they had them doing for supplementary work must’ve been rough.

“Didn’t we work out something to do with the Support items coverage in the mainstream media?” Izuku frowned, remember that one had also been All For One’s idea.

“What about reporting of Support item patents and licences in the media?” Hatsume hummed. “I like it, certainly, but only if you’re capable of examining the laws around it. Perhaps we should do some in-house experiments for support item portrayals in the media.” If Izuku hadn’t been exposed to All For One, he would’ve found her unhinged smile far more frightening.

“I don’t know about in-house experiments, but we can cover why the laws for Support item use
aren’t covered by the media very often,” Mineta nodded frantically. “I did some pre-research and only one mainstream outlet in Japan that talks about it regularly and that’s the *Heroes Mirror.*”

Izuku groaned. “Really?”

“Well,” Hatsume agreed.

“Why is it always the *Mirror*?”

“They’re a tabloid, it’s what they do,” Mineta shrugged. “Their coverage of the Mount Lady vs Midnight feud was excellent. I had no idea that Midnight’s original costume got the laws changed.”

“Fine,” Izuku sighed.

Forty minutes later, Izuku staggered back out into the party proper.

“I really need to sleep,” Izuku sighed to Ida. “I haven’t had time to just sit down all day.”

“That’s fine, Midoriya, we can catch up another day.” Ida nodded to Yaoyorozu. “Alright, everyone out! Midoriya needs to sleep! Clean up and leave, double time!”

As quickly as the swarm came, they left, a hurricane of rubbish deposited into bags and “bye Midoriya”’s screeched as the mass stampeded out the door and through the media pack without a single pause. Izuku stared. He stuck his head out the door and stared some more, then he turned to Ida.

“Did you guys plan to do that?”

“We have to come and go as a group because of the media,” Yaoyorozu sighed. “It’s not the prettiest thing to look at, but it stops anyone from being cornered on the way out. We’ll sneak out the back door while Todoroki makes non-comments about his father to the press out front.”

The Class President and Vice President said their goodbyes and Izuku was left in blissful silence.

“That must’ve been exhausting, Izuku,” Fuyumi fussed. “Here, you can sleep in my brother’s old room. I’ve left your clothing to the side there for when you get up.” Fuyumi lead Izuku to a reasonably sized room.

“Old room? Where is he now?” Izuku wondered aloud through a yawn.

“We… don’t know. A lot of us just packed up and left to get away from dad. I stayed to make sure Shouto didn’t starve,” Fuyumi quietly whispered. “We haven’t seen him in years, but he and dad had the same sort of personality.”

Izuku winced. “That must’ve been… loud,” he concluded lamely.

“Very,” Fuyumi nodded. “Well, happy sleeping. I need to make sure no one destroyed the mats.”

Izuku changed and promptly fell into the soft mass of blankets and quilting which surrounded the futon.

It didn’t fill Izuku with confidence that neither hide nor hair of All For One had been seen the whole day. If he wasn’t stalking Izuku, then what was he doing?

Chapter End Notes
And here's one I prepared earlier.
Toshinori could feel every molecule of his body being pulled apart. He couldn’t scream, something was wedged between his teeth. He couldn’t see. Then, nothing, he lay there panting, a horrible boiling feeling in his stomach. Phantom hands moved away and a more solid pair wrapped around his shoulders.

“What. Did. You. Do?” Toshinori snarled at All For One, who was dragging him into a seated position.

“Patience is a virtue, Yagi,” All For One murmured only just within Toshinori’s hearing. “So is courtesy when a child is present,” was the even lower attached comment.

“A what?” Toshinori asked, his tongue feeling like lead.

Why would All For One be mentioning a kid unless-

“Hi, Mr Yagi. Are you feeling better now?” Sweet and familiar, Toshinori leaned around All For One to see Eri waving brightly from a blanket fort.

“Little Eri? Shouldn’t you be in hospital?” Toshinori stared between them.

What the fu-

“They said visiting Izuku is okay,” Eri beamed, holding a bowl of what had to be sweets.

“I might have neglected to mention to the hospital that Izuku won’t be available until lunch,” All For One said all too casually with a broad shrug that did absolutely nothing for his innocence.

“You abducted a child from a hospital?” Toshinori hissed to All For One. “Young Midoriya will not approve.”

“You think so, eh?” All For One smiled broadly in a manner that didn’t suit his face. “Eri, can you please pass the mirror?”

Oh god, not that rag, Toshinori thought to himself. Disembowelment for a second time was a better experience.

“What’s with that look, Yagi? Surely the paper hasn’t tainted your views on mirrors?” All For One smirked, passing over a highly polished mirror and not a newspaper.

“Thank god, for a minute there I thought you were going to make me read the Opinions page,” Toshinori sighed with relief as he took the offered item. “What’s this for?” Toshinori held the mirror at arm’s length.

“See for yourself,” All For One encouraged, which in Toshinori’s view, was never a good thing.
With no real choice, Toshinori held up the mirror and promptly choked. “What the holy fu-!”

-Only to be slapped across the knuckles by All For One. “There’s a child present,” All For One hissed, failing to conceal his shaking from Toshinori. Bastard was loving this.

Toshinori coughed dryly and cleared his throat, his hand lifting in reflex for blood that never came. With a hand that wasn’t emaciated, a side that didn’t hurt and a face that was far too young for the age Toshinori felt. From the lounge, Eri giggled. “Eri, what happened?” Toshinori carefully asked, mindful of All For One still being within reach.

“I rewound you!” Eri beamed. “I already had a test run on Mr Midoriya and since you two got injured at the same time, it was sorta the same thing. I… don’t know if your Quirk will come back though. I was only trying to fix you being sick,” she nodded furiously with a bowl of sweets. “Mr Midoriya helped.” From Toshinori’s attempt at flexing, One For All was still absent, which wasn’t a surprise when Eri was targeting physical health and not his whole body...

Toshinori blinked and turned to glare at All For One. “And who had this idea?”

“Izuku did,” All For One promptly answered, examining his nails in an exaggerated manner.

“Did he now?” Toshinori managed to bite down the growl.

“I heard from reliable sources that he was attempting to stave off your death… so why not have some competent medical treatment and cut seven years off your age at the same time?” All For One languidly explained, his arms raised in a wide shrug.

“Oh, so that’s why you were so eager to get Recovery Girl out the door,” Toshinori snapped with as much restraint he could manage. It didn’t stop Eri from seemingly finding them hugely entertaining when Toshinori glanced over, watching her fight down laughter to chew her sweets.

“And how has it been since that happened?” All For One smugly purred. “I’d assume OH&H&S has gone through the roof with a more responsible medical staff? Student injuries have surely dropped with them being a lasting problem now instead of having a quick fix?”

“I don’t know.” Toshinori could only speak for his class and he’d definitely seen Aizawa’s Quirk come out to play a lot more often than he once had. Students couldn’t afford to be crippled for weeks at a time. Toshinori paused. “You did this deliberately,” he breathed.

“Of course I did. Izuku’s exposed to enough risk without the school itself trying to hospitalise him,” All For One snapped.

Toshinori deflated, jostled back to the previous conversation. “Yeah, at risk,” Toshinori said flatly. What the hell was he going to do about that? If All For One, the resident master of emotional manipulation was at a loss, then how did he expect Toshinori to help? Providing All For One actually intended to help his son. All For One by all accounts didn’t need much help in the advice department from his lifespan alone. “What exactly do you want to do about that?” Toshinori phrased as indirectly as possible. Young Midoriya was an incredible person, but his deeds alone should’ve been a confirmation. If young Midoriya couldn’t accept his own achievements…

“Izuku’s problem is that he’s unable to see the impact he has on others,” All For One delicately worded. “The counselling of Todoroki, little Eri being saved, the capture of Stain, Bakugou’s rescues on numerous occasions,” All For One seemingly couldn’t help but hiss. “A small sample, but Izuku needs to see the consequences of his actions, both positive and negative and have those
stressed to him.” Toshinori watched All For One inclined his head. “Unfortunately, I gave away my goodwill by spending so much time away from them, so he’s not going to listen to me.”

“You want me to show him the consequences of his actions?” Toshinori clarified.

“He listens to you, where he doesn’t listen to me or his mother. Aizawa may be of use as well, but it can’t be me,” All For One confirmed, his eyes fixed on a point above Toshinori’s shoulder. “Both the good and the bad. He needs feedback to link him back with reality instead of the damage Bakugou and the rest did to him over the years.”

“A therapist would be better for this,” Toshinori argued.

“Yes, I’m sure it’ll go spectacularly well when they run back to the police as part of mandatory reporting and tell them all about my day job,” All For One sarcastically offered.

“Owning a newspaper isn’t that bad, is it?” Eri asked, as though she was watching a particularly educational TV programme.

“It is when it’s the Heroes Mirror.”

“Please, we’re off-topic.”

“Fine, I’ll try but he needs professional help.”

“I’ll consider it.” All For One flicked on a monstrous TV and handed the remote to Eri. “Yagi, would you mind assisting me for a moment?” All For One’s head jerked towards a hallway and Toshinori managed to refrain from groaning as he followed him over.

Having organs again was… an experience. That furious boiling in his stomach for instance or the dryness of his throat.

“Yagi, your stomach hurts because you’re hungry,” All For One commented. “Stop touching it, I won’t be ripping out anymore organs for now.”

All For One was right about the hunger, but if there was anything Toshinori trusted less than All For One himself it was the archfiend’s cooking. “What do you want?” Toshinori hissed, gazing around the corner at Eri’s bobbing head as she followed the costumed character on the TV, fists digging deep into an oversized salad bowl of mixed sweets.

“A… small request,” All For One squeezed out.

“What?”

“From the reports I obtained, Eri’s Quirk was responsible for the disappearance of her father,” All For One half asked, half stated.

Oh, Toshinori thought to himself. “That’s what we were told by the gang. If you think that can be believed,” Toshinori snorted derisively.

“See, that’s the thing Yagi, I don’t think that they should be believed on the basis of how her Quirk operates,” All For One murmured in his ongoing undertone.

“Spill it.” Toshinori braced himself, as was all you could when around a Midoriya who was about to lecture on Quirks.

“Eri rewound Izuku during his encounter with Overhaul to restore the damage he was doing to
himself in maximising One For All,” All For One stated and Toshinori nodded with more than a little disgruntlement. “Yet, why wasn’t he immediately erased if her power operates on all or nothing? He repeatedly caused damage to create a longer chronology of injury events for Eri to rewind, but by all accounts, it’s a painful procedure that still takes time for the effect to manifest. Eri’s father supposedly ceased to be upon the first activation of her Quirk, but how likely is that to be possible without the Quirk being near maturity? You could suggest a burst…but it’s rarer than the Quirk itself. Even now Eri strains to rewind a period of ten years while encouraged,” tumbled from All For One’s mouth. “That being said…”

Toshinori grit his teeth. “How did she erase her father of probably more than twenty years before anyone could respond if winding young Midoriya back minutes was so obvious to everyone and took so long? She wasn’t aware of it at any point.”

“As far as the notes are concerned,” All For One continued, “what Eri’s grandfather was told came purely from the girl’s mother… Eri supposedly reached out to touch him and her father ceased to be, with only his clothes left behind him and somehow not a single police report was filed by anyone and there was no investigation into her Quirk. Normally missing person reports of upstanding citizens are followed up…” Toshinori supposed the distinction mattered when the police cared so little about missing criminals. Tsukauchi was working on it, but he was one man in a sea of police who couldn’t care less about local criminals going missing.

“Then you have the mother conveniently skipping off into the sunset after abandoning her daughter as being cursed,” Toshinori indignantly concluded. There was something off about what happened. “I can’t believe I’m saying this…but I think you’re right.” All For One seemed more put out by the shared views, from his slight frown. “Young Togata’s going to kick in someone’s front door along with young Midoriya at this rate,” Toshinori groaned. If either of them had the slightest implication that Eri’s mother was in fact the cause of what happened and indirectly caused Nighteye’s death, heads were going to roll.

“All For One?” All For One asked, an eyebrow raised.

“Mirio Togata. He’s young Midoriya’s senior and worked with him at Sir Nighteye’s internship. He had his Quirk erased by Overhaul’s formula while saving Eri,” Toshinori reluctantly told All For One. “He’s also on the list of people young Midoriya saved… even if Nighteye was harsh to young Midoriya because of his favouritism towards young Togata.”

“Harsh?” All For One, deceptively casual, gestured towards another room in a manner that didn’t inspire confidence. In a louder voice, “Eri, Mr Yagi is going to help me with Izuku’s room. Please feel free to come over when you’ve finished eating.”

“Okay!” She chirped back. The poor thing would be awake for the next week with the amount of sugar All For One had given her.

“Should she be eating that?”

“The staff aren’t particularly kind to her,” All For One nodded and Toshinori grimaced. *Something else on the to do list.*

Toshinori still eyed the fiend suspiciously. “Actually, help with what?”

All For One waved Toshinori in after him and Toshinori stared and whistled lowly. “I can’t believe you’re letting him get away with that.” Toshinori gazed, with more than a little hint of awe, at the gigantic line art of himself covering the wall opposite young Midoriya’s spacious bed.
“Izuku isn’t in a position to be doing much painting…” All For One trailed off.

“You want me to do it,” Toshinori glared at All For One.

“Of course not. We’re going to have a friendly chat about Sir Nighteye’s rampant favouritism while we work out which shade of blue Izuku would like for your cape. I’m thinking ultramarine blue for that and cadmium red for the primary colour of the suit…” All For One was ever so cordial, but the way his left hand clawed immediately gave him away. “Now, what was it Sir Nighteye was doing again?”

“You know you can’t kill him a second time, right?” Toshinori groaned, reaching for a brush and feeling no customary twinge of pain from the old wound and no shortness of breath.

“Where there’s a will, there’s a way,” All For One hummed.

Strictly speaking, of all of the things Toshinori had done over the years, having an impromptu parent teacher meeting with someone who’d attempted to kill him in the years previous still counted as the strangest and most mind boggling of them all.

“Midoriya, the old man sent a text message for you,” Todoroki’s voice sounded in Izuku’s ear. “And breakfast is ready.”

Izuku just about flew out of the futon, stumbling to his feet. He half expected All For One to have blown the door off its hinges or ignored it entirely before Izuku had even woken up. That didn’t seem have happened yet, but Endeavor? “Endeavor did what?”

“See for yourself,” Todoroki handed over his phone to Izuku.

Shouto, Midoriya hasn’t been active for a few months due to his previous injuries. Inform him that he needs to undertake hours with an agency to maintain his provisional registration. I’ve been informed about the legal action his parents are taking against U.A. and the probability that they will attempt to block his attempts at completing these hours. Inform him as well that, using his police contacts, he will be able to nominate a substitute linking identification number in his reports to log his hours without it being disclosable to the public, including his parents. Centipeder and Bubble Girl have promised their discretion.

Endeavor

Izuku read the message twice. On the second time it sank in, “Did he just…?”

“He was one of the people guarding you in the hospital when you were taken in.” Izuku felt Todoroki pry the phone from his hand. “He… would have seen you at your worst when the ambulance arrived. He didn’t talk about it, but Fuyumi heard the dispatch and let me know…” Todoroki shrugged, leaving Izuku at even more of a loss for words. “Being under guard meant it was pretty bad.”

“I don’t remember, but Endeavor doing anything like this is weird.” Not quite as weird as abducting a child and using their Quirk to bring your son back from the dead degree of weird, but Endeavor showing any awareness beyond his own direct interests was bizarre.

“Fuyumi saw it first on the lock screen and almost had a heart attack.”
“Just looking at it almost gave me a heart attack.”

Then Izuku’s phone alert sound and he leapt another kilometre into the air. Fumbling for it, Izuku read the message.

_Izuku, please be home in time for lunch. Either I can pick you up or Todoroki’s family can drop you off. A guest from your school will be over to discuss how the faculty intends to move forward with your education._

“Uh oh.” No teachers were scheduled to visit Izuku yet. Only the students were meant to be coming over with work. Who was going to be there?

“That’s not good. Is he going to attack them as well?” Todoroki peered over Izuku’s shoulder.

“I thought he let me go too easily.” Izuku tried to fight down a surge of butterflies. All For One near anyone was very very bad. Aizawa-sensei or All Might were the most likely candidates for that meeting and the last thing All For One needed was Erasure or an opportunity to have an attempt at All Might. All Might who couldn’t defend himself.

“Speaking from experience, he probably mentioned that specifically to get you back over there early,” Todoroki nodded knowingly. “All of the teachers are too well known for him to get away with anything.”

“I’d rather not give him an opportunity to try it let alone get away with it.” Could Aizawa-sensei negate more than one Quirk at a time? He said it worked on the activation mechanism which allowed Quirks to be used, but was All For One’s loadout the same as other Quirks?

“Don’t panic. We’ll have breakfast and then we’ll work it out,” Todoroki patted him on the back.

DING!

Izuku groaned. “What now?”

_Little Midoriya, that article’s coming out tomorrow. Big Midoriya is probably going to horrifically murder us so make sure your will is up to date and that your loved ones are informed. Also, your fee’s in your nominated account._

_Your boy,_

_Zach_

“Well, in any event, I’ll probably wake up dead tomorrow.”

Todoroki didn’t dignify it with a response and Izuku was carted off to try Fuyumi’s noodles. Over the meandering conversation, Izuku texted back to All For One that he was being dropped off and that the latter’s presence wasn’t required.

All For One responded with a sad face. Izuku felt like tossing the phone out of the nearest window.

“All For One responded with a sad face. Izuku felt like tossing the phone out of the nearest window.

“Ready?” Fuyumi called over her shoulder.

“Not really?” Izuku said in small voice, as he texted Mei Hatsume. He needed some way to hide his appearance from the media if he was going to take Endeavor’s advice, which after reading the rules, he was going to have to take. What it meant in reality was acting under a separate pseudonym.
entirely. The difficult part would be managing it under All For One’s nose.

*Hi Hatsume, I encountered some logistics difficulties in my completion of allocated duties. Please call when you have a spare hour so we can troubleshoot.*

Entirely too soon, they arrived and Izuku left the car far more slowly than he’d first entered it.

“Good luck!” Fuyumi called. “We’ll wait here for a minute in case you need to run for it.”

Shaking, Izuku nodded and sped up the floors to the apartment. He knocked.

“It’s open!” All For One’s voice wafted from deep within.

With no small amount of hesitation, Izuku slunk in, aiming for the voices which came from his room.

He looked through the door. He stared.

“All Might? Eri?”

All Might was manning a detailing brush, carefully going over Izuku’s line art with a book of traditional style comic art for reference open beside him. Not too far away, Eri and All For One were critically debating who else were worthy enough to make it on the wall.

“Ah, young Midoriya!” All Might turned around and Izuku smothered a scream.

“What… the…” Izuku’s brain gestured between Eri, All For One and All Might. “Eri, did Hisashi make you…?” Izuku choked out. All For One wasn’t doing himself any favours, having the expression of someone bracing for a nuclear blast. “What did you do?” Izuku barked at All For One.

“I assisted Eri in repairing Yagi’s unseemly state of being.”

“He jumped me after I came back from Endeavor,” All Might disgruntledly added, with one last flick of his brush before he put it down.

“You didn’t even ask?” Izuku yelled at All For One.

“Do you think he would have said yes?”


“You know what young Midoriya, Eri and I will get lunch served,” and All Might picked up Eri and fled from the room with a speed Izuku hadn’t seen since before he’d lost One For All.

“Aren’t you happy that he’s capable of stomaching normal food?” All For One coaxed.

“The end result does not justify the means,” Izuku heaved. “You can’t do that to someone without asking. Not to mention Eri. Did Eri know that he didn’t know?”

“Technically, but… his quality of life outweighed… our past differences,” All For One tentatively put forward.

And sent Izuku’s brain skidding to a halt. “What. What are you angling at?”

“If Yagi drops dead well ahead of his time, it would have a disastrous impact on your health,” All For One shrugged. “Instead of being a mere Symbol of Peace, Yagi could have more utility as a…”
“Peace offering,” Izuku finished. “I have absolutely no idea how you made it to your age.”

“By being-”

“That was rhetorical,” Izuku growled. “Out.”

“Done?” Eri waved cheerfully.

“For now,” All For One sighed. “Until he verbally eviscerates me again.”

“No talking about evisceration at the table,” Izuku snapped. He turned to All Might, “are you okay?”

All Might didn’t pause in scarfing down what looked like roast beef and potatoes, instead giving a thumbs up while inhaling more than what Izuku had ever seen him eat in all the time he’d known him.

“How didn’t you two maim each other?” Izuku reached for the salad, feeling more lost than ever.

“Probably because I was here,” Eri whispered conspiratorially across the table.

“I was engaged listening to complaints about other idiots in the industry,” All For One nodded.

All Might grunted around a chicken wing and mimed a paintbrush.

“You know what, I don’t care,” and Izuku shoved his fork into his beef and attempted to ignore All For One’s extremely pleased expression.

Beyond Eri’s chatting about how boring hospital was and how all the tests were equally boring, All For One and All Might put up a magnificent attempt at maintaining civility, as a bowl of chocolate mousse made its way around the table. Izuku carefully supervised the amount Eri was allowed to have, even as she frantically attempted to reach for it.

Without another word, Izuku left the table and staggered to his lounge, flicking on the most senseless garbage show he could find.

“Is he okay?” Eri asked, even as Izuku’s eyes began to droop.

“Depends on your definition of okay…”

“Who’s taking Eri back?” Izuku slurred and without much ado a blanket was dropped over him.

“Should he be sleeping this much?”

“He’s a week after a surgery and pain leaves people fatigued. I doubt he slept well last night without painkillers…”

Izuku drifted off to a debate on post-op painkillers.

Mirio Togata had far too much time on his hands for a U.A. student. Well, being held back a year on practical scores didn’t help. Sprawled on the floor of his room following another hospital appointment, he struggled to think of something productive to do. U.A. still wasn’t letting him take the same practicals as everyone else, but that was okay, he could still do plenty to help people. Sir’s
agency were happy to have him. Losing his Quirk was a setback and everyone had setbacks at some point. Unlike everyone, this one could be fixed once Eri knew how her Quirk worked. It was just a matter of time.

Of course, the doctors weren’t so optimistic. He wasn’t meant to hear that particular conversation between them and his parents, but that wasn’t going to stop him. Midoriya had mentioned a Quirkless vigilante who still managed to take out villains and save people. He could do it.

“Mirio, there’s someone at the door for you,” his dad’s voice broke into his thoughts. “He says he’s Izuku Midoriya’s father.”

“Midoriya has a father?” Mirio asked before he could stop himself.

“From the extremely disgruntled expression on his face, I’d say yes,” his dad said, retracting his head through the door.

“Invite him in, I’m coming!” Mirio bounced from his room and skidded to a halt within his kitchen, where a dark-haired man was leaning against the benchtops. “Ah, Mr Midoriya? You wanted to speak to me about something?” The moment the elder Midoriya looked up, Mirio could see the family resemblance, even if the younger Midoriya had a slightly rounder face than his father. 

“Mirio Togata, I presume?” His voice was deeper as well.

“Yes, how can I help you?” Mirio edged closer.

“I wasn’t available when my son commenced his internship with Sir Nighteye’s agency,” Mr Midoriya began and Mirio felt his stomach start to sink. “His teacher only recently saw fit to inform me of the risks that he was exposed to while carrying out the rescue of a young girl and I would like some additional details on Sir Nighteye’s treatment of my son.”

Oh boy, it was one of those conversations. A creasing of the eyebrow, a mildly hostile tone of voice, clasped hands… Mirio figured that if Nighteye was still alive that having this man at his front door wouldn’t have ended well. “I’ll tell you as much as I can, but Nighteye had a lot of private conversations with Midoriya that I wasn’t in,” Mirio struggled to express. “I only saw how he treated Midoriya as part of the team and he seemed to treat your son mostly the same as the rest of us, but… Maybe a bit more strict because he was new…” At least Mirio figured that it was the case. Public relations were important to Nighteye.

“You don’t know what happened behind closed doors,” Mr Midoriya sighed. “Unfortunate. You’re not aware of the blatant favouritism you were showed and the impact it had on my son’s mental health? That Sir Nighteye engaged in relentless bullying of him due to All Might being Izuku’s teacher?” There was an edge to his voice and Mirio stared, watching the darkened shadow’s progression across Mr Midoriya’s face, his fingers now drumming the counter.

“What…” Nighteye could be strict, but bullying? He had treated Mirio with nothing but respect, even if Midoriya was on the receiving end of his eccentricities. “What do you mean by bullying?” Surely Mr Midoriya was being oversensitive... Nighteye didn’t hold what had happened against All Might. Never.

“Sir Nighteye patently dismissed my son’s entire set of contributions to society on account of his depression from countless years of bullying and abuse. He referred to him as humourless and called him unworthy of being All Might’s student, because my son can’t smile like an idiot in front of cameras as one would expect from a performing seal.” Mr Midoriya’s expression hadn’t changed,
but his feral tone of voice and sheer malice creeped through Mirio like a sheet of frost. There was no hint of humour, no sign of a joke. “I’m questioning whether or not legal action should be raised against the agency for the psychological and physical harm he experienced while under their care.” It was at that moment that Mirio’s brain decided to remind him that Inko Midoriya was already in the process of suing U.A. into the ground and he gulped. “Sir Nighteye was engaged in a feud with All Might and saw fit to take it on my son who was under his care. My son who continues to suffer due to it.”

“Is that… is that why he offered me a hypothetical Quirk?” Mirio asked faintly and felt like he wanted to throw up. Midoriya’s entire demeanour the whole time… “I didn’t… I didn’t think it was because of that. Nighteye’s entire office was covered in All Might merchandise. It didn’t seem to bother him.”

“Your mentor cared more about the show Yagi put on for the public than he did about the wishes of the person,” Mr Midoriya hissed. “All Might wished for my son to be treated kindly and Sir Nighteye was completely incapable of basic human decency towards a child. It was the wishes part that Nighteye couldn’t respect and my son suffered for it,” Mr Midoriya explained with no small amount of vehemence. “My son received that invitation purely to facilitate harassment.”

“Really?” Come to think of it, Nighteye didn’t have all that many interns in the time Mirio had been in the agency. “Where did you hear about it?”

“From All Might,” Mr Midoriya answered while frowning. “My son is reluctant to discuss these matters with me. He feels that my responses to the harassment he receives are… extreme.” Mirio didn’t really know the elder Midoriya well enough to comment, but Mirio would be on the side of suggesting that Mr Midoriya didn’t think whatever he was doing was extreme enough. At least from the grate in his voice. Mirio hadn’t known… but he should have known. The signs had always been there.

Had Mirio only been invited for the same reason? A sign of Sir Nighteye’s outrage with All Might’s decision making? Was that all Mirio had been to him? Midoriya had been treated so poorly for a simple difference of opinion. “I’m so sorry… I can’t apologise for Sir Nighteye, but I’ll make sure I apologise to your son for not questioning it!” Mirio dipped into a deep bow. “I wish I knew about this when it happened. I would have said something.”

“That would be appreciated, but the damage is done,” Mr Midoriya said with some finality. “I don’t know why society is so stupid to think that every pro hero is capable of caring for children because of their status when it’s clearly not the case,” Mr Midoriya inclined his head, fingers splayed on the counter and twitching in what Mirio guessed was suppressed rage.

“I understand that you’re upset, but Nighteye was the first to defend us from other pro heroes talking smack about us,” Mirio hurriedly explained.

“It’s a shame he couldn’t use that to defend those under his care from himself. In all honesty, Togata… if Overhaul hadn’t killed Sir Nighteye, I probably would have in light of what I’ve discovered.” From the aura of dread that clung to the irate parent, Mirio didn’t doubt it happening metaphorically. “He got off rather lightly…” Complete financial and reputational ruin, piledrived into the ground by the Midoriya family legal team. Nighteye had at least escaped dealing with this man.

Mirio nodded dumbly. “If you say so.” There wasn’t anything else Mirio could say… he hadn’t known.

“Thank you for your assistance,” Mr Midoriya dipped into a slight bow, his hair flopping slightly as he did so. “It’s clear that you weren’t aware of Nighteye’s grudge. Don’t worry about seeing me out.
I need to have a word with your father before I leave.”

“Take care and tell your son hello for me,” Mirio bowed.

“I will,” Mr Midoriya assured him and Mirio fled as his dad stuck his head back into the room.

Mirio hadn’t cried himself to sleep since Nighteye had died… but with what Mr Midoriya had said, he may as well have died a second time.

Izuku was perfectly aware that he’d dozed off while watching some nameless reality show. He’d briefly woke up to the late-night news on his customary lounge. Something about Kamui Woods being arrested a while back for a weird costume change? Who knows? What he didn’t understand, through a haze that was part sleep and part aching brain, was why someone was stroking his face as he slept wrapped in sheets that distinctly weren’t on a lounge.

Izuku slowly opened his eyes. “Oh, it’s you.”

“Hello, Izuku,” All For One murmured, peeling his hand away.

“Why is it,” Izuku yawned, “that every time I wake up you’re doing something creepy?”

“I have sixteen years of parenting to catch up on,” All For One said simply, curling around Izuku who could only faintly slap at him with a partially restrained hand.

“Can you do it… somewhere…”

Izuku drifted off, only vaguely aware of All For One’s fingers uncoiling themselves from an arm.

Far away, Mirio felt a breeze and reached for a quilt that wasn’t there, on a surface that wasn’t his bed, with a hand that was strangely cold. Eyes flicking open, he stared upwards. The ceiling of his room was missing, as were his clothes. At least no one stole the living room’s TV, Mirio thought, then he blinked and stared at his other arm. His other arm which was phased partially through the floor. And he shrieked into the night until his parents came running, his father doubled over and stumbling, puzzled looking as though something important was missing even as he hobbled over to Mirio.

Mirio never really questioned his father’s uncontained joy at the re-emergence of Permeation. Parents are meant to be happy for their kids, right?

Chapter End Notes

Here you go.

Silver666 did some nuts panels of the last chapter, check it out:
Article of a Cryptid

Chapter Summary

Some cryptids not only are the subject of articles, but wear them as well.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Izuku was barely keeping afloat, treading shadows in a desperate rush for the surface. But was it a surface? Izuku wasn’t sure, he was standing on something flat and equally black. As he looked ahead, eight glinting eyes stared back.

“Where am I?” Izuku called to them, running for them along unnaturally flat ground. “Who are you?”

Whispers and nothing, the figures retreated and Izuku could only chase them. Deeper still into a darkening black. Then they stopped and so did Izuku.

He still couldn’t catch the details of their faces. Closer to the front was someone with All Might’s hairstyle, glaring ahead with narrowed eyes. To his left there was an odd hairstyle that vaguely resembled his mother’s, but the rest had him at a loss.

The shadows seemed to congregate, preventing Izuku from seeing between them.

“What’s back there?” Izuku demanded.

Whispers again, but no distinct voice answered.

Izuku pushed his way through them, bogged down by grasping, invisible hands and blinked.

There was a single figure standing far away from the rest. Slouched forwards, only a single gleaming eye open.

“No,” the voices hissed. “Not him.”

“Who is he?” Izuku snapped at them, feeling more lost than ever. What was going on?

Ripping away from the last of his captors, Izuku marched over to the ninth figure and stared. From a distance, Izuku hadn’t seen it, but the distinct profile of All For One was unmissable, his hair even shifting slightly in a non-existent breeze.

“All For One? Why are you here?” Izuku whispered to himself, not really expecting an answer.

“Because I was the first,” the shadow whispered, a pale imitation of the original’s voice, and lunged, enveloping Izuku in a bearhug. He couldn’t breathe… it wasn’t letting go…

Izuku started and practically flew out the sheets, his mouth dry and his tongue more sandpaper than organ.
The dream was like the vision from the Sports Festival, only the maybe eight or nine was definitely a nine. A ninth the other spirits tried to hide behind them, but where? In Izuku’s head? Did One For All have a will of its own? Was that why the Quirk could only be taken with consent? What was going on?

More importantly, did All For One know there was an aspect of his will in the Quirk? There was really only one way to find out… It wasn’t an ideal measure, but All For One in theory would know the most about the Quirk’s functionality with how close it was to his own.

All For One’s room was suspiciously void of him for such an early time of morning. If he was home, which Izuku didn’t doubt, he was probably lurking around the kitchen or living room.

Confirming that suspicion was simple, stepping into the dark living room to find All For One immersed in something on a dark laptop covered in stickers, his face illuminated by the screen. Squinting at him, Izuku carefully tiptoed his way into the kitchen, opening the freezer and absconding with the tub of ice cream which he carefully mounded into a bowl. Returning the tub, Izuku crept to a counter-

“-Izuku, you’re up early.” All For One peered over his laptop through the gloom, directly at Izuku’s exact location. “Are you alright?” All For One’s eyes drifted to Izuku’s heavily laden bowl of ice cream.

“No?” Izuku stated almost unsurely, then took his time edging into the living room and the seat opposite All For One with a sigh.

“Something must be wrong. You’re never this placid around me,” All For One inclined his head.

“What do you know about One For All?” Izuku deployed with the force of a small nuclear bomb. All For One’s eyes widened. “Why do you ask?”

“Because I ran into something that All Might didn’t know about…” Izuku trailed off.

“And you want to know if I do know about it.” All For One seemed torn for a moment, his face twisted and the conflict passed. “Fine. What do you want to know?”

“Does One For All retain the essences of its past wielders and is it sentient?” Izuku asked from around his spoon. “And can it influence its current wielder?”

All For One almost dropped his laptop off the table. “What. What do you mean?”

With a degree of reluctance, Izuku explained the behind the scenes of the fight with Shinsou and the odd dream which had drawn him to ice cream so early in the morning. All For One was silent, his face paling the longer Izuku spoke.

“The Quirk activated on its own to prevent you from leaving the arena?” All For One swayed slightly in his seat, his hands twitching.

“Yeah. All Might didn’t seem to know what to make of it,” Izuku shrugged helplessly. “At first I wasn’t sure if it was eight or nine people I was seeing, but in the dream this morning I could see nine of them.”

All For One inclined his head. “Nine? I was only aware of there being eight before you.”

“You were the ninth,” Izuku explained with a wince, watching something awful distort All For
One’s face, features warping in the low light. “I asked you why you were there, and you said it was because you were the first… The others were trying to hide you, so I went over to take a look…”

“And you found me…” All For One whispered. “That wasn’t meant to happen. That Quirk was only meant to stockpile energy, not anything else.” All For One set his laptop on the table, stood and began to pace.

“You didn’t know?” Izuku asked, more uncertain than he’d ever been. New territory for two people who prided themselves on knowing about Quirks. Even if All For One and One For All weren’t standard Quirks.

“No, I haven’t been able to speak to any One For All wielders since my brother was alive and, more recently, Yagi now that he’s toothless.” All For One strode back and forth, staring blankly in front of him, eyes not so much as drifting to Izuku. “The rest preferred attempted murder to conversation. It stockpiles consciousness…” With All For One’s record, Izuku wasn’t surprised that casual chats weren’t occurring.

“What does that mean exactly? If it’s stockpiling energy then it must take something when it transfers over…” Izuku speculated, not really expecting an answer.

“But if it has taken something, then what does it take?” All For One carried on Izuku’s thought without additional comment, leaving Izuku jarred. “If the Quirk can express itself without the will of the wielder, then what would it choose to take? Is it a single will or a collective will? Is there a bias towards what it takes?” All For One’s face was rapidly darkening, marred by something that Izuku doubted he’d be hearing anytime soon. “Izuku,” he suddenly voiced, “you would think that my brother’s ability to transfer his Quirk to others would be similar to mine, yes?”

“Yeah, but your powers are predominantly parasitic, aren’t they? You can benefit from all them, but there’s a high risk to anyone who receives one from you. One For All doesn’t seem to hurt anyone it goes to… beyond blowing off limbs occasionally,” Izuku mumbled then winced at All For One’s sharp stare.

“I’m going to need to hear an explanation for that at some stage…” All For One visibly grimaced. “But, parasitic…” Japan’s fiend whispered, eyebrows pulled together in concentration. “Surely it doesn’t…”

“Doesn’t what?” Izuku prompted, at a loss. All For One had more experience with the progression of the Quirk on the whole than Izuku or anyone else did. How was One For All parasitic though? It transferred energy between people, but if it was only energy then why were there shades of the previous wielders? Why was there an echo of All For One who relocated the stockpiling Quirk? Was it part of All For One’s stolen Quirk or had the brother’s Quirk altered it in some method?

“There’s been a… trend,” All For One stated delicately, “in One For All wielders that might be explained by what you’ve uncovered.”

“Are you going to tell me what it is?” Izuku tapped the edge of his ice cream bowl impatiently.

“Not yet,” All For One retook his seat with an indeterminable expression. “Because, with any luck, I’m wrong and I can then tell you that I’m wrong without causing any lasting anxiety for you.”

Izuku glared at All For One. “I’m not made of glass.”

“Of course not,” All For One agreed. “You’re more like tissue paper or a particularly fragile flower.” Izuku scowled at him.
“Why the scowl, Izuku?” All For One perked up and Izuku remembered something that should have occurred to him before he left All For One’s room. “You should be smiling brightly since your first article dropped today.”

Izuku froze. The article.

“You forgot, didn’t you?” All For One hummed, almost bouncing into the kitchen with a newfound spring in his step.

“Yes,” Izuku bluntly confirmed and hesitated, for a moment. “Is Zach still alive?” Izuku might have a parental protection mechanism in place in the form of his mother, but strongly doubted Zach had the same Plan B.

“For now,” All For One’s menacing voice wafted from the kitchen.

“Don’t make me come over there this early in the morning,” Izuku groaned.

“I’m kidding.” All For One’s head poked back into view. “I rather enjoyed the article and Zach’s editorial contributions.”

“You… did?” Izuku clarified.

“Yes, but we shouldn’t get so bogged down on the details after all, not when you’re going to have visitors in the near future,” All For One purred.

Izuku froze. “What visitors?”

“Unless I’m much mistaken, Hatsume and Mineta at the very least are located in a nearby park and are rather… excited,” All For One teased.

It was then Izuku remembered the text message to Hatsume. “I told her to call me!” Oh no.

“Ah, insubordination. That brings back memories…”

Izuku bolted for the bathroom without another word and ten minutes later there was a knock on the door.

“Ah, more of Izuku’s classmates. I’m only familiar with two of you…” All For One’s voice trailed off.

“Ah, more of Izuku’s classmates. I’m only familiar with two of you…” All For One’s voice trailed off.

“Hello, I’m Momo Yaoyorozu, the vice-president of your son’s class and the materials expert of his company. His mother sent us to discuss an employee interview.”

“We meet again, Midoriya Senior. Midoriya Junior and I have business to discuss.”

“Yo, Mr Midoriya. I’m Eijirou Kirishima, prospective model.”

“It’s just me again. I brought the homework this time.”

“Heyo, I’m Mina Ashido, working in customer relations. Pleased to meet you.”

“Hi, I’m Ochako Uraraka from logistics!”

“Hello Mr Midoriya, I’m Tenya Ida, your son’s class president and I’m here to make sure we conclude early enough to make it back in time for the morning class.”
Rubbing his head frantically with his towel, Izuku could only shudder. *What are they doing here? Why so many? Why are they here in person? They could have VOIPed me. Didn’t Todoroki warn them that All For One’s violent?*

“What’s this about new employees?” All For One noted. “Izuku’s just having a shower. Tea, anyone?”

Izuku dressed in record time, flying out the door to a stampede of feet.

“What’s this about new employees?” Izuku sneezed.

“Time for work boss man. Your mum wants your opinion on the new employees,” Ashido nodded sharply towards Hatsume.

“Oh, expanding, are we?” All For One snuck in.

“We’re not at liberty to discuss the details with you Mr Midoriya. It’s a matter of confidentiality between the parties,” Yayorozu promptly responded.

“It’s nothing personal Mr Midoriya,” Uraraka added.

“You’re going to kick me out of my own home, aren’t you?” All For One asked, voice dripping with mirth.

“They’re not,” Izuku hurried in, “but I will.”

All For One’s mask cracked, with him dissolving into chuckles. “Very well, but you’re making your own tea. I have some chores to do and I’ll be back later then. The fridge is supplied.” Izuku spied the outline of All For One’s phone as it shifted in the man’s pocket and felt a trill of anxiety. “I’d say don’t do anything I wouldn’t do, but…” All For One grinned, slowly and broadly. “Take care!” And he was gone out the front door.

“Alright Midoriya, I want to wear swag that’d make Best Jeanist jealous,” Kirishima flung himself to his knees. “Make me look epic.”

“If you weren’t joking, I’d be a little bit disturbed,” Mineta remarked, already helping himself to the fridge.

“Eh, I’m only partially joking. Have you seen these suits? They’re actually comfortable and the fabric lining… it lets me breathe. Not much does that with my Quirk.” Kirishima flicked a thumbs up and threw himself into a lounge. “Your dad must be loaded.”

“Um, maybe we should take a seat?” Izuku broached, pointedly ignoring Kirishima’s comment.

“Certainly, Midoriya Junior,” Hatsume almost sang, hauling an oversized wheelie bag behind her. “Please observe my prototype!” She presented Izuku with a typical clothing box, which popped open to reveal a neatly folded suit.

“I gave her access to my designs and she developed a manufacturing method which increased the strength of the overall material blend. Synthesizing fibres the way she did is easier with industrial manufacturing than my Quirk,” Yaoyorozu sighed. “I can do it, but it needs so much concentration.” Izuku didn’t doubt it. Yaoyorozu carried reference books for good reason and even a small mistake might lead to an unwanted chemical reaction in the output. With it coming from her skin, she was at the most risk of anything going wrong. The more sophisticated the compound, the more dangerous the process.
Izuku spied something underneath the main set of clothes. “Gloves? Why would I need gloves?” Izuku looked up at Hatsune, then noticed the soot staining her clothes and the disarray of her hair. She'd most likely spent the whole night awake to get it done in time and Izuku felt a customary twinge of guilt.

“The gloves insulate your hands from the cold and harsh nature of environmental factors!” Hatsune exclaimed.

Something chimed and Ashido looked down at her phone. “Okay, Kaminari’s given the all clear.”

“Like glass, concrete, flesh, bone, cartilage and anything else you need to punch on your way to important business meetings. In the event of needing to do your part for public safety, you can kick teeth in with style with these matching dress shoes with iron soles and shock absorbing materials,” Hatsune promptly exploded, holding up another box. Izuku’s jaw dropped at the brazenness and he turned to the rest of his classmates who radiated smugness.

“You’ve got surveillance on the apartment?” Izuku squeaked. How many people were watching the apartment?

“Yeah, Todoroki told us your parents weren’t meant to know why we’re really here.” If it was possible, Ashido was even more business-like in her mannerisms. “We’re not actually here because we needed you to speak to us in person.”

Izuku sighed, feeling his blood pressure jump. If All For One found out… actually, who knew what he’d do if he found out?

“We’re here because Todoroki said you needed some help with your hero hours and we needed an excuse to give you the gear,” Mineta smirked. He paled. “Also, homework.”

“The first thing that came to mind was our label,” Yaoyorozu explained, flushing slightly. “I mean, I already designed it to be bullet proof… why not make it wearable armour? When we told your mother about Hatsune, she suggested that we could diversify into Support and even making armour. She told us to ask you about it, but that’s the limit of her request.”

“So, I took some of the designs I did for you earlier and Yaoyozuru’s and made beautiful children with them,” Hatsune beamed. “My babies will make us lots of money and keep clients satisfied. Someone could drop you through a building and you’ll still be well enough to make it to any business meetings.” Izuku felt a strange urge to introduce Hatsune to Shigaraki…. If only for the latter’s abject terror at the wide smile she was giving everyone in the room.

“Sounds good to me… but this is mum’s area business wise,” Izuku carefully voiced. It was brilliant, but finances weren’t Izuku’s thing.

“That’s what we thought you’d say,” Uraraka nodded, “but we weren’t going to say no to visiting you. All you have to do is sign off on the memorandum of the meeting and we’ll give it back to your mum. It’s not official, but I think she wants to hang it on a wall. It’s so cute.” Uraraka eyes closed in what Izuku could only assume was a cuteness overload. Said overload almost made him to go running out the door just to escape the embarrassment of his mother framing anything business related.

“I’m only here to check up on you,” Ida confirmed. “Todoroki told us that your relationship with your father is just about non-existent.” Ida swallowed heavily. “Especially with you having surgery on your arms… My brother asked me to give you these documents about caring for injured limbs. He said he’s a mutual friend of someone called Haimawari and his associates.” Ida held out a sleeve
bursting with pamphlets and paperwork, which Izuku took while fighting down tears.

“Also, man, Togata said to take these business cards and to leave them wherever you do a job. It’s got an identification number on it from Nighteye’s agency,” Kirishima added, handing vacuum sealed bundles to Izuku.

Izuku wouldn’t have been opposed to the lounge swallowing him whole. “Thanks… I… I really appreciate it.” Even if they knew exactly who All For One was, Izuku was fairly sure they would have turned up anyway.

“Don’t worry, Deku, we have you covered,” Uraraka nodded.

“Unless it’s for homework,” Mineta wept, holding a folder out to thin air. “I couldn’t read these laws if my life depended on it.”

“Aizawa-sensei’s grading it man, so your life kinda does depend on it. Remember what he gave me for remedial classes?” Kaminara shuddered.

“Don’t remind me!” Mineta rocked from side to side.

“Pfft, it’s not that bad,” Ashido brushed off and took the older. Then she read the front page. “O-kay, maybe it is that bad. Our topic isn’t too bad since we’re doing costume rules and Midnight knows all about it. All Might-sensei said we should ask the media outlets themselves for comments on the article, see if the people who wrote the articles are willing to lend a hand.” Izuku paused. U.A had how many students in his year? How many would be flooding various media outlets for comments? Wasn’t that what the media itself did? What are you doing, All Might?

“I’m sure All Might-sensei understands that journalists give it their all when researching, even if their ethical decisions can be questionable…” Ida pushed his glasses up his nose. Izuku tried to smother down a cough, thinking of the new deposit to his bank account.

Then, Izuku cautiously retrieved the folder from Ashido and winced. Maybe Shu can help? Izuku felt only a small amount of remorse for joining the horde of his cohort who were no doubt slowing the media’s productivity to a crawl even as they spoke.

“Oh hey, I forgot! Togata got his Quirk back!”

“What? How?”

“No idea, he said it feels a bit weird, but he’s doing great.”

And Izuku was lost in his interrogation of an increasingly worried Kirishima.

For the first time in almost a decade, Toshinori was enjoying a late breakfast. Namely, he could sleep well enough to manage past eight… and he was currently feigning illness while he worked in his cover story for his miraculous healing. Eri’s name was going to have to be mentioned, but however he was going to palm it off as the fault of “Hisashi Midoriya”, the local media baron, was going to be slightly more difficult. With the mountain of bacon before him, Toshinori to put it on hold for ten minutes while he ate.

“Yagi,” a familiar voice almost barked and Toshinori jumped a foot into the air.
“Isn’t it a little bit too early into my recovery for attempted murder?” Toshinori griped to All For One who had materialised out of thin air. “And you still aren’t using the door.” For some reason, all it did was score a laugh from the bastard.

“Why would I do that and lose a valuable source of data?” All For One rolled his eyes, his foot tapping impatiently. “I’m not here to play games. Izuku told me something concerning about the Quirk you gave him.”

Toshinori coughed, once more feeling the almost strange absence of blood. “What about it?”

“He said he saw the ghosts of the previous wielders at the Festival,” All For One answered without hesitation, dropping into the seat opposite Toshinori without invitation. If Toshinori still had One For All he’d have thrown All For One clean out the front door for being so presumptuous.

On the other hand, it was about young Midoriya… “Yeah, I remember him telling me that,” Toshinori winced. “I didn’t think much of it at the time…” Largely because Toshinori hadn’t witnessed anything remotely similar in all his years of using it. There hadn’t been any visions or ghosts he’d seen that could affect the wielder… but if it wasn’t important than why did All For One almost sound panicked? Young Midoriya must have been worried to even ask All For One.

“The figures he saw are previous wielders of the Quirk.” All For One paused. “He had a dream last night that confirmed it as being more than his imagination.”

“Odd timing for a dream,” Toshinori glared at All For One around his plate. “It only happened last time because that kid’s Quirk messes with brains. So what were you doing?” Toshinori growled.

“I was probing the Quirk,” All For One shrugged naturally and Toshinori saw red.

“You’ve been trying to take it?” Toshinori repeated in outrage. “Did you even consider his feelings about it?”

“I did and I likewise considered that he won’t have any feelings if he dies while using it,” All For One snapped back.

“You tried to take it before-“

“-From my brother, where it was likewise encouraging reckless behaviour.”

“Your brother was an adult who made his decisions.”

“Oh really? So him being an adult revokes and somehow nullifies all familial concern and responsibility on my part does it?”

“Your son didn’t need to be an adult before you revoked all familial concern for him,” Toshinori snarled back across the table.

“That’s…” All For One visibly swallowed a response that probably would’ve flattened the building they were in. “Fair… But enough squabbling.”

“What?” Toshinori chomped into a hefty piece of bacon, trying not to think about how his stomach was returned to him. “If you don’t tell him what you were trying to do then I will,” Toshinori threatened.

“I plan on telling him, but I needed to speak with you first.” All For One paused and Toshinori irritably jerked his head. “The ghosts weren’t an intended feature of the transfer and there are other
potential problems which Izuku himself highlighted.” Toshinori almost dropped his bacon. *What problems?* “Family members with Quirks generally have a degree of resemblance between the Quirks and if my Quirk is ultimately parasitic…” All For One trailed off expectantly as if nothing had happened.

“Then your brother’s might be too…” Toshinori breathed, feeling All For One’s discomfort click into place. “But how?” One For All blessed its wielders with great strength and speed as time went on, but beyond the laws of physics, Toshinori hadn’t seen much in the detriment department. But it would make sense if the Quirk took something as a trade off for that power. Toshinori reached for his glass of water and gulped some down.

“There is no real way to ask this in a tactful manner and being you, I don’t particularly care,” All For One said, almost pained, “but were you suicidal prior to taking One For All from Nana Shimura?”

Toshinori choked on his mouthful of water and swallowed it with effort. “What?” Toshinori reeled. That… wasn’t the question he’d be expecting. “Not that I remember. What’s it to you? Looking for more easy targets to kill?”

All For One snorted. “How about I tell you why Nana Shimura’s death was so shameful?”

“I’m not interested in you baiting me,” Toshinori growled. “Get out.”

“No, Yagi, this is important,” All For One affirmed, settling his forearms on the table.

“I doubt-”

“-She let me kill her,” All For One irritably cut in and the ground dropped out from under Toshinori’s feet.

“What… No,” Toshinori violently shook his head. “She had a family… She wouldn’t have….” She had so much to live for, had a child, had her friends and Toshinori. She never…

“She’s one of many, Yagi,” All For One continued without a trace of mockery. “Ten wielders, according to Izuku, and seven of them came to die. Seven husks who still sought me out after passing the Quirk on, with the rest of their lives before them with their loved ones and they still came to die. Helpless, outmatched and entirely indifferent to their imminent deaths. Nana Shimura was but one of them.” All For One paused, lowering his head. “My brother was the first to start the cycle,” All For One offered shortly, straining with something.

“But she had so much, why?” Toshinori repeated. All For One was a patent liar, but why would he lie about this when he wasn’t taking any satisfaction in hurting Toshinori? What was happening?

“Why indeed would seven people with the only similarity of a Quirk between them all choose to die?” All For One was almost speaking to himself at this point. “I’ve been alive for a very long time Yagi, and I too watched my friends and family pass me by, yet I’ve never seen the appeal of ending my own life. I chose to persist in spite of the pain, but why would do-gooders like Nana Shimura come to me to die? What logical reason would result in such a timing where it always happens after the Quirk is given away?” All For One was inviting Toshinori to finish that thought and Toshinori could feel the answer well within him in spite of his attempts not to think about it.

“You think that all of us lost the will to live after the Quirk was passed on,” Toshinori whispered.

“The Quirk is designed to propagate itself and shares its gifting abilities with my own Quirk, which is a parasite in and of itself,” All For One elaborated. “It’s developed a degree of sentience to prevent itself from being granted to others without the wielder’s consent.”
“But what if it having a mind of its own is making the wielder choose who it goes to next?”
Toshinori tacked on, wanting to throw up, feeling the bile churn in his throat. “If it’s a parasite, it
needs to be passed on.”

“-And so compels the wielder to pass it on, but at what cost? All of them came to die apart from you,
Yagi. Why are you different?” All For One probed. “You by all accounts had no one, yet you still
persisted with every petty trick in the book to hang on. You hardly know Izuku, why hang around?”

Toshinori thought back to the encounter in question, wincing at the phantom pains he could still
remember. Young Midoriya who had no friends, no Quirk, no support, nothing. Young Midoriya
who broke down at both the discouragement and encouragement, who had no will to save himself
without support… “He didn’t have anyone else,” Toshinori shrugged helplessly. “His mother wanted
him safe above everything, so she never supported his dreams until I gave him One For All. Safe
people might be safe, but deeply unhappy people jump off buildings. Without me, there wasn’t
anyone who understood what he was going through, no one to give that encouragement.” Toshinori
snorted and shot All For One a nasty look. “You sure as hell weren’t there to do it.”

“Izuku’s been quite helpful in reinforcing that point and I don’t disagree with it,” All For One
murmured. “So you disgraced yourself to preserve his wellbeing… You lived on because he showed
you a different way of doing it beyond running at the problem.”

“To be honest,” Toshinori smiled ruefully, “every dirty trick I used against you last time came from
him.”

“I don’t doubt it.” All For One flexed his hands. “The real question remains, what does One For All
take from each wielder? Is it uniform in what it takes from each person? Is it a specific trait? Is it their
drive? I have no means of answering that question without acquiring the Quirk and testing it…”

“But you can’t do that without potentially harming young Midoriya,” Toshinori finished, raising an
eyebrow at someone who shouldn’t have been able to look so human.

“Why did you even pass it on if you thought I was dead?” All For One drummed his fingers along
the table. “Its purpose was to end me, was it not?”

“So he could help people. Getting rid of you was part of that…” Toshinori shrugged awkwardly.
“And for killing her…”

“Izuku never made an attempt on me, which is unusual.”

“He didn't really know about you and he wasn’t even meant to be there. One of his classmates got a
tracker and he somehow ended up at your doorstep, ruining Shigaraki’s day.” Toshinori smiled. He
wish he could’ve seen the expression on All For One’s face when that happened, but from All For
One’s current expression, at least Toshinori got a close second to the real deal. “Young Midoriya
doesn’t like hurting people, he’d rather talk them down.”

“Does he now?” All For One whispered. “Tomura wasn’t pleased, but he needs to stand on his own
two feet without me. My remorse for Inko being the sole parent grows day by day, at any rate” All
For One sagely nodded. With that, All For One stood, drew a folded up sheet and from a pocket and
tossed it in front of Toshinori. “Exhibit A,” All For One smirked and vanished.

Filled with more apprehension than air, Toshinori opened it.

“What the fu-”
He didn’t quite get the words out, having immediately dived for his phone.
“Tsukauchi!” Toshinori barked.

“What now?” Tsukauchi groaned. “I haven’t even had my second coffee yet.”

“Get over here, I’ve just had a visit from All For One. Two, actually.”

Toshinori heard something break in the background of the call. “It’s not even nine yet, All Might, my god, how are you still alive? I’ll be right over.”

“Bring Gran Torino, he’s gotta see and hear this.”

Well, Toshinori had been intending to surprise them with his recovery, but this was a bit much.

All For One was such a bastard.

“THAT BASTARD! HE DIDN’T EVEN ASK!” Gran Torino screeched across the metre gap between Toshinori and himself. Toshinori plugged his ears with his fingers.

“He’s in the doghouse still for Bakugou and Endeavor, isn’t he?” Tsukauchi groaned. “At least Eri’s getting better. What an afternoon you three must have had.”

“Pretty peaceful all things considered, once I shoved down the urge to violently strangle him,” Toshinori idly commented, watching his teacher turn purple. “He must be worried though, because I think he’d rather ingest poison than willingly help me.”

Gran Torino huffed loudly. “If that bastard was there in the first place then kid wouldn’t be such a worry.”

“No, he’d just be severely traumatised by the all the people his father killed on his behalf,” Tsukauchi nodded.

“This stuff about Nana Shimura though,” Gran Torino growled from between gritted teeth with noticeable effort. “How do we know he’s not full of it?”

“We don’t, but with the amount of effort he’s putting in for the kid… Maybe he’s not lying,” Tsukauchi proposed, drumming his fingers on a distinctly more filled out tablecloth. Toshinori watched Tsukauchi set his cup down and wrote genuine interest onto the tablecloth, with it bolded and circled. “There’s always a possibility that he’s just pulling a long con, but I think there’d be a lot more conveniently timed bodies if he was.”

Yeah, mine, Toshinori thought.

“I’ve got no confidence in him.” Gran Torino crossed his arms as though he was expecting Toshinori to correct. Not that there was much to disagree with. “What’s the other news?”

Toshinori winced. “Well, All For One left this behind…” With that, Toshinori unfolded the printed article and laid it out on the table before them.

Media Baron Of Wealthy Tabloid Secretly A Two-Hundred Year Old Plus Supervillain
While always an elusive figure within the mainstream media, Hisashi Midoriya is most notable for his highly successful endeavours into the mainstream media. As the owner and CEO of the parent company of The Heroes Mirror, its sub-publication, Heroes Weekly and the Quirk Focus group, his unique management style has contributed to their enduring success as private corporations. Bereft on the typical trappings of a traditional media structure, Hisashi Midoriya’s corporations have consistently broke news from the pro-hero industry first and provided the general public with a valuable service for over six decades. Now, following an investigation, Hisashi Midoriya’s success should be questioned after historical documents were found to link him to the criminal known as “All For One”. These documents not only link the two, but are strong evidence that Hisashi Midoriya and All For One are indeed one and the same individual with a corporate and criminal empire spanning centuries.

Upon Hisashi Midoriya’s reappearance within the public domain, it was discovered that Hisashi Midoriya shares a medical practitioner with All For One who is currently under investigation....

Dr Tsubasa’s disappearance shortly followed that of his grandson and other students who were once classmates of Izuku Midoriya, the son of Hisashi Midoriya, who was relentlessly bullied...

The involvement of the Stain is likewise concerning, with his prior involvement in public experimentation with prior links to an associate of All For One.

Full disclosure: In light of the revelations of this investigation, Hisashi Midorya may have a connection to this publication and the staff by extension.

“TOSHINORI – WHAT THE HELL IS THS?” Gran Torino screamed an inch from Toshinori’s ear.

“I was hoping you two could tell me,” Toshinori confessed, his ears ringing. “You looked at the author, right?”

“WHO HELL IS IT? IS IT THAT BASTARD? THEY TOLD THE WHOLE PLANET ABOUT YOUR STUDENT!”

“Wow, this is really... detailed,” Tsukauchi’s eyes tracking every word. “It doesn’t talk about One For All though, which is good news, but it rips All For One a new one for not telling his wife about his colourful business history... Tsubasa, the Noumu generally, Stain being a puppet... It’s comprehensive, even speculating on past vigilantism and the Mirror’s similar tone about the legalities of hero ethics.”

“Who wrote it?” Gran Torino growled. “That list-”
“-That list is real,” Tsukauchi cut in. “We took a copy from the contents of Midorya’s hard drives after his kidnapping and it matches up with the one we had on the police database after a robbery from a long time ago.”

“Those bastards are going to eat the kid alive.”

Toshinori fiddled with his hands. The article gave a way a lot of information about young Midoriya’s investigation, but most the public didn’t even know that All For One was a real person let alone the history with One For All. “Do you think anyone’s going to believe it? If it wasn’t for the blood tests, I wouldn’t have believed it.”

“Good point. A41’s used a really sensationalist style… or maybe his editor did before it went to print,” Tsukauchi drummed his fingers against the table. “Conspiracy is pretty niche and it’s not the least bit mainstream… We don’t even know where Conspiracy is published for us to get a warrant for search and seizure.”

“But it’s out there,” Gran Torino snarled. “It might lead to One For All being discovered and cause problems for Midoriya.” Toshinori carefully shuffled his chair so he wasn’t sitting between them.

“It was already out there,” Tsukauchi pointed out. “Nothing in that article wasn’t already publicly available or was speculated upon based on publicly available information.”

“Then who in their right mind would compile all of it?” Gran Torino grumbled.

“Young Midoriya already compiled all of it and we know he found it in the public domain.” Toshinori hesitated for a moment. “All For One said that the article was exhibit A of young Midoriya’s behaviour.”

“WHAT. THE. HELL. IS. GOING. ON?”

Toshinori ducked his head did his best to drown out Gran Torino’s yells. He really needed to tell Inko Midoriya about this article before someone in the media did. And try to laugh appropriately if anyone at U.A. raised the article at the next day’s staff meeting.

Izuku’s classmates had thankfully left before All For One returned. All For One, practically glided in the front door with a number of long tubes under his arm, humming as he did so.

“Is Zach still alive?” Izuku bluntly asked from the lounge, where Hatsume’s oversized manual dominated the table.

“Of course he is,” All For One replied. “Have some faith, Izuku.”

“I have plenty of faith… in your capacity to maim people,” Izuku mumbled under his breath.

All For One’s chuckle followed him through the house. “You should ring Maki, she wants you at the office for a staff meeting tomorrow. She can provide the details.”

Izuku’s head whipped around to vaguely stare at All For One’s general direction. “I’m finally getting assigned to something?”

“Yes, all she needs is your penname and a face to face chat,” All For One’s voice knowingly called
back. Then, a pause, followed by some of the most diabolical laughter Izuku had ever heard. Maki had told him to use a penname reflective of someone he didn’t like, he just hadn’t expected the person in question to take it as a compliment.

Dragging the heavy manual off the table, Izuku hurried to his room. It wouldn’t do to be late to the staff meeting, especially with such a nice suit.

Chapter End Notes

People always seem to ask, so I try to update every two weeks. Weather permitting...
Toshinori’s goal for this staff meeting was to make it through without inciting mass panic.

“Whaaaaaaaaaat? All Might? Is that really you?” Present Mic promptly screeched into Toshinori’s ear, tossing an arm around Toshinori’s shoulders. “You look greeeeeat!”

“Yes, it’s me,” and Toshinori, grinning, flicked a thumbs up. He’d done a lot of unconvincing smiles in his life, but he hoped that this one would hold up to scrutiny. He shrugged Present Mic off as graciously as possible and took his seat.

“My my, you look healthy.” Nedzu eagerly peered across the table. “It’s as though you’ve lost seven years of age.”

Aizawa’s eyes were narrowed at Toshinori in the same way they usually were when dealing with young Midoriya. Toshinori squirmed.

“It’s complicated,” Toshinori allowed with a cough.

“Complicated?” Midnight repeated with a raised eyebrow.

“I had a run in young Midoriya’s father who was allowing little Eri to visit him and there was an incident…” Toshinori didn’t bother to hide his grimace. No need to tell them when or what exactly the incident was, especially because the incident wasn’t really Eri.

Aizawa, eyes wide, leaned forwards. “How the hell are you still alive?”

“Little Eri has substantially better control of her Quirk than she used to, but she got excited and… was all to happy to “fix” me for young Midoriya at his father’s suggestion, Toshinori mentally finished. Instead, Toshinori lifted his hands and gestured vaguely.

“And your Quirk?” Nedzu eagerly bounced in his seat.

“Nope. Eri’s not that good yet. It’ll be years before she knows how to get it working on Quirks.” Toshinori watched their faces fall and sympathised with them more than they knew. Young Midoriya was trapped with All For One, something that no one currently available had the ability to resolve. Endeavor’s defeat at the hands of a “group of random thugs” had tarnished the industry in exactly the way the bastard would have appreciated.

On the bright side, young Todoroki was happier than Toshinori had ever seen him. His grades were lifting and he was more social with his classmates. But… that wasn’t going to be enough.

“Oh well, at least you’re healthy,” Midnight encouraged. “Now, I heard Midoriya’s father is also the
reason we’re having this staff meeting…”

With a swallowed sigh of relief, Toshinori nodded. “It’s come to my attention that a parent, namely Hisashi Midoriya, learnt and complained of poor management in relation to the mental health of the students. He, particularly, stressed his concern about the psychological health of his son and questioned if he should have been admitted in the first place.” Toshinori didn’t know what to expect when he asked Nedzu to arrange the staff meeting. As it was, only the Heroics Department was in attendance, but with any luck whatever came from this meeting would spread to other areas of the school.

Aizawa stared. “He said what?”

Toshinori awkwardly cleared his throat. “Young Midoriya’s father doesn’t believe that his son is psychologically stable enough to be allowed at the school.” There wasn’t much point in lying about it or concealing it. The more Toshinori spoke to the new resident doctors, the more he noticed cause for their concerns. Like the lacking quality of sleep that seem to persist throughout 1-A’s dormitory.

“Midoriya’s plenty mature,” Cementoss snorted.

“It’s not maturity. He thinks his son is using his career as an excuse to legally kill himself and get paid for it,” Toshinori voiced so bluntly he saw Nedzu do a spit take of tea across the table. Not that All For One had managed the point so bluntly. Toshinori had half killed the bastard and still hadn’t seen him in as much distress as during that conversation in young Midoriya’s room before Eri arrived. Complete bastard or not, he had a point that Toshinori was reluctantly going to give to him. It was the school’s responsibility to protect the kids and that didn’t just include physical safety.

Silence.

“What?” Midnight leaned forwards against the table.

“He also raised the possibility of other students suffering psychological problems due to their exposure to traumatic events,” Toshinori barrelled on, “and demanded that care be given to the students in light of the trauma.”

Toshinori swallowed and a sea of very pale faces gazed blankly back at him.

“Elaborate,” Aizawa bluntly stated.

And Toshinori did, reading from the folder prepared with the assistance of Mineta, who’d take the problem with him to therapy and had been given a worksheet to assist with the matter. Mineta who’d drastically expanded on the worksheet and offered it to Toshinori for the staff meeting.

Toshinori cleared his throat and read aloud. “Mineta’s been diagnosed with a type of anxiety and depression after his Quirk basically shorted out on him…”

He read and read and the list wasn’t as empty as he’d have liked it to be. Midway through the listing, Nedzu had pulled out a computer to start drafting the tender for mental health services on the school premises. It should have been years sooner, but it was a start.

Now he just needed to find time to speak to young Midoriya and his mother between the excited students reporting back their harassment of various media outlets.
Few things surprised Izuku these days. Waking up in his own room shouldn’t have been one of
them, but All For One’s smothering behaviour made it an unlikely event. All Might’s huge grin
hovered above and Izuku sighed with relief. Then he looked at the time and launched himself into
the bathroom.

Staggering out, Izuku hadn’t bothered to button his jacket, instead tucking his unsleeved arm into its
depth. His pockets were full of bits and pieces that his classmates had generously given to him in the
name of corporate R&D and the cards provided by Nighteye’s old agency. It was far more likely that
Hatsume wanted it field tested as opposed to anything else, but Izuku was going to take what he
could get with the hovering overwatch of All For One.

Speaking of hovering, All For One lurked at Izuku’s doorway doing exactly that. “I’ve missed so
much,” he murmured, looking Izuku up and down. His eyes glistened oddly and Izuku did his best to
ignore it.

“Still your fault,” Izuku grimaced at a tie. “Do I need one of these?” Down an arm, Izuku was even
less likely to be able to knot it correctly.

All For One inclined his head. “I stopped bothering years ago.”

“But you’re you,” Izuku pointed out. Even after regenerating, All For One didn’t seemed inclined to
care about the full formality of a tie. Probably for the practical reason of someone trying to strangle
him with it. Not that Izuku would blame anyone for trying to strangle All For One.

“You’re a child,” All For One hummed to himself. “Oh well.” And All For One was gone.

Izuku hardly had time to blink before All For One’s hand snuck around his throat and the tie was
neatly knotted around Izuku’s neck. “I didn’t think I’d ever have the opportunity to do this,” All For
One whispered. Even though it was tied in record time, All For One didn’t seem to be letting go.

It was at that point Izuku’s brain noted that he’d been dragged into what could technically considered
a hug. Izuku blinked at All For One, who took the opportunity to bury himself into Izuku’s hair.

“Hey, get off!” Izuku struggled and eventually broke free. “What’s wrong with you?”

“Even if you couldn’t be bothered doing it tomorrow,” All For One carried on as if nothing had
happened, “you should at least attempt to look professional for the media circus outside.”

“… Do I want to know?” Izuku asked in spite of himself.

“You might want to have breakfast first…”

Izuku was glad he took All For One up on that offer as they stepped outside and were beset by thirty
odd people.

“Mr Midoriya! Is it true that you’re a supervillain?” Called a scruffy looking journalist.

All For One pulled out his phone, gazing down at it without blinking. “Certainly. Didn’t you read
that excellent article about all of the small children I experimented on and murdered for bullying my
son? What was it written in again? The local rag?” All For One shrugged and Izuku could imagine
Zach doubling over with pain a country away.

“Are you really two hundred years old?”

“I’m actually over two hundred years old. You’ve think they’d have the sense to at least look at my
birth certificate. Really.”

“What part did you have in the League of Villains?”

“A very large one, on account of Tomura Shigaraki being too impatient to stage a press conference for recruiting purposes. It was charity, really.” Izuku attempted not to choke on air.

“What’s your relationship to All Might?”

“Well, we did attempt to kill each other on a few occasions, but in the interests of professionalism, I did invite him over for dinner to clear muddied waters. It was successful as far as I could tell.” Izuku wanted to sink into the footpath and disappear, but All For One was still going, without looking up from his phone.

“What about Kamino Ward?”

“What about it? I lost.”

“I get the feeling you’re not taking this seriously,” one of the braver journalists ventured.

“Would you take it seriously?” All For One asked.

“Oi kid, is he really a supervillain.”

“He murdered all of my childhood friends, used their corpses for cannon fodder and then tried to strangle the one that escaped and he won’t stop hugging me,” Izuku confirmed. “I also wrote the article so it’s one hundred percent accurate to my knowledge.”

“This is a waste of time…” Someone griped from the back of the pack.

“I’m secretly the owner of that publication,” All For One said in a stage whisper. “I’m very proud of my little boy’s first piece of defamation.” Izuku wasn’t going to give All For One the satisfaction of laughing.

“I reckon you’re full of shit, mate,” a familiar voice shouted. It was at that moment that Izuku remembered that All For One didn’t actually have anything on his phone.

Oh no.

Zach shoved his way to the front of the crowd, all teeth and flannelette.

“I’m amazed it’s taken so long for someone to outright say it,” All For One shrugged. “If you’ll excuse us, we have places to be.”

Izuku felt All For One’s hand wrap around his good arm and all of a sudden there was quiet and they were a street away.

“You’ve got a perception filter,” Izuku realised, glaring accusingly at All For One.

“Do I?” All For One winked.

And Izuku remembered the hospital and Zach’s pitch of a scandalous tape and how eagerly they ran for something that may or may not have been real. “It’s Zach’s Quirk…”

“I’d say I’m jealous, but there’s something special in the amount of lives he’s ruined and reputations he’s destroyed with that Quirk.” Bright and cheery, All For One could have been commenting on the
“Even though he did it to you?”

“Please Izuku, give yourself some credit. It was a spectacular joint venture.” All For One clapped Izuku on the back and tugged him into the back a waiting car. “You couldn’t help yourself, could you Zach?”

“I was here helping out Maki anyway, figured I’d lend a hand,” Zach spoke from the driver’s seat. “We’re all going to the same place, so I figured I’d give you a lift back. Especially with some of the reader feedback I got last night. Panic doesn’t quite cover it.”

“They probably didn’t know what to think,” All For One hummed, even with Izuku doing his best to peel him off.

“There was actually a lot of I can’t believe it took him two centuries to have a kid,” Zach noted without a trace of humour as he accelerated away. “I think they felt sorry for you, if anything.”

“If they had my family, they also would have waited two hundred years,” All For One mumbled.

Izuku groaned. It was going to be a long drive to work, even as All For One pulled out a copy of Heroes Digest and started complaining about the uninspired cover design.

“LITTLE MIDORIYA!” Izuku was half a step in the front door of the office before he was lifted from the ground by a series of tentacles.

“Hi Shū,” Izuku gasped and felt himself being placed back on the ground.

“I’m so relieved,” he whispered from a pool of shadows.

“Me too. I don’t remember what happened, but…” Izuku shrugged.

“I’ll keep an eye on you when you leave today,” Shū’s head bobbed up and down. “Here, we’ll take the expressway.”

Izuku was lifted again and pulled into the shadows. With a sensation of a thousand grasping limbs, they rematerialized in Shū’s office.

“You’re a warper?” Izuku stared at Shū who… turned slightly orange.

“Yes and no. It’s part of my Quirk, but not the actual Quirk,” Shū’s tentacles swayed as he spoke. “It’s complicated.

“I’m fine with complicated,” Izuku nodded, wishing he had a second book to write in.

“You’re Hisashi Midoriya’s son, of course you’re fine with complicated,” Shū snorted. “Maybe later, but Maki should be here in not too long to drag you off to the staff meeting.”

“Speak and I appear.” Maki stuck her head in through the door. “Midoriya, get over here. We need to work out what exactly we’re going to pay you for.”

Izuku made no attempt to hide his grimace. “Hisashi isn’t going to be there, is he?”

“Nah, he’s busy putting my boss through the wringer over at Corporate. You’ll be with the Content
Team. Lots of underpaid and desperately broke writers. You’ll fit right in,” Maki smiled encouragingly. All of Shū’s tentacles gave Izuku a hearty slap on the back and pushed him towards Maki.

Izuku hurried after Maki’s brisk powerwalk.

“Your school is a menace to society, kiddo,” Maki turned and winked in an exaggerated manner. “Our team’s been flooded with phone calls about old articles, ethical requirements, investigators who have long since left… All sorts of topics as well. We’re not getting time to do any actual work, because we’re being bombarded by phone calls, emails and even kids turning up at reception.”

Izuku almost tripped over mid-step. “Really? I didn’t think people were that studious.”

“I don’t know how much it is studiousness or if it’s a pathological terror of Eraserhead being the head grader for it along with All Might,” Maki outright laughed. “Poor kids. Eraserhead has a reputation with the media for a good reason. One of ours caught him a few years back letting some old guy beat the daylights out of someone else just because he was Quirkless and the other guy wasn’t. Basically said it wasn’t his department and was gonna head for the hills, until the victim turned violent with his Quirk.” Maki snorted derisively.

“He… didn’t help?” Izuku felt an eyebrow twitch upwards. That didn’t sound like the teacher he knew. But Izuku was a student owed a duty of care, whereas pro heroes were really only obligated to deal with Quirk related incidents. All Might was an anomaly in that he helped where ever he could and didn’t squabble over publicity in the same way many of his cohort were wont to doing. Popularity contests didn’t replace substance, as All Might’s retirement had to have shown everyone, or so Izuku thought. Instead, the media didn’t seem to want to discuss the problem.

“Pro heroes are an overworked lot, but Eraserhead was only ever interested in doing the letter requirements of his job.” The noise Maki made immediately after saying that didn’t leave much room for interpretation. “He’s not at all like All Might who went above and beyond in the human decency department. It’s not just about doing your job, it’s about having some standards in the process.”

An understandable position coming from Mai Maki, someone who’d spent most of her career trying to get a child abuser arrested. She seemed to work at the tabloid for the sole reason that they were willing to take the risk to publish controversial material that no one else would touch, whether it be a whistleblowing political scandal or a celebrity beating their kid, she’d cover it. Izuku had read enough of her work to know it.

“I don’t get many perks doing my job, but after the career I’ve had, I don’t think I want them. Some parts of the media are too niche, too willing to jump on a bandwagon for some easy sales…” Maki trailed off, gazing at the Endeavor dartboard decal to her right as she went. She pushed open a door to the office beside it and gestured for Izuku to go ahead.

It wasn’t the least spacious office Izuku had ever seen. A number of semi-cubicles filled the space with a common area in the middle. At the cubicle nearest to Izuku, a brown-haired man with donkey ears was snoring soundly on a tablet monitor.

“That’s Takada. He’s our graphics designer,” Maki nodded. “OI TAKADA!” She yelled without warning into an ear.

Takada shot into partial awareness. “Why is my pen tool cloning everything I do...” he wailed in a partial drone, before promptly starting to snore again.

“Takada’s Quirk is Dream On. He’ll start a job, take a nap, and bust through two weeks’ worth of
work in an hour while asleep. It take a bit of getting used to because he can hear us, but he can’t really respond,” Maki smiled.

Purple hair poked over another cubicle. “Oh, the new kid!”

Izuku shyly waved. “Hi, I’m Izuku Midoriya.”

“Mitts off Yamaguchi, he’s a contractor, not an intern here as your personal slave,” Maki shook her head.

“Aw, alright then.” Yamaguchi chuckled stood and Izuku was treated to the sight of a literal harpy, with purple and red plumage poking out of a tailored dress suit. “Heyo, I’m Mai Yamaguchi. We only use last names here because there’s another two Mais in Corporate as well. I’m the assistant editor and we’re the only four in today, because everyone else is off working.”

“The reporters go off on assignments, then?” Izuku queried, pulling out his notebook.

“We do, because we’re the Field Team. The office next door is part of the Content Team, but they’re more research. They pipe us stuff and we do the legwork investigations,” Yamaguchi waved a winged arm to a pile of papers on her desk and Izuku’s eyes tracked how the feather’s ruffled as she did so. “Editors used to be a paper only job, but Maki over here impressed the boss so much that he gave her free reign.”

“Why aren’t I part of the research team?” Izuku looked between them.

“You’d be a waste behind a desk sweetheart, and since you’re having trouble with your school we figured we’d have you do a dedicated crime corner for our readers.” Maki set a cup of coffee down at a low communal coffee table rimmed by worn armchairs. “You’re a student, but you’re exposed to so much more than we are as just journalists. You’ve got a different perspective.”

Yamaguchi bounced up and down in a manner that would’ve broken a normal person’s bones. “There’s all sorts of ethical requirements on reporting legalities, but…” She grinned, exposing numerous sharp teeth. “You’re press, but not a journalist, so you’re not bound by them. You can write as an opinion writer and we don’t have to worry about the regulatory body coming down on us for a journalist breaking subject rules. We can claim that you’re a source and refuse to say anything if the police come knocking!”

Police? “I’m sorry, but what do the police have to do with reporting?”

“Oh boy, are you in for a treat!”

Yamaguchi and Maki’s treat was less treat and more a sort of self-contained horror story was only getting worse the longer they went into it. Japan, as it turned out, had censorship laws. Extremely well enforced censorship laws, the same ones that prevented the media from speculating openly about All Might’s illness. Censorship laws that supposedly existed for the public’s safety.

“We were told not to talk about All For One as well,” Maki added. “We were told that the public would panic if they knew that a two-hundred-year-old Quirk stealing abomination was a real person instead of the bogeyman. It’s not something I subscribe to, but that’d get us arrested instead of just being dragged off to court by Endeavor.”

“I was wondering why they said that Ragdoll’s involuntary retirement was caused by an anomaly… All of the students know that he’s a real person.” Izuku shuddered. Too real.

“And that honey, is why we’re hiring you,” Maki and Yamaguchi hive fived and Izuku honestly
couldn’t blame them.

After all, would the camp have even taken place had the media been allowed to report on people like Toga, Dabi, Muscular, Moonfish and the other members who were all murderers known to the police? Izuku didn’t get time to truly wonder as they descended into the nitty gritty of how he was to spend his work days balanced with his take home schoolwork.

Katsuki couldn’t yell, scream or even whisper a word to the nurses. He couldn’t move, pinned by a familiar malice. Hisashi Midoriya stood before him, casually examining his nails. No warning, nothing and Katsuki was helpless.

“Aw, don’t look like that, Bakugou. It’s only me,” the elder Midoriya purred, tipping his hand in another irritatingly familiar gesture.

Katsuki could only blink angrily at him, arms like lead beside him. The bastard who strangled him. The bastard who scared the shit out of Deku and was missing in action for fuck knows how many years. For years, his parents had wondered about Mr Midoriya, but they’d never asked Inko Midoriya what the fuck had happened to him. With the shit Katsuki was seeing now, it was a fucking godsend that this prick hadn’t been in the lives of his wife or kid. Violent bastard was probably another Endeavor behind closed doors. Explained a lot about Deku’s behaviour over the years. If he had an asshole like this for a father, he’d be a dweeb as well.

With as much might as he could muster, Bakugou extended a single finger in the bastard’s direction.

The elder Midoriya tutted. “Is that the best you’ve got, Bakugou? All about winning and being the best and that… is the best you’ve got?”

Katsuki glared and, with more effort than he liked, reached for the writing pad beside him. He wrote. *Who the fuck do you think you are?*

“A late, but ultimately responsible parent,” Midoriya smoothly cut in, looking out the window. *Fucking off for over a decade isn’t responsible, you prick.*

Midoriya tapped the window with his fingers and a curious eye. “A good thickness, this window. Would you like to know why I wasn’t around, Bakugou?”

Katsuki really didn’t want to know. He wanted Midoriya to fuck off and let him sleep.

*As if any reason’s good enough. You’re a shit parent.* Katsuki furiously scrawled, holding the writing pad up.

“Aw, me? You wound me. Here you are attacking my parenting… but we really should mention your parents if we’re going to be on the topic.” Midoriya paced back and forth before Katsuki. “Ah, your parents, a reason for a licence to procreate if there was ever one.”

*The hell are you talking about?*

“You haven’t noticed, Bakugou? You’re the most disliked person in your class. One of the best achieving, yet they have nothing but contempt for you. For your attitude, for your mannerisms, for
your complete lack of social skills,” Midoriya purred and Katsuki twitched, feeling his Quirk spark to life. “For your lack of control and temper. You’re a liability, which is why you failed and they succeeded.”

Fuck off. You don’t know anything.

“What an excellent view. We must be on, what, the tenth storey? I know plenty Bakugou. I know that your father was so worthless that your mother had to chase him. That he’s a spineless, pathetic wimp that’s at the beck and call of his emotionally abusive wife,” Midoriya leered, smiling unpleasantly and Katsuki felt a chill run through him. What the fuck is up with this guy? “That not once in all your years has he ever defended you from her stupidity about strength and weakness, as though she were a chimpanzee frolicking about in the jungle as opposed to a functional human being raising a vulnerable child.”

Katsuki’s eye twitched. I turned out fine.

“Oh? Is that why my son beat you in your first combat simulation? Is that why he had his provisional licence before you? My disadvantaged boy, so new to the world of violence, still surpassed you.” Midoriya paused and Katsuki clenched his fists, still crushed by an invisible strain. “It’s almost like there’s more to life than having a Quirk and money. For all that my son once lacked, he still had more than enough substance to his personality to utterly destroy you in all the ways that matter.”

Katsuki felt a line of tension snap. Deku is as fucking useless as he always will be. Nothing can fucking change that.

“Ah, Bakugou, remember what I said about calling my son that name?” Midoriya hissed and Katsuki couldn’t scream, dangling above the ground once more. “This Bakugou, is why Tomura saw such likeness to himself in you. Another spoilt, emotionally driven brat who’d step on others to achieve their goals. A menace to society.”

Katsuki froze. Tomura, Katsuki thought. The inflection in how Midoriya said his family name. His quirk not working when Midoriya was meant to be a fire breather… Deku’s abject terror at his father seeing Katsuki. At seeing the one that got away… “You’re…” Bakugou rasped. “All…”

All For One beamed at him. “All for me and none for you, Bakugou. Let’s see how your parents enjoy dealing with a weak, Quirkless child with no prospects, no future, when there’s no Quirk to compensate for poor parenting,” All For One dripped with malice. “Just remember, it’s not the fall that kills you… it’s the sudden stop.” All For One’s broad, unhinged smile had far too many teeth.

Katsuki didn’t remember anything past the prick’s hand clamping around his head.

With the number of article topics queued up for release, Izuku felt more confident leaving than he had arriving at the office that morning. Izuku trotted out the front door with a watchful shadow seeing him off and more paranoia than what used to follow him to the train station. Before, Izuku only had to worry about Kacchan, now he had to worry about everyone else and the prospect of All For One’s retaliations. It wasn’t a comforting thought.

At least the conclusion of the meeting had gone well. Maki had nodded approvingly at the topics and set out the deadlines for the delivery. Not that the deadlines bothered Izuku, he could copy and paste and do up large sections of his own notes for the vast majority of the topics. There was one topic
though where Izuku honestly needed Shū’s opinion. There was nothing Izuku could find on what gave the government authorisation to pass the regulations they did in relation to Support gear and some of the summary sentences that Izuku had seen surreptitiously handed out. He’d need a real expert to hunt down the answers for that one. Fortunately, Shū was a competent researcher.

Not that the train of thought lasted long. Izuku heard the screams before he turned the corner saw the mass of people in front of the gates.

“They had guns!” A casually dressed woman shrieked, a toddler in her arms. “They rushed into the school and…”

“Has anyone called the police?” Another voice shouted.

“Yes!” Someone yelled back. “Ten minutes!” Ten minutes was too long. Far too long.

Izuku inched closer to the panic, clamping down on any erstwhile worries of his own. All For One might know Izuku’s location and condition thanks to Search, but that didn’t necessarily tell him what Izuku was doing. So long as Izuku didn’t panic with the crowd or injure himself, All For One wouldn’t have any way of knowing what was about to happen if Izuku kept clear of the cameras. Izuku sidled up to an elderly man at the rear of the crowd. “What happened?”

“Some group of armed thugs busted into an elementary school. Dunno what they want, maybe hostages?” The old man shrugged, but he failed to hide a violent tremor.

“Is… is anyone you know in there?” Izuku hesitantly questioned.

“My grandson, a bunch more kids and the nine or so bastards who barged in there,” he snarled back.

“Okay, I hope it turns out okay, but I think that this crowd will just get in the way of the police. Maybe everyone should move back and let them deal with it?” Izuku gently ventured.

“Yeah, you’re right,” the old man nodded. “OI, EVERYONE CLEAR OFF, WE’RE BLOCKING THE POLICE!”

Izuku stepped away and bounded over the school wall before anyone could glance in his direction.

*Nine or so people. Unreliable as to number.*

*Armed.*

*Hostage situation? Speculated, but also unreliable.*

*Location of the gunmen in the school was unknown.*

*The number of children in the school was unknown.*

*I’m down an arm, can’t panic, can’t be seen, can’t be injured. Ambush tactics? Gotta be quick before anyone else arrives, because it might not be a hostage situation.*

Eh, Izuku had dealt with worse odds before and he accelerated, dodging through the gaps in the school’s CCTV cameras.
To everyone else, it was over before they could blink.

Number One was standing watch in a main corridor with a machine gun. A graze to the back of his neck and he sank limply to the ground, his weapon dismantling itself before it hit the ground.

Number Two had been approaching Number One. Nobody was quite sure how Number Two had ended up unconscious and dangling from a ceiling vent, but they had their suspicions and none of them were pleasant.

Number Three was brained with a pot plant. Or at least the pot of the plant, which had been separated from it and unceremoniously slammed over his head. They found the plant in the rear courtyard of the school, some distance away.

Number Four had unwisely chosen to leave the group of them guarding the children contained in the gym. He wasn’t going to ever view public bathrooms the same way again, even if he had no idea how him and the better part of his arsenal had ended up wedged in a public urinal.

Number Five met a similar fate to Number Four, but he only made it to the first ceiling fan before the bathroom, where he’d been left dangling via a number of skipping ropes.

Number Six had been on the verge of entering a classroom full of students when he was launched through a second storey window and slammed into the ground.

Numbers Seven through to Nine had been guarding the gym where most of the students and teachers had been herded into by the gang. The operative word there was had, because the lights had flickered off, there was a scream and all three of them were left dangling upside down from the rafters. At the exit, a small pile of dismantled weaponry was found and secured by police.

Number Ten was found two streets away in a van. They wouldn’t have known the connection between Number Ten and the others if not for the sleek business cards left behind, embossed and printed with a single odd number. The door had been ripped clean off the vehicle and he was found unconscious and secured backwards to his steering wheel by his tie.

Evidently, the getaway driver hadn’t been able to get away from whatever vengeful group of people had seen fit to intervene in what turned out to be a failed ransom attempt. The wealthy grandfather of the boy had waxed poetic of the good work of their mystery vigilante, and of the strange man who’d warned the crowd to move before they obstructed the police.

At least that’s what Naomasa had been told in the interviews. Long, incoherent and terror filled interviews of the gang in question, who indeed used a Quirk to smash through the local security. But they weren’t really why Naomasa was involved. It was the ten calling cards left behind in the trail of carnage in a series of takedowns that not a single person had witnessed, even in a school riddled with people and cameras.

“So Tsukauchi, what the fuck happened here?” Naomasa’s boss growled, staring over his shoulder.

“We have absolutely no idea,” Naomasa sighed. “Nobody saw what happened. There’s definitely a Quirk involved, but we have no idea what it would be for us to start investigating. For all of the popularity of calling cards in fiction, I’ve never seen a literal one left at a crime scene.”

“A calling card? You sure it’s not a routing number for a pro hero?” His boss grunted. “Gimme a look…”

Naomasa obligatorily brought up the photographs of the business card.
“Yeah, Tsukauchi, that’s a routing number. Whoever assigned it’s got a sense of humour on them though with a number like that. Do a report for our pro hero and standard investigations for the filth that he caught.” Another grunt and his superior was gone, slamming the door behind him.

Naomasa would have sighed with relief, if not for the fact that each capture needed its own record made and their unknown pro had bagged ten of them. He settled for rushing downstairs for another coffee.

Izuku slouched into All For One’s apartment and to the living room. “What a day…” He mumbled to himself, fishing his tie out and flinging it onto a nearby table. It wasn’t school, he didn’t need it, especially when Takada attended work in a t-shirt and shorts.

“Seconded,” All For One’s voice answered to his right. “I’m exhausted.”

“Doing what?” Izuku raised an eyebrow at the sprawled overlord.

“Resolving some loose ends. My work is in shambles after such a long absence,” All For One sighed.

“Do I want to know?” Izuku groaned.

“Probably, but that doesn’t mean I’m going to tell you,” All For One indifferently commented, flicking the TV off standby.

“Breaking news,” a nasally voice sneered across Izuku’s ears, “a ransom attempt was foiled today by an unlikely member of the public.”

Izuku ignored him. “I’m getting changed.” With that, he hobbled off to his room. Standing for the full length of the train trip hadn’t be fun. Peak periods of public transport were a type of evil that had to be supernatural in nature.

“Oh, this happened not far from your station,” All For One called to Izuku.

“Where did it happen?” Izuku called back.

“The local elementary school. You didn’t hear about it?”

“No, I had a quick peek and ran for the train. Didn’t have much time to hang around,” Izuku yelled back, feeling more tired than ever and finally in sane clothing. Taking his time, Izuku made his way to his usual lounge and flopped into it.

“You didn’t stop to help?” All For One asked, eyes closed.

“The best I could, but I’m not exactly in great condition,” Izuku sighed. If he had his right arm, he would have been done in half the time. As it was, some of the lifts he could still do in spite of only having one arm amazed Izuku.

“Just make sure you’re taking care of yourself.” All For One cracked open an eyelid and stared at him.

Izuku made an unintelligible noise even to his own ears and closed his eyes. It must have been some sort of latent parental indication for All For One who promptly swooped down and scooped him up.
“Can you not?” Izuku groaned.

“I want to show you something.”

Izuku briefly wondered if it was the dismembered corpse of someone All For One assumed he didn’t like. Then he opened his eyes.

“Is that…?”

“Yes.”

All For One had wallpapered the room in extracts of Izuku’s article. Pride of place above All For One’s desk read “a nefarious fiend whose deeds would be often recounted with those in the same category of Stalin and Hitler, if not for the fact that the government is still yet to formally acknowledge his existence or that he was imprisoned at all” and Izuku felt himself turn bright red.

“I thought he was going to delete that.” Izuku buried his head in his arms.

All For One laughed at him.

Chapter End Notes

My laptop died on me and left me with some debilitating migraines after the screen failed, but we got there eventually.
Assignment of a Cryptid

Chapter Summary

The early cryptid gets the worm.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Katsuki was going to blow that motherfucker’s head clean off and present it to Deku on a golden platter. As soon as his Quirk started fucking working again. For now, all he could do was gesture insistently at the brand new writing pad which had mysteriously replaced the old one. Gee, where did the old one go? Asked fucking no one.

**IZUKU MIDORIYA IS IN DANGER. HIS ASSHOLE FATHER ATTACKED ME.**

“Katsuki, you’ve had a head injury. There wasn’t anyone else here. No camera footage and the guards didn’t see anything. There’s nothing wrong with Midoriya. He’s with his father and safe. I asked Inko about it and she said her kid’s been busy working. You fell out of bed and hurt yourself,” his hag of a mother insisted from his hospital bedside, his father nodding beside her.

**Because he fucking attacked me, you bint. What about this aren’t you getting?**

“The MRI showed that you have a cracked skull, Katsuki and it matches with how they found you on the floor,” she repeated in a slow, grating tone of voice that made him wish that All For One had threatened to throw her through the fucking window. Seemed like the only thing that would convince her that the bastard had been in Katsuki’s room. “You fell out of bed. Nothing else happened.”

**He stole my fucking Quirk. If it’s fucking brain damage then why isn’t anything else shitted up?**

“People can’t steal Quirks, Katsuki,” his father repeated for the umpteenth time. “Brains are delicate, so we don’t know exactly, but it got your Quirk…”

**Bullshit. Yeah, I guess fucking All For One’s fucking pawn kidnapping me was a figment of my fucking imagination then. The Noumu that fucked up Hosu and Kamino were fucking imaginary too, then. All Might fought and sent thin air to prison,** Katsuki aggressively scratched into his paper, almost snapping the pencil tip when he heard his mother’s snort.

**Fuck off, you spineless worm. Get me Detective Tsukauchi so I can tell him about it. You two morons aren’t doing shit. What are you going to fucking do when they find his corpse? “I’m sorry, Mrs Midoriya, my son told us but we didn’t do nothing because we were too busy being shitheads to call to call the police.”** Katsuki stabbed the paper as though it had done him a great personal wrong. “We know you’re upset, but you don’t have to be rude about it,” his mother growled and Katsuki fought back the urge to gesture rudely.

“Excuse me, a word please,” a reedy voice rang out and Katsuki immediately extended his middle finger in the bastard’s direction. It was like releasing a pressure valve, but more soothing.
“KATSUKI!” His mother screamed and he ignored it. The fucking greasy haired, squinty eyed moron deserved it. Cross between a weasel and a molten garbage bin. Doctor Shitpants or something like that, some incompetent neurologist, who the fuck knows or cares. His name wasn’t worth remembering.

“It’s all right,” Shitpants snivelled, holding his clipboard to his chest. “People with brain injuries are very delicate, especially with something as traumatising as losing a Quirk. He’ll need time to come to terms with it.” Shitpants gestured at Katsuki’s mother and they left the room. Katsuki was left fuming and glaring murder at his father.

“You hear that, Katsuki? It’s normal to be upset when something like this happens. I know it’s confusing and scary, but you’ll be okay.” The smile was meant to be encouraging, but it only caused a vein to pulse even further out from Katsuki's forehead.

Why aren’t you listening to me? You never fucking listen, you always take her side.

“That’s not true, Katsuki. We want what’s best for you,” his father sighed.

Yeah, being repeatedly smashed in the head is what's best for me. Wonder if Dr Shitpants will call me delusional when I tell him that.

“What did he write?” The harpy barked and Katsuki hurriedly ripped off the page and stuffed it under him. He needed it as a threat when he wasn't considered delusional,

“Katsuki’s upset about his Quirk.”

Fuck off. Katsuki scrawled to his father. He was right about you, you wimp. You can win the fucking Doormat of the Year Award and go lick mum’s shoes while you’re on your knees collecting it.

His mother’s blow landed on Katsuki’s shoulder and he saw red, white and his fucking father sitting there, being fucking useless. He flew forwards, wrenching at his IV and thrashed. Flinging flailing blows that were almost useless without the explosive force of his Quirk behind them. It didn’t matter if he had his Quirk or not, he’d make them fucking listen.

They held onto him, which only made him buck more, letting him deal a remarkably satisfying blow to the harpy’s jaw even through the bloody haze. Not good enough, more hands dragged him off them and held him down.

Fucking sedatives. Katsuki wasn’t some moron like Kaminari. They thought he was delusional because his Quirk was gone. That was bullshit. Katsuki knew what happened. So did All For One, Deku and whoever the fuck else had realised something was wrong. Deku had been missing for too fucking long, everyone knew it and now Katsuki knew why. Deku who was fucking trapped with that asshole who went around murdering all of their friends.

The moment he could smile and nod his way into the security fucking off, Katsuki was going to get the fuck out of there, get Deku away from his fuckwit psychopath of a father, get his Quirk back and explosively shove that smug, squinty eyed fucking doctor’s clipboard straight up that bastard arse with extreme prejudice. He didn’t need a fucking Quirk. He’d fucking solo it if these pricks weren’t going to help him. If Deku had managed this shit, then so could he.
What Maki had failed to tell both Izuku and All For One weeks ago in that spacious office, was that Izuku was being dispatched to crime hotspots all over Japan for reporting purposes. This was the first time Izuku would be travelling to another island. All For One took it about as well as Izuku would have expected.

“Hokkaido? There’s nothing in Hokkaido,” All For One griped.

“Apart from a huge cluster of criminal activity,” Izuku commented, digging through a suitcase and sliding his carefully counted business cards into a side pocket. He hopefully had enough for the trip, but Maki wasn’t optimistic about the prospects of him getting away unscathed.

Mei Hatsume’s assistant writing hand was sitting on Izuku’s side table. Hatsume called it the NanoGrab. A hand shaped clump of tiny robots held together with magnetic fields. It could float and act independently so long as Izuku wore the receiver circlet she’d given him. It was the only thing that got him through his note taking and writing for both work and school. Izuku had suggested rolling it out as a disability aid once more testing was done, which had only caused her to sandwich herself onto a terrified Izuku and wax poetic about their children. If there was ever a person married to their job, it was her. Izuku added it to his travel bag.

“And they think sending a child is somehow going to fix it?”

“Fix it?” Izuku cocked his head slightly. No, Maki wasn’t expecting him to physically fix these problems. She just wanted the peace of mind of her reporter not being dismembered while attempting to interview people. She hadn’t specified if that was due to the subjects or the police. “I think she just wants to expose the source of the problems.”

All For One snorted. “A lack of professional heroes to arrest the villains?”

Izuku perked up. “No, actually.”

All For One shot Izuku a sideways look, his eyebrows raised. “No?”

“No. Seems like someone in government decided to cut funding and shut down mental health wards across the island,” Izuku grimaced.

“And where do disenfranchised, ill people go but the streets?” All For One concluded. “And Maki hasn’t been allowed to report on this due to the censorship laws.” Definitive to the letter, All For One was a media mogul. If anyone knew about the pains of reporting real news instead of some celebrity love triangle, it was going to be him. Even if he also would happily publish details on the celebrity love triangle alongside the news.

“From what we can tell. The statistics we got from the Justice Department show that most of the people arrested don’t have a lot of contact with their families.” Izuku really didn’t envy the research team. He’d seen the pile of disposable coffee cups obfuscating the bin and could only sympathise with them. “Maki wants me to find out if there’s any connection between the closures and the increase in crime.”

“Existing data from other countries would suggest yes,” All For One drawled.

“Other countries also suggested that making Quirks illegal was a good idea,” Izuku observed.
All For One winced. “Point taken. Better to be thorough.” All For One’s blank expression didn’t conceal the erratic drumming of the overlord’s fingers.

Izuku took a deep breath. “The rules don’t apply to me because I’m not really a journalist, so I can write my heavily informed and sourced opinion piece without having to worry about the fallout,” Izuku nodded, zipping the suitcase up. “I’ll be fine.”

“Will you?”

Izuku stared at All For One, who stared back without a trace of humour.

“I’m not Shigaraki and I didn’t have a Kurogiri. I babysat myself for years without any issues.”

“That doesn’t make me feel any better.”

Izuku rolled his eyes. “I’ll ring every night and you can visit once while I’m there, only if you behave yourself and don’t maim, strangle or otherwise horrifically harm someone.” Punctuated with a furious glare, Izuku was rewarded with a supremely contrite nod.

“I’ll be good.”

Izuku strongly doubted that they shared the same definition of good, but hopefully All For One would keep his homicidal tendencies to himself for a month. Taking care of Eri was a holiday compared to this experience.

Hokkaido was a disaster and either the research was with a ridiculously small sample size or someone had gotten something drastically wrong. War zones had a better atmosphere than the street before Izuku, where buildings had been shattered and rubble lined the streets. Unsurprisingly, the street was next to a now closed public mental institution. The police hadn’t released the numbers yet on how many people were running rampant, but the pro heroes weren’t keeping up, even in the immediate areas to the source of the problem.

It didn’t take him long to find his first subject for interview, as the subject stood screaming with bladed fingers over a woman who was desperately attempting to shield her child. Izuku hadn’t intended to leave his business card wedged up the man’s left nostril, but he’d slipped and accidents happened.

Subject Number Two was crying in a nearby alleyway. Spikes protruded from her spine and she cried wildly as he approached. Forty minutes later, Izuku delivered her to a local hospital, a far firmer understanding of just how unhelpful this particular institution had been to the woman. “They told me to retract my spines, but I can’t, they’re just there and they wouldn’t listen,” she wailed into Izuku’s arms, who could only nod sympathetically and take notes while she hung from his shoulders.

Subject Number Three was a burning building. Or rather a child younger than Izuku who could combust into sentient flames at will. A child whose fiery form had been splashed into a building as an act of malice by fellow patient. Izuku constructed a makeshift torch and lured the child onto it, watching the blue flame gleam brightly Izuku as babbled about what he’d seen his classmates doing at school for the previous weeks. While the boy had burned on Izuku’s torch, Izuku stumbled across Subject Number Four’s family, who hadn’t been notified about the institution’s closure. “She’s got telekinesis,” the girl’s mother whispered. “When she gets upset, things explode, including people.”
“And no one bothered to tell you?” Izuku was struggling to hold his jaw closed and could've sworn he saw something resembling a facepalm in the flames of Subject Number Three.

“Typical,” a tiny, burning voice whispered.

It took three hours for the boy to run out of steam and revert to flesh and blood, but it seemed as though the orderlies hadn’t cared about that minor detail that all Quirks subscribed to - limited energy. *Utter stupidity*, was Izuku’s personal note on the file.

Subject Number Four was found at a playground and treated to ice cream while they waited for her family to arrive. The “girl” was older than Izuku, but was as lost as the rest of the people Izuku had found.

Izuku’s first day ended at a hotel with fourteen subjects worth of notes hammered into his laptop by a strangely aggressive mechanical hand. It was then his phone chose to ring.

“How was work?” All For One’s voice carefully probed.

Izuku opened his mouth and thirty minutes later, he could just about see the man's grimace.

“How was work?” All For One’s voice carefully probed.

Izuku opened his mouth and thirty minutes later, he could just about see the man's grimace.

“Do you want me to come over. I might be able to help…” All For One seemed to hesitantly broach and Izuku frowned. On the one hand, Izuku didn’t want to give All For One any ideas about Quirks… on the other, maybe he could explain the local criminal groups in the area, so Izuku could render them with his assistance.

“You can come for breakfast tomorrow at the cafe nearby and that’s it. No helping,” Izuku warned.

“Deal.” Izuku hadn’t heard someone so relieved since his arrival back at home after hospital.

Though as it turned out, All For One wasn’t the only person with expertise about the local gangs as they both stepped into the only cafe that served strong coffee in the area.

“Makoto Tsukauchi?” Izuku waved and the glasses wearing woman sitting in front of the table waved back.

“Midoriya! You live!” Haimawari called, sporting a brilliant bruise, raised a hand. Then flopped limply onto the table.

“Don’t mind him. He picked a fight with someone bigger than him,” Tsukauchi winked. “Is this your father?”

All For One made a throat slicing gesture.

“He’s banned from talking to people after the last outing,” Izuku explained.

Haneyama smirked, her pink hair carefully braided behind her. “Sounds like the old man and his daughter at the moment. She grilled him alive for being an embarrassment at our last concert.”

All For One snorted and Izuku casually elbowed him in the ribs.

“So it’s just you three here, then?” Izuku probed.
“We're here for work, researching the surge of villain activity,” Tsukauchi pointed at her laptop. At this declaration, Haimawari inexplicably coughed violently and was smacked on the back by Haneyama next to him.

“Yeah,” Haimawari said sleepily, “work.”

“So, wanna know about the local villains?” Haneyama winked and Izuku was too busy ogling her phone full of criminal happy snaps to yell at All For One for ordering drinks. So long as he didn’t brain anyone with them, it was probably okay.

A week later, Izuku set down his bags and a cinderblock next to the coffee table back at All For One’s apartment after a text message to his mother.

“Izuku…” All For One carefully ventured.

“Why do you have a cinderblock?”

“Research purposes,” Izuku yawned, curling up on the lounge in a shirt with “Awake” printed on it in English.

That had been a mistake, caused by an All For One free week, risk free of waking up with the resident megalomaniac wrapped around him in a room that wasn’t his. Izuku couldn’t breathe. Pinned and crushed by an arm enclosing him, he could only gasp in air. Air that was surprisingly salty, since Izuku wasn’t crying. At least it didn’t feel like he was crying.

But if it’s not me, Izuku thought in a haze and squinted at the quivering figure curled around him. Glistening, a drop fell and splattered on Izuku’s forehead. Oh no.

Wrenching at All For One’s iron grip, Izuku broke free enough of a hand to roughly grab the man’s shoulder. “Hey!” Izuku shook him as much as he dared. All For One mumbled something indistinct and shifted, as if to roll over with Izuku’s still in his grasp. “Hey! Wake up!”

“Hmm, Izuku?” All For One’s voice was slurred, eyes wet and shining in the faint illumination of room.

“Let go! You’re crushing me.” Izuku gasped and All For One relinquished his grip, shooting upwards and staring with wild eyes.

“Are you alright?” Someone else might have mistaken it for concern, but Izuku could practically smell the panic with how quickly the lights came on and how carefully All For One watched him.

“I think,” Izuku said slowly as he deeply inhaled, before words could fail him, “that you had a nightmare. Then you wouldn’t let go.”

Centuries of murdering children had been perfectly fine for the nemesis of Japan, but whatever had happened here left him nothing short of stricken. One hand was clawed into the sheets, another tentatively prodded at Izuku’s side. “I’m so sorry,” All For One whispered, ruffling Izuku’s hair.

Izuku hadn’t dealt with many apologies in his lifetime. No one seemed particularly inclined to apologise for much of anything these days. It only made the lump in Izuku’s throat bigger when he remembered the last person who’d cried their eyes out while apologising to him.
“It happens,” Izuku allowed.

All For One’s lip trembled. “It was about you.”

“My?” Izuku stated blankly, head ringing as though he’d been swatted with a saucepan. “Why me?”

“You’re a regular feature in my nightmares,” All For One smiled mirthlessly. “I wasn’t expecting to ever have the opportunity to do this again.” All For One eyes never left Izuku, but as the seconds ticked away, he could see his face fall. “You’re surprised by it,” he concluded.

Izuku struggled for words, because was it even All For One who surprised him? Izuku didn’t think it was, there was something missing from the assessment. “It’s not you,” Izuku started, attempting to figuratively slap the sleep from his brain. “It’s just that… I don’t think anyone would dream about me in any capacity, let alone have nightmares about it.” Izuku could have said so many things, like a finely honed barrage of feeling seeking missiles towards All For One, but he doubted any of them would have made his face drop like a stone the way it did with that utterance.

“Do you think that no one cares, Izuku?” Izuku’s stringent attempt to avoid eye contact was foiled by All For One’s hand sneaking under his chin and compelling him to look upwards. “Is that why you throw yourself at the world’s problems? That no one will miss you when you’re gone?”

“No.” Izuku squirmed and was tugged back to All For One.

“Then why are you so lost at the prospect of people worrying about you?”

“Because people didn’t before… and,” Izuku hesitated. “Just because I have a Quirk, I didn’t really expect them to start now.”

“Past experiences don’t necessarily mean that no one’s worried for your safety,” All For One inclined his head.

“You not coming back seems to indicate that you weren’t all that worried about my safety,” Izuku remarked. That being said, Izuku’s mother hadn’t exactly ever told All For One about Izuku’s numerous hospitalisations or injuries. Probably for the best with the trail of carnage that followed Japan’s Most Wanted’s every step.

“I was replaced, Izuku. It only would have hurt you and your mother’s feelings if I had come back and you both found out who I was. I left to deal with All Might as bit by bit he destroyed my income. The income that was used to sustain you and your mother,” All For One explained, rubbing circles into Izuku’s back. Somehow, Izuku doubted it was really for his comfort from All For One’s distant expression. “Our encounters became… more violent and as he knew my appearance, staying became a problem that went beyond me.”

“Mum,” Izuku realised with dawning horror.

“And you. What would happen if I was linked to you both? I never told Inko about my past, though she no doubt has guessed that all was not well from the same restless sleep that you witnessed.” All For One gently squeezed Izuku. “And in a handful of years, you were lost to me. You favourite video as a toddler was the aftermath of the bloodshed between All Might and myself. The bloodshed I used to cover my escape after he came at me with the intent to kill. I left him, bleeding, to clean up the rubble and bodies and fled. For a while I was overseas, looking for a proxy solution to my
Swallowing thickly, Izuku had little doubt that All For One’s business overseas was the importation of Trigger back into Japan from America where it was currently legal. Izuku shook his head and glared at All For One. It wasn’t good enough. All For One had brought it upon himself by refusing to deal with his problems like a normal person. Izuku couldn’t contemplate a world where Hisashi Midoriya would be excused by his family or anyone else. “You killed his mentor. What were you expecting him to do? You can’t run around murdering people and not expect people to hold a grudge.” Or expect your family to just deal with it.

“I,” All For One began… and stumbled. “I’ve done far worse than simply kill his mentor, Izuku,” he finished in a taut voice.

Izuku blinked at him. “If you mean Nana Shimura’s grandson…” What had happened to Tenko Shimura was nothing short of horrific. However All Might could sleep at night with that information was well beyond Izuku’s comprehension. Tenko, now Tomura, was a mess of a human being. So convinced that it was All Might who was the source of his woes, rather than the murderer who’d taken on the role of a sabotaging teacher. Did Shigaraki even know about All For One’s part in his grandmother’s murder?

“Worse.” Class 1-A had a shortlist of all of the morbid, disturbing and downright nightmare inducing crimes they’d come across… and somehow from tone alone Izuku had little doubt that All For One would destroy everything else on that list.

“… Are you going to tell me?” He really didn’t want to know, but it was almost an obligation to fix whatever All For One had destroyed.

“Eventually, along with the many other things I have to tell you,” All For One sighed, his head in his hands. “I never planned for this to happen. I never expected to be in a position to…” He waved a hand to their general surroundings.

“Why not?” The lack of planning hadn’t stopped All For One from outright kidnapping Izuku. What changed to make him disregard the prior conclusion?

“I watched you over the years. Gazing at something I could never have because of All Might’s tenaciousness,” All For One bitterly spat, momentarily tensing around Izuku’s shoulders. “You used to smile so often, always happy…” All For One shuddered and Izuku was forced to shuddered with him. “Then Tsubasa drew and delivered his conclusion and you didn’t smile anymore… Year by year, photo by photo, you and your mother lost a little bit more of your liveliness. She, in her stress gained weight, and every time I looked at you there was an ever fading shadow of what you used to be. By the time I had lost my sight, you didn’t really smile anymore.” All For One’s voice trembled. For a little while, quiet. All For One’s deep breathing and Izuku’s long suffering noise of sleep deprivation.

Finally, he continued. “I convinced myself that it was better to not be involved, that I’d never be accepted regardless because of the propaganda and the damage done by All Might,” All For One whispered, a hand smoothing down Izuku’s hair. “I told myself that you were gone and would be happier if I wasn’t involved, but that wasn’t entirely voluntary on my part…” All For One snarled.

“You went after Tsubasa because of it.” Izuku swallowed down bile. Tsubasa was in the wrong place, at the wrong time and was related to the wrong person.
“His grandfather had ruined your life, left you a despondent shell of a human being with his lack of tact,” All For One hissed. “He took your happiness, so I took his.”

Swallowing down his nausea, Izuku swayed as the image took shape in his mind. Tsubasa had no tact and said what he did at that clinic so long ago. Izuku was shattered, his mother blaming herself for Izuku’s misery because she couldn’t explain where the defect had come from. All For One had retaliated by depriving Tsubasa of a loved one, just as he had All Might and Nana Shimura. Izuku didn’t know what to say, because of the lump in his throat.

“I think… it might be for the best if I sleep elsewhere,” All For One eventually nodded, facing away from Izuku.

“Are you sure? This is your room.” Any excuse to get back to his own room. To have the time to process what he’d just been told.

“No, you stay here,” All For One insisted and pulled himself to his feet even with Izuku holding onto part of his shirt.

It’d give Izuku time to think, but there was something missing about the situation. Izuku knew he shouldn’t ask. It’s not something that he’d generally ask anyone. He shouldn’t have had the curiosity ask especially in this instance. He tugged All For One’s retreating sleeve. “What… what was the nightmare?”

All For One’s head was resolutely turned away from Izuku, but it didn’t hide the quiver in his voice. “You fell,” he said simply and vanished, Izuku’s fingers holding thin air.

While he might have been safe from being inadvertently crushed by All For One, it didn’t prevent the imaginary weight that pressed down on Izuku’s chest or the fit of wakefulness that left him staring at where All For One stood long after man had left.

Izuku awoke to a scream, followed by a gargle.

“What the he-?!”

He shot out of his bed, skidding to a halt in the living room, obfuscated by a haze of lingering sleep.

Tomura Shigaraki was held suspended in mid air by Mei Hatsume’s writing assistant. His attempts at disintegrating it foiled by its copious, incongruent magnetic components and unrelenting grip. Kurogiri stood to his side, yellow eyes wide and then he spotted Izuku who hurriedly closed his jaw and rushed for the headband sitting on the coffee table, slamming it on.

“Your father asked us to keep an eye on you,” Kurogiri rushed out. “We’re meant to be here, he sent you a message.” Izuku fished out his phone and read the single unread message on it.

Sending some associates to keep an eye on you after last night. Please attempt to not traumatise them.

Whoops. Izuku reluctantly relaxed mental fingers and Shigaraki fell to the ground with a muffled thwump. The writing assistant limply fell from the air and back onto the coffee table. That was weird. Maybe an interfacing glitch? Hatsume had to be told about that. At least it hadn’t happened to
“Wait, what? What time is it?” Izuku blinked and paled. *Work!*

“Midday and he already told your employer that you won’t be in today,” Kurogiri explained, hefting a gasping Shigaraki to his feet.

“Why… does all of your shit… try to strangle people?” Shigaraki gasped, falling into a lounge and Izuku scratched his head, feeling more mortified than ever.

“It was like that before it was given to me,” Izuku winced, more sure than ever that Hatsume must have repurposed an existing gadget for something so complicated to be so quickly made. “What do you mean no work today?” Izuku accusingly turned to Kurogiri who averted his gaze.

“He said that you’re sick,” Shigaraki coughed. “Not that anyone would have guessed,” he muttered darkly.

“He doesn’t get to make those decisions,” Izuku bit out. “He’s years too late.” Not to mention every other atrocity he’d carried out only within Izuku’s lifespan.

Even as a cloud of almost intangible mist, Kurogiri was doing an impressive job of attempting melt into the side of Shigaraki’s lounge. “He spoke to your mother and it was her idea.”

“Really?” Izuku carefully stressed. *What convenient timing.* “What else was she talking to him about?” Not that such phone calls were necessarily uncommon from the number of recent calls logged on All For One’s phone whenever he made his own. They just didn’t tend to happen while Izuku was within hearing distance, though All For One’s strained expression at a distance was a dead giveaway.

Kurogiri audibly swallowed. “They have planned dinner for two weeks today and it was raised that you would, perhaps, like some time to yourself on the night.”

Pausing, Izuku’s eyes wandered. Izuku didn’t know when they’d last seen each other in person. As far as Izuku knew, All For One must have visited at some point after Izuku discharge from hospital if the phone was any indication, but there was no way of pinpointing when it happened.

“Is there any particular reason why I wasn’t told this directly?” Izuku groaned flopping into the lounge most distant to Shigaraki.

Kurogiri cleared his throat. “He didn’t want to wake you up.”

“Typical,” Izuku muttered. All For One had no doubt tracked the solid three hours of sleep that Izuku managed after the night’s incident. “You don’t need to be here.”

“He insisted.”

Izuku rolled his eyes. “Then be a big boy and tell him that you’re busy ruining peoples’ lives or whatever it is you do.” It came out more bluntly than Izuku intended, but given the people in question… The League of Villains were murderers who would have happily carried on where Overhaul left off with Eri. If they had managed it… well, these days, Izuku might be more inclined for business card involved accidents to happen with extreme prejudice. There was a perfectly good cinderblock next to the table and no one was immune to ambushes… apart from All For One.

“Why are you so disrespectful?” Shigaraki snapped. “Rude.”

“And you invading a school and attempting to murder kids isn’t rude?” Izuku raised an eyebrow.
“Society did that, and their heroes in training, they're part of the problem,” Shigaraki returned.

Izuku felt a mental set of gloves slide off and combust. He was too tired to have this argument. “Oh, really? When was the last time you voted?”

Shigaraki visibly shrunk. “What?”

“When was the last time you formally registered your disapproval with the government in a legal manner? Do you even know how to vote? Do you know how the laws work? Do you know what pro heroes are legally considered and their formal role? When was your last activist movement day? Did you lobby for changes to Quirk regulation? Did you raise awareness that prior laws already dealt with criminal activity and Quirks didn’t have to be specifically addressed? Do you know anything about anything?” Izuku barked and he could have sworn he saw Shigaraki jump.

“No…” Shigaraki said in a small voice.

“Evidently not, otherwise you would already know that most people agree with Quirk deregulation if you did some research instead of attempting to genocide people who agree with changing the law and not killing people,” Izuku blisteringly delivered, taking great satisfaction in Shigaraki’s perplexed expression.

“People… don’t agree with Quirks being regulated?”

“No, so do some research, stop murdering people and stop blaming areas you have no idea about,” Izuku bit with finality, prodding the TV remote.

The TV snapped to life. “-ing news!” Drawled out from the speakers and Izuku held in a sigh. There was never not breaking news and no matter what Izuku did it never felt like it was enough, even with the pile of gushing letters on the desk that wasn’t technically his at work.

Shigaraki on the other hand was so close to the TV that he was almost in it.

“Shock, horror, calamity, nightmares…. For the villains that is, after Hokkaido was subject to an assault by the illusive Ku.” Before Izuku’s eyes, appeared a scene that he was only vaguely familiar with, having glanced over his shoulder as he left the scene of twenty-four gang members who’d been plying former mental patients with a steady supply of conventional drugs. Twenty-four gang members who were displayed with business cards left carefully beside them.

Oh no.

“This bastard,” Shigaraki growled, hands inching towards his neck. Izuku was faster and slapped them away before retreating to his seat. Whether Kurogiri knew it or not, Izuku saw him take that panicked step back on his way past.

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“Don’t scratch. You know this guy?” Ku. They were literally calling him #9, after the routing number on the business cards. Ku. Izuku stared as the news continued flick through scene after scene of seeming carnage. The media had reached it before the police, but none of those people were seriously injured. Not unless they had other injuries he hadn’t known about, but he tried. Not that anyone would know it from the footage here.

“They call him Ku. A pro called Suffering,” Shigaraki giggled almost hysterically. “Everyone knows about him… People are scared because he can crop up anywhere, but almost always where we are. Makes me sick, him just ripping through us as though we’re nothing.”
Hanging around with All For One wasn’t doing Izuku any favours, because the words left him before he could stop himself. “Maybe if you weren’t so inept, he wouldn’t be ripping through your associates on account of you all being nothing.” Izuku resisted a wince, but saw Kurogiri once again backing away, by now a healthy distance between them. Izuku hadn’t known that so many of the thugs he’d dealt with were associated with the League of Villains, but any information was good information. The media was onto the League even if they and the police didn’t know it yet. Drug dealing, though, was a new low for them.

Izuku’s attention jumped back to the so-called guests and Shigaraki, too, was likewise inching backwards, his expression drawn into something Izuku couldn’t identify. “Sensei… hurt you, didn’t he?” Shigaraki whispered, rocking from side to side, hands planted carefully away from his throat.

“He almost killed me,” Izuku bluntly noted, thinking back to All For One’s dispatches and Muscular’s attack. So many times Izuku had brushed with death or injury, but it’s not like All For One had bothered to carefully screen or check the sites of Shigaraki’s involvement. “I don’t owe him or you anything.” It was too early to see these people let alone speak to them.

Shigaraki looked though Izuku had lodged an iron sole into the manchild’s stomach and Kurogiri wasn’t much better off. They stared at him, so Izuku rolled his eyes and stood, collecting his writing assistant before it could make another attempt at Shigaraki.

“I have work to do,” and Izuku stalked off, snapping shut his door behind him, left the hand and circlet on the table and threw himself into his sheets. According to Takada, sleep was also an important kind of work and maybe he could work on dismantling the League of Villains in his dreams. Currently, Kurogiri was just going to warp away any blow he tried to land either of them. Probably the reason All For One had sent him in the first place.

Izuku tried to ignore the hand drumming, as though irritated, while he dozed.

Chapter End Notes

These seizures have not been pleasant. Updates will be slowing down as a result. Generally it’s every two weeks, but blek. Formatting and editing is broken on AO3 for me at the moment, so I’ll have to clean it up when it’s fixed. Apologies!
All For One’s cupcakes were staring Izuku down from across table, as were Hatsume and Mineta who’d skidded in through the front door past a nonplussed All For One with a hurried “Hi Midoriya Senior!” before unloading their pile of papers onto the coffee table.

“Cupcakes!” Mineta squealed, snatching one and savaging it. “Mmmmm, strawberry.”

“I made apple muffins last time for a guest. I thought they were a touch sweet, but it didn’t seem to deter anyone,” All For One observed, wandering past. Well, he wasn’t wrong. All For One had barely set the tray of muffins down before Eri, when they’d vanished in a snarling joint effort. Izuku admitted nothing and denied everything. “I’ve made chocolate cupcakes for Izuku for tomorrow.” All For One winked over his shoulder at Izuku and Izuku had never felt more inclined to just cease his own being at that moment.

“What for?” Mineta grunted through his food.

“I’m taking a research trip,” Izuku shrugged.

“He needs bribes,” All For One added and Izuku groaned.

“Whatever works,” Hatsume nodded enthusiastically. “I have been perusing the requirements for authorisation, licensing and patents and I am still yet to find reasons given by government for the changes.”

“I looked too, there’s nothing,” Mineta agreed.

“Nothing from me,” Izuku sighed.

“Now that we’ve made no progress on the project, I didn’t tell you about therapy!” Mineta bounced up and down, diving into his backpack. With a flourish, he whipped out a risqué magazine that had Izuku averting his eyes, a blush crawling up his face. “Check this out.” Mineta pulled a ball from his head and stuck it on a blank piece of paper. Then he lifted it and waved it through the air as though it were a particularly stubby flag.

“Oh, your Quirk!” Izuku bounced, careful to keep his head averted from the magazine. “It’s working again!”

“Yep!” Mineta plucked a few more off and expertly juggled them, before sticking them to the same piece of paper. “Also!” He lifted the magazine, which was filled with a particularly buxom woman and nonchalantly tossed it over one shoulder. Straight into the waiting arms of Hatsume who viciously grabbed at it.
“Oh!” Izuku exclaimed. “You probably don’t want to give the details, but…?”

“It’s a work in progress,” the purple haired boy nodded seriously. “The doctors said it’s not usually normal for one extreme or the other. My Quirk working again is a good sign, but it’ll take a while for everything to be normal. Progress is progress.” Mineta’s lip wobbled momentarily, but he held firm. Izuku nodded sympathetically.

Mineta was probably being optimistic. Izuku didn’t know the details, but therapy was generally a lifelong commitment from the research he’d done. Discrimination was still a problem for people seeking treatment as well. While Mineta might not have thought that far ahead, his condition placed him at risks that went well beyond whatever the therapist had suspected was wrong with him. If less savoury members of the media ever found out about Mineta’s problem, his career would go down in a fiery blaze moments after it began.

With pro hero statistics what they were, instances of mental illness shouldn’t have been a surprise. The operative word there was shouldn’t, but it didn’t stop the floodgates from being blasted open by a surge of unrealistic expectations from media commentators, average people and, rather sickeningly in Izuku’s opinion, actual doctors who didn’t seem to see the issue with pros working themselves into the ground. Unless Mineta somehow made his way into All Might level popularity, nothing was going to save him from the lowlives both in and out of the media.

Izuku hadn’t gotten any texts to suggest that Mineta had relapsed into his old behaviours, but he had received texts from Kaminari suggesting that Mineta was “less fun” to be around. With Mineta not blinking sideways at the magazine he’d tossed away, Izuku could hazard a guess for the source of the complaint.

“I see you have a copy of Support Monthly,” Hatsume nodded eagerly from behind. “The calendar edition they did for charity. By order only, if I remember correctly and they were sold out when I went to order.” Her eyes narrowed and Mineta visibly shrunk.

“There’s a really neat article on page eight that talks about people getting Support licences for their Quirks,” Mineta rushed out in a small and rapid voice. “I brought it for schoolwork and thought that maybe you’d want it.”

Hatsume beamed, her face an inch from Mineta, who was now almost in Izuku’s arms.

“That was very thoughtful of you, Purple.” Hatsume patted Mineta on the shoulder. “Good boy.”

“Aw,” All For One cooed, “this brings back memories.”

“Well, I was the awful one and my brother was wonderful, so it did cause some family conflict.” All For One noted from the kitchen. Izuku’s brain screeched to a halt and reversed. Aw-ful-One. All For One. Won-der-ful. One For All.

Izuku sunk his head into his heads. “Can I go back to mum now?”

Mineta gagged on his second cupcake, Hatsume valiantly slapped him across the back and he coughed up crumbs. All For One’s chuckles reverberated from the kitchen.

“Not to worry, Midoriya Junior. When you cite reasons for leaving home early, all of us will understand and sympathise with a parent’s malformed sense of humour,” Hatsume encouraged, while still patting a pink Mineta on the back. Hatsume calling All For One a parent only made Izuku shudder.
“I have no idea what your dad was talking about, but that reply killed me,” Mineta coughed, lunging for a glass of water. “Almost as much as Kirishima being tossed out of hospital visits by Bakugou’s parents.” Mineta snorted dangerously close to his glass.

“What, why? He’s the last person to be thrown out of anywhere.” Izuku blinked. Kirishima was generally the one preventing Kacchan from being tossed out of places. Kacchan’s parents normally didn’t care about who their son hung around with. Not in all the years Izuku had known him. What changed?

“Yeah, that’s why it’s so funny. Well,” Mineta frowned deeply, “it is and it isn’t. You haven’t heard yet, have you?” His teeth bit into his lower lip and he winced. “Bakugou might not be coming back to U.A.”

Izuku stared. “What did you just say?”

Mineta grimaced. “His parents said he fell out of bed at the hospital and cracked his skull open. He’s been hallucinating pretty badly and his Quirk is on the fritz.” Mineta cringed, his lip twitching. “I feel bad for him there.” At least Mineta’s Quirk was slowly, but surely, starting to work correctly again. Seemed like the stony faced doctors now manning the Nurses Office were proving a point just as much as they were offering treatment. “Remember what happened to Aizawa-sensei? They reckon the same thing happened here. Kirishima didn’t get time to hear what Bakugou’s side of the story was, but the moment Bakugou opened his mouth, the parents kicked him out. Seems like they took his phone as well.”

Izuku continued to stare. “How… It’s Kacchan,” Izuku struggled to voice. “Wouldn’t he just, you know…” Izuku made a vague motion implying great violence.

“You’d think so, but Kirishima reckons they’re sedating him. Which, uh,” he whispered, Mineta’s eyes darted sideways, “I don’t know about you, but I don’t think a guy with a head injury needs much more messing with his head.”

Nodding furiously, Izuku’s mind and eyes wandered over to All For One, who seemed to be doing his best to contain something that might have been suppressed glee. “Hey Hisashi, isn’t that awful? Kacchan being stuck in hospital with everyone thinking he’s crazy? Maybe mum should know and we can jointly visit. She remembers him from school after all.” Not fondly, but he didn’t need to know that. Normally, Izuku didn’t take pleasure in the misfortune of others, but All For One’s visible swallow and paling did miraculous things for Izuku’s stress levels.

“How about we go visit after dinner next week?” All For One suggested, almost meekly.

“Okay,” Izuku agreed, shooting the man a final nasty look. So help Izuku, if All For One had anything to do with Kacchan’s sudden backwards step in hospital… If All For One was responsible for it though, he was in no position to deny a direct request from Inko. Not after she’d already issued her all too clear orders on Izuku being allowed to visit friends.

“Uh, Midoriya? Can you stop staring like that? You’re going to hurt someone,” Mineta warbled, holding up a wobbly finger. “Namely us.”

“Oh, sorry!” Izuku scratched his head and noticed All For One’s hasty retreat back into the laundry. “So I was thinking, if we can’t prove the positives that we can take a leaf out of university papers and just talk about what we found instead…”

It was a plan, maybe one Shū could help with since there was a suspicious amount of nothing in what should have been a legal system.
Armed with his remaining chocolate cupcakes, Izuku perched on one of the free remaining spaces in Shū’s office.

“So, in conclusion, to quote our Australian correspondent, we’re up shit creek without a paddle,” the tentacled being finished off, waving four them at various points on his board.

Red string crossed from pinned article, to photo, to block title, to article title and while the string led somewhere, ultimately where had both lawyer and heroics student at a loss.

"That was unusually profane,” Izuku coughed. Not that he blamed him. None of this made sense. Nothing made sense unless there wasn’t a government in the first place.

“I can’t find anything that lets them do it, little Midoriya. There’s nothing in the Japanese Constitution that allows them to even make the legislation for the regulations. Normally you get the legislation which sets out the regulations for enforcement,” Shū shrugged. “You have the big law and the little baby law follows the big law, like a sort of schedule, but not here and not anywhere else in Quirk regulation.”

“There’s no legislation,” Izuku hummed. That didn’t sound… great. It was the very opposite of great. It was patently illegal from everything Izuku knew. Governments weren’t allowed to throw people in prison just because they felt like it and if there wasn’t dedicated laws then how were they justifying the arrests?

“Nothing, just the regulations themselves but they don’t seem to come from anywhere and everything I’ve found outright contradicts the Constitution. The Fiend of Kamino never got a trial, which is a direct breach of the Constitution rights of the citizen. Same with Stain. Absolutely no due process for anyone currently in Tartarus at all and no doubt some of the lower security prisons. The courts just don’t see them and they’re detained without anything. The censorship rules under which Maki is bound? Entirely unlawful. Quirk marriages? Illegal since 1947, government still turned a blind eye. With the statute of limitation not yet repealed as well, these people have never been formally charged… and the limitations period of their crimes has expired which means they can’t be charged.” Shū became more animated, his tentacles wringed furiously. “There is also,” he snarled, “no evidence that our current government was duly appointed under the Constitution. Absolutely nothing showing they followed Parliamentary procedures for the votes.”

Izuku snapped his pencil. One piece remained in his hand, the other flew neatly into the nearby bin. The implications settled themselves in Izuku’s head and echoed around its various chambers, a whisper from their first set of conversations. “Wait, you’re telling me that All For One is innocent?”

“Under law, as it should be followed, yes. He was imprisoned without trial under a law that doesn’t exist, without a warrant for a crime with tenuous linking evidence. Maybe not of blowing up Kamino Ward, but there’d still be a city if the police had been following the actual law and not whatever this garbage is,” Shū spat. “There’s no authority for what they’re doing.”

“Then that means…” Izuku whispered with dawning horror.

“That our so-called democracy has prison cells full of innocent people who never had a trial,” the lawyer concluded, throwing down a thick bundle of papers. “I’ve never been involved in criminal
law, but I’m starting to think it might be a profitable change in career.”

Stain was technically innocent… a serial killer with countless deaths to his name. All For One was technically innocent and could remain that way with a change of government and by waiting for the limitations period to expire for his crimes. All of the current violent criminals held within Tartarus’s depths were innocent because the government had taken a shortcut somewhere along the line. None of them had been charged or prosecuted… some could walk out tomorrow and there would be no legal basis for detaining them if the law was really followed. The limitations periods of their crimes had expired and they hadn’t been charged and now they couldn’t be charged… what have they done?

“Why are people voting for government? This is crazy.” It meant that All For One, those many months ago, had a point. He wasn’t any different to the government, because they didn’t follow their own rules and nor did he.

“For show,” Shū snapped. “This is huge. You can’t complete your assignment without mentioning the illegality and this is going to print whether Maki likes it or not. I need to ask some more questions but my god… I was wondering about the high turnover in the Courts but this is absurd.”

“We can’t be the first people to have noticed it,” Izuku observed and, for just a moment, was thankful that Hisashi Midoriya was who he was, because there was absolutely no moral twang in that man’s brain that would say no to the following idea.

“You have an idea for getting it to print?”

Izuku thought for only a second. Really, with what the lawyer had just found out? "Did you know that your newspaper is owned by a legitimate supervillain with limitless resources?"

Izuku was rather taken aback when Shū cracked open a bottle of champagne in response. “Maki owes me money, because I knew he couldn't have been paying for the Endeavor matters legitimately. Which one is he?”

Izuku cleared his throat and Shū laughed at him.

Flanked by shadows, Izuku left the Mirror’s office and he immediately squinted. In front of him was a familiar silhouette, bladed fingers tucked carefully in front of the man’s immaculate business suit. He wasn't looking in Izuku’s direction though, instead gazing at a blinking billboard.

“Something wrong?” Shū whispered from the darkness.

“That guy… was in Hokkaido. One of the patients.” Izuku tapped his fingers.

It was then Subject One chose to look over and… wave energetically? “It's you! Finally!” He arms still tucked to his sides, he almost waddled over to Izuku, revealing features that weren’t recognisably Japanese.

Shū meanwhile was having none of it, extending from the shadows and over Izuku, a tentacle anchoring itself at a shoulder.

“Please! I’m David Demir. You helped me in Hokkaido, I think? I was one of the patients you found
on the street,” the dark haired man nodded eagerly. “I… know the claws are an issue, but I can’t retract them.”

OH, a part of Izuku’s brain realised. The bubble of guilt for the misplaced business card only grew the longer Izuku watched the man. “That must be very awkward,” Izuku winced, wondering how Demir managed to get dressed for the day. Demir had appeared threatening at the time, but he was one of many patients with mutations that weren’t controllable. Izuku was seeing a pattern.

“Extremely. I used to get them filed back to my finger tips, but…” Demir’s lip wobbled dangerously and Izuku was left remembering that the man had been an inpatient at a hospital for a reason.

“Are you alright? Do you need anything?” Izuku gently asked.

Shū cleared his throat from his inky depths. “The cafe on the bottom floor has serviceable tea and coffee.” And armed security was left unsaid. But, it was also close for someone who was potentially on the verge of having more delicate issues.

“Is what Shū said okay?” Grasping Demir by the shoulder, Izuku tugged him inside.

Izuku didn’t get a relevant reply, but there wasn’t any resistance.

“I’m so sorry, I’ve been off my medication. After Katsu made off with all the money, there wasn’t any supply to give the patients,” Demir babbled, with Izuku depositing the fidgeting man into a seat.

“They did what?” Shū asked in an easy tone of voice reserved for reaming particularly disagreeable interns. Thankfully, Demir had no way of knowing that.

“Itsuki Katsu, the hospital’s administrator of finances. He’s part of a big company that deals with a lot of mental hospitals and clinics in Hokkaido. Everyone suspected that he’d been skimming off the top, but there wasn’t anyone who cared enough to look. I mean, my family reported it, but they didn’t count to the local police…” Demir’s hands touched the table with a heavy clang and a sigh of relief, which suggested to Izuku that the poor man was carrying around either solid iron or an alloy with iron in it.

“Why not?” Izuku asked, catching Shū materialise near the kiosk owner.

“My family… aren’t Japanese. We’re Thai, originally. My father used to work here and I was born here. My eldest brother wasn’t though. So when father was done, they all went back home and I stayed here with my friends and to work. My Japanese is better than my Thai these days,” Demir laughed nervously, fingers clacking noisily. “I keep in touch with the family, but their Japanese isn’t great and…”

“But…” Izuku prompted.

“My friends weren’t always the most educated people. When I was young I had a lifestyle that caused… problems,” Demir finished lamely. He hesitated for a moment then leaned forward to whisper, “the doctors said I got schizophrenia from a drug I was taking recreationally” and Izuku nodded, resisting the urge to pat the thoroughly miserable looking man man on the shoulder. Not an uncommon story.

“Not the best thing to happen.”

“No,” Demir groaned, “but I took it as a sign and got my life together. It's manageable with treatment, luckily. It's not like that for everyone. Went into accounting for a hero firm and had a nice boring job so I could get my fingers trimmed back once a week. It was nice and peaceful.” Demir
paused. “Then, back home, my father died of a heart attack and in the stress I forgot my medication…”

Izuku’s fingers involuntarily twitched. “You had withdrawal and someone called the police, right?”

Demir nodded sadly, wiping tears on a sleeve. “My fingers had grown and the police saw them and called the pro heroes who dived on me. Completely destroyed my apartment. They put me into the mental hospital without telling anyone. They couldn’t, because everyone’s back home…”

Dumbfounded, Izuku stared. Izuku could see it now. Neighbours heard something, called the police, who arrived and immediately panicked upon seeing the claws without knowing that they couldn’t be retracted. How long ago had this happened?

“But you’re a Thai national still,” Shū chipped in, popping up with two cups over Izuku’s shoulder. “Why didn’t they tell the embassy?”

Demir snorted. "They could have half of Thailand locked in a maximum security prison and they wouldn’t tell Thailand. I wasn’t the only one there with that problem. There was an Australian who didn’t speak Japanese at all, an American tourist, a German… all sorts. No one knew where they were.” Demir went to scratch his head and immediately placed his hand back on the table, careful to keep it away from the tea in front of him.

“Standard medication practices, I’d assume?” Shū asked rather snidely.

“Drug them into unconsciousness to stop the screaming?” Demir nodded. “It’s the main way they treated mental illness in my ward. Godforbid anyone have depression in that awful place. Katsu ripped money from staffing levels and drug supply for the three years I was trapped there… then one day he just vanished,” Demir just shrugged and Izuku was distinctly put off drinking his tea.

“Strange people visited him before it happened though. I’m sorry, but I have no hands to hold that…” Demir pointed at the teacup.

“Oh, that’s okay, you can borrow mine.” Izuku dove into his bag to retrieve his hand. From what Izuku had discovered, so long as he recalibrated the headband with a new user prior to them touching the NanoGrab, they would be able to use the hand without any near death experiences. It’s not something he was ever going to tell Shigaraki. “Now if you hold still a moment…”

Twenty minutes later Demir sat with a floating hand shakily holding one of All For One’s chocolate bribes in front of him. “This is... amazing.”

“Mei Hatsume from U.A. designed and programmed it after I broke an arm. She was personally offended by how slow I typed with one hand,” Izuku explained.

Demir snorted. “What about fine motor control? Could I play with the piano with it? I haven’t been able to do that for so long…”

“I don’t see why not. I take notes and type with it mainly,” Izuku shrugged. “I could ask her if she’s game to make you one.”

“Are you allowed to do that?” Demir seemed to be on the verge of tears again.

“Who cares?” Shū grunted. “It’s not like any of them follow their own laws at this rate.”

Izuku wondered if this is how All For One got his start in life. A moment of intense moral contemplation followed by “who cares?” But, Shū had a point, because even under the government’s non-existent laws’ Demir was no doubt eligible for a Support exemption anyway.
“Actually, I was here for a different reason…” Demir’s borrowed hand rubbed his head.

“Yes?”

“You’ve said before that you like investigating Quirks, right? I, uh, did some homework about you before I came looking for you.” Demir flushed and Izuku wished that one of them could have melted into the furniture. “They’ve got profiles about you now online since I saw you at the Sports Festival.”

“Yeah?” Izuku responded, feeling absolutely mortified. Who was telling random people on the internet that he liked Quirks?

“Can you please find the young girl astral projecting into my apartment?” Demir hurried out. “I tried to call the police to tell them, but they told me that I was imagining things.”

“Huh, why? Astral projection is rare, but not unheard of. You’ve got a guy running around who can steal Quirks.” Izuku blinked. That was a lazy excuse if Izuku had ever heard one. It was of the not serious enough so it’s not our problem category of policing that seemed to be sending Tsukui to an early grave.

“I said something similar, but with my history…”

They’d decided he was crazy and no doubt called it an afternoon. “Where’s your apartment?”

“Not too far away…”

Demir had only given the address and finished his cupcake before a swirl had pitched them through to the address in question. Shū said he wasn’t a warper, but that looked like warping at a glance to Izuku. Either that or some sort of Faster Than Light travel, which might be mechanically different to a warp. He’d have to ask him when the sentient mass of tentacles was in a better mood.

“Just up here,” Demir whispered and lead them up the stairs and he unlocked the door. “She keeps appearing in my bathroom of all places.” As Demir propped open the door, three sets of eyes observed a pale imprint of a five year old girl eyeing off what appeared to be a cat who hissed back at her.

“Yep, that is definitely astral projection,” Izuku noted and the girl jumped and vanished.

“Deliberately too from that response.”

“Time for a door knock,” Shū burbled. “She’s young so the odds are that she’s one of your neighbours.”

It was hard to miss Demir’s gasp of relief. “Thank you so much.”

Demir naturally hugged the nearest available person. Who just so happened to be Shū, who cried his eyes out. It was all Izuku could do to comfort both of them as he started the arduous process of working out how many floors were in the building.

It was a surprise to no one that Mai Maki was still in her office when Izuku and Shū slunk back in forty minutes later to ask about the mentioned hospital administrator.

“Where have you two been?” Maki asked from around what was probably her fourteenth coffee.
“Finding out about Itsuki Katsu from a patient.”

“Izuku, honey, my new favourite person, let me tell you all about Itsuki Katsu…” Izuku shouldn’t have been surprised. He really shouldn’t, but there was something so fundamentally evil about people like Itsuki Katsu that even dealing with All For One seemed tame in comparison. It might have been the distinct lack of grease on All For One.

“He’s in Thailand,” Izuku repeated.

“Living it up with the nightlife,” Maki confirmed. “Wasn’t even a source who saw him, but an old friend of mine who I was complaining to about it. Saw him staggering out of a club into a massage parlour.”

“You need me to tell the police, don’t you?”

Maki beamed at Izuku and Izuku sighed and silently took the flash drive and received an express trip to the Izuku’s favourite police station. It had to be FTL. Surely.

Which didn’t make Izuku any happier when he had to rehash the entire story to the only detective he remotely trusted, only to be given the least satisfying answer anyone could expect to receive.

“What you’re saying is that the police can’t do anything…?” Izuku repeated dumbly and Tsukauchi sighed with a sort of latent agony that Izuku vicariously felt.

“Fraud isn’t my area, strictly speaking, and this administrator didn’t use a Quirk to commit a crime.” Tsukauchi, almost flopped over his desk, tossed a screwed up ball of paper which bounced off the rim before landing solidly into the recycling bin. “I’ve got no issue with raising it to the the guy who does head Fraud, but…” Tsukauchi made a motion that Izuku was intimately familiar with.

“He’s not going to want to know.” Sounded about right from Izuku’s recent efforts in the workforce.

“He’s a friend of Takahashi in Organised Crime Prevention. I wouldn’t trust him running a corner shop let alone Fraud,” Tsukauchi stated so bluntly that Izuku almost gagged on his cup of tea. “Him and his little group of friends are more interested in climbing the ranks than actually doing their jobs.”

Izuku groaned. “There were so many people in Hokkaido. I spoke to one of the patients just today you know. He was a normal person… None of them deserved what happened to them.” But who was going to do anything? If the police with the power to act weren’t going to do anything, then what options were left? Nothing legal was the obvious implication.

Tsukauchi shook his head. “I know that. You know that. The problem is that the people who could do something can be told that, know it, understand it and not care about it if it needs more than what the budget allocates.” Tsukauchi drummed his fingers. “There’s a loophole where I could get involved though…” He almost seemed to murmur to himself. “But our errant thieving administrator’s all the way in Thailand living it up with the hospital’s money. If something were to happen overseas, the Japanese Embassy in Thailand might call us in for consulting purposes, but it’d have to be usual enough to warrant us being there…”

Izuku had an awful, awful thought. “Like… if the administrator could be connected to the League of Villains?” Why was the League of Villains in Hokkaido? Shigaraki had been exploiting the patients to turn a profit. Conveniently, Katsu had also been there to turn a profit by siphoning funds from the institution. Why pack up and leave at exactly the same time the League of Villains had been in the area? Before then he’d been skimming money from the top, but what had made him so brazen? Had he been offered something else… like an untraceable escape from Japan? Demir said strange people
had been in contact with Katsu before he left.

Izuku voiced his suspicions to Tsukauchi.

Tsukauchi simultaneously smiled and groaned.

“Coming from a team run by Mai Maki, your boss finding all of this doesn’t surprise me.” Tsukauchi tapped his pen on a writing pad filled with cramped characters. “Would she object to…?” Tsukauchi frowned and Izuku attempted a smirk, but it fell flat under fatigue.

“She wouldn’t, but I can.” Without ado, Izuku handed over a flash drive that he would never admit to getting from Maki. “This is everything I could find on Katsu and his roles on the various hospital boards. And all the weird timings. Bank records are something you guys might have to pull, but there’s enough there to suggest a link to the League of Villains…”

Tsukauchi took the drive with the reverence of a man who knew exactly how much work had just been done for him. “I’ll make sure you get paid for this one, Midoriya,” he assured Izuku.

Izuku was going to be able to get his mother a very nice holiday in time for next year at this rate.

Izuku almost fell through the open doorway.

“Was your visit to the police station really that bad, Izuku?” All For One asked, steering Izuku inside.

“Had to report a multibillion yen fraud,” Izuku groaned, as he was directed to the coffee table. All For One’s chronic stalking wasn’t getting any better. Izuku was four hours late getting home and hadn’t called ahead, so he was prepared to excuse it this time. “Did you know that Shigaraki was drug dealing?” Izuku asked so tactlessly that he heard All For One fumble the kettle a room away.

“Define drug dealing.” Cautious, no doubt wondering if Shigaraki was spreading his unique flavour of Trigger around the streets.

“Paper bag in an alleyway,” Izuku clarified and heard one of the most pained noises ever to grace his ears. Even including situations involving violence. “He’s run out of money, hasn’t he?”

“You tell me, Izuku,” All For One sighed, edging into view. “I’ve been busy elsewhere.”

That was news to Izuku. “Doing what?” It’s not like All For One had a life beyond his rampant criminality.

“Gainful employment,” All For One glumly stated, followed by a far perkier, “and parenting. I haven’t had time to supervise Shigaraki.” There was a cheerful nonchalance to All For One’s face that suggested that even if he did have theoretical time that he wouldn’t have known then either.

Shigaraki’s cultivation these days was more the work of an inattentive fungi farmer than someone who was truly putting effort into keeping their crop. How hadn’t Shigaraki noticed? Or had he and he couldn’t process the information?

“You almost sounded like a normal person,” Izuku pointed out.

“Where did I go wrong?” All For One almost pouted.
Izuku held back a *getting married* and settled for, “the fact that Shigaraki’s involved in the first place. Why drag him into it?”

“Oh, I have my reasons,” All For One mumbled noncommittally.

“Which you won’t tell me.”

“I will soon.” All For One quietly asserted, “but first, what happened with this fraud?” All For One prodded and Izuku wasn’t fooled for a moment. There was more to this than All For One taking a free kick at All Might’s feelings, but what? Questions to be answered another day.

Sighing, Izuku regaled the overlord with the tale of Itsuki Katsu’s embezzlement and the subsequent encounter with Demir.

“-You know, that name sounds famili-”

“Not a word.” Katsu sounded close enough to Katsuki that All For One would have a dig at it and it was too late in the afternoon for Izuku to care about it.

Usually there was a rule about not telling All For One anything, but it was going to be in the newspaper tomorrow. What could he do that the tabloid couldn’t?

Unlike many of his co-workers who refused to check emails on days off, Izuku still risked a morning peek with his muffin and cup of tea.

Which he promptly coughed around.

**URGENT!!!!**

*Midoriya,*

*A source in Thailand just informed me that Katsu was found in an alleyway over there by the local police. Apparently he was flashing money around and some of the local thugs took it upon themselves to remedy him of the problem of having more money than sense. I don’t know how successful it was because he now has no money and no sense. He’s in critical condition in one of the hospitals in the capital. From what the source said, he’s still in surgery and there’s nothing on his prospects beyond it being pretty bad.*

*The good news is that the Japanese police have asked Thai police babysit him when/if he wakes up due to his “links to local villain gangs” back in Japan. The Thai police were only too happy to oblige. The Japanese government’s also footing his medical bills to get him back home faster. Gee, I wonder why?*

*The even better news is that I’ve heard whispers that all of that funding plus some extra reappeared back into accounts associated with the various hospitals that he stole from. Last I heard, it still takes three days for a standard transaction to occur let alone the amount of money this guy stole. Whatever happened to him took a lot longer than three days and inspired a rapid change of heart compared to how the local described him pre-alleyway.*

*Ta,*
Izuku squinted at All For One who was blithely frowning at the morning news. “Did you… tell anyone about Katsu?”

“Oh of course,” All For One nodded without missing a beat and without looking away from the TV. “I let some of my old contacts know that the police were having difficulty locating him after he stole hospital funding.”

Izuku stared. “You only told them?” Izuku probed. “You didn’t say anything else?”

All For One gazed moved to meet Izuku’s and he nodded again. “Remember Mr Demir?”

“Yes?” Demir wasn’t someone Izuku was going to be forgetting any time soon.

“Mr Demir’s brother is a contact of mine who is a native to Thailand. To say he was… unhappy with the state of his brother’s medical care due to Katsu would be putting it rather mildly,” All For One phrased oh so delicately. “He was unaware of the more unsavoury reasons behind the poor service as he’s not fully fluent in Japanese. He has difficulty reading the non-English newspaper variants and no reporting is done in his local tongue.” All For One shrugged. “He was also happy to assist in giving Japanese police a reason to be in Thailand.”

Izuku set his muffin down on his plate and took a deep breath and set his head in his hands.

There was a padding of footsteps. “Oh no, don’t blame yourself for this, Izuku. Even if I hadn’t told him, his brother eventually would’ve told him and the same result would have occurred, just a little bit later.” All For One patted Izuku comfortingly on the back and Izuku might’ve felt slightly better about it, if he could trust a single word out of the man’s mouth. “As for what I did do, I’ve started a small fundraising effort to see what we can do about the housing issues some of the patients were facing…”

Izuku dropped his teaspoon. He looked between his cup of tea, the muffin and skimmed the email again. It was still comprehensible and the words made even sense across the screen. “I’m not dreaming, am I?”

“Is it that unusual?”

“Yes.” All For One was never this nice. Never.

All For One inclined his head and smiled in a manner that almost made him look human. “I suppose I better make it more of a habit then.”

Chapter End Notes

Poor Demir.
Quirk of a Cryptid: Part 2

Chapter Summary

Another week, another attempt to find out about a cryptid's Quirk.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Toshinori hadn’t so much bumped open Pandora’s box as stumbled into a storage warehouse filled with pallets of them and deployed an explosive device. Student reports were everywhere, on every service, on every desk. His email inbox had exploded with requests of help, complaints about government websites not having enough details or being abused by government officials when attempting to access data under freedom of information requests.

Uh, i dont mean to be rude, but the woman was a total b****, sensei. She said “WE DONT DO THOSE HERE” and hung up on me. Our project was on using quirks to enhance the environment. Wtf is that response? I know you don’t know me personally, but u’r the project coordinator so... help???

(Also, I’m a HUGE fan.)

Love,

Matsuda from Support

There were several Matsudas in Support that Toshinori knew of and his master list of the assignments was buried under a truly frightening pile of parent correspondence. It was just a matter of getting to the list. Eventually.

Dear U.A. Faculty...

...

My son was arrested for trespassing at the Heroes Mirror because he was “researching for a school project about the media sucking”.

...

Toshinori wasn’t sure why Monoma hadn’t just sent the tabloid an email like everyone else (or called them), but from the rest of the letter he was inclined to reflect on the parenting of the child rather than the conduct of the child. He sent back a letter politely explaining as much, to the horror of the rest of
the faculty. It wasn’t the job of the school to teach the students how to be decent human beings after all, that was preliminary knowledge and if young Midoriya had turned out to be to an excellent human being then absolutely no one had an excuse.

There were countless more parent letters where that came from. Toshinori was attempting not to dwell too too heavily on the… immediate enlightenment that came with such an intimate understanding of Japan’s varied parenting styles, but it still inspired a shudder.

At least alcohol was an option now thanks to All For One. The irony hadn’t escaped him. Unfortunately, it wasn’t one for Aizawa who had screamed Present Mic clean out of the faculty office on several different occasions. Present Mic had at least gotten off lightly compared to Toshinori after Gran Torino and Tsukauchi had heard about the former’s run in with All For One’s impromptu parent teacher interview. Gran Torino had seemed torn between hugging Toshinori and attempting to inflict another near death experience for the catalogue. Tsukauchi on the other hand had been halfway through dialling his superior before Gran Torino and Toshinori had dived on him to abort the call. All For One's actions towards young Bakugou were far more worrying than his actions towards Toshinori and they still couldn’t act for fear of the fallout. Young Bakugou was still stubbornly refusing to discuss his attacker.

Class 1-A had become increasingly antsy, with Aizawa’s paranoia reaching new heights after the injuries which had been dealt to Bakugou by “an unknown member of the public” and it was compounded by the unknown acquired brain injury at the hospital.

Toshinori knew that All For One was involved, but the Bakugou family had barred everyone from visiting after Kirishima’s eviction from the hospital. As Mitsuki Bakugou had made outstandingly clear when Toshinori had called to arrange a visit.

“We’re flattered, All Might, but I have to decline. These visits upset Katsuki. The doctors said it might be a good idea for Midoriya to visit to put Katsuki at ease, but he’s busy with his dad. Katsuki’s gonna have to wait like a big boy,” Mitsuki’s voice had floated across the line so gratingly that Toshinori had almost crushed his phone while saying goodbye.

Young Bakugou had almost been a different boy while living at the dorms… and like young Todoroki, perhaps the removal from the family situation and associated stresses had been why. Toshinori wrenched a heavily bound notebook from his overflowing desk draw and made a note in it for the next staff meeting for student health.

Then he made a phone call. There was something else to be dealt with, namely to see if All For One had kept his promise about telling young Midoriya about his attempts to take One For All.

“All Might? O-Of course I’m available tonight! It’s about Kacchan and his mother? No! I had no idea she wasn’t letting anyone but me visit. Yeah, Hisashi’s date with mum is tonight so I’m home alone. Come over and we’ll work something out. Yep, that time is fine, see you then.” Izuku’s acute sense of paranoia informed him that All For One was standing right behind him as was usually the case when he received a phone call and he turned to face All For One, whose face was set in its usual expression of All Might related disgruntlement. “All Might’s coming over at five.”

“Does he have to?” All For One… whined?

“I think it’s so he can throw Mitsuki Bakugou under the bus in front of the school student health
board,” Izuku explained. “She’s been refusing to let teachers or his friends visit and he’s worried.”

All For One was usually a simple person, unless ruining someone’s life was involved, as Izuku had discovered. Then the man would sit for hours, pondering the pros and cons of every minute aspect of life ruining in question before the execution would take place. The timing, the damage in question, the misery generated, the flavour of suffering… It was deeply suggestive of someone who needed a healthier hobby. “Izuku, why do you tell me these things?” All For One sighed theatrically. “Fine. Your mother will be here at six.”

Izuku did a double take. “Mum’s coming here? Why?”

“She has a surprise for us,” All For One winced.

“Both of us?” Izuku confirmed.

“Yes,” All For One shuddered.

“Divorce papers?” Izuku gently suggested.

“Please don’t jinx it,” All For One said with what might have been a flicker of anxiety and vanished back into his room.

All Might’s arrival couldn’t have been timed better, rescuing Izuku from All For One’s increasing anxiety.

“If she likes green, then just wear green. Or red. Just not both! Just pick one or the other, it’s not that difficult! Oh, hi All Might!”

All Might stuck his head through the front door, followed by the rest of him. It was still jarring seeing him so healthy and blood free.

“My apologies for being late, young Midoriya, there was an… incident at the faculty office.” Though, his health seemed to dictate working unhealthily long hours back at the school. Izuku checked his phone to see All Might was almost an hour late.

“That’s not what I heard,” All For One’s voice floated from further back in the apartment. “I heard that Monoma’s family marched down to the school after you implied that baboons wielding kitchen implements would have greater competence in raising children than whatever methodology they turned to for child rearing. And would produce children with better manners to boot.” So U.A.’s spy was still alive and well, much to Izuku’s fury.

From All Might’s glowing pink face, All For One was either entirely wrong or had nailed the poor man to a wall. “No, that’s their interpretation of what I said. I said that manners should start at home and any behavioural problems shouldn’t have made it to the dorms in the first place. Even young Bakugou didn’t have the amount of issues with his fellow students that Monoma does, even taking out the trespass charges.”

“Oh, I forgot about the trespass charges.” Followed by a chuckle. “Why didn’t he just email the staff?”

“We have absolutely no idea. Nedzu thinks entitlement issues.” All Might shrugged to Izuku and made a throat slicing gesture towards the direction of All For One’s voice to which Izuku nodded.

“Hisashi, if I ever find your spy at U.A., I’m going to beat them with your favourite wok,” Izuku called back.
“All on your lonesome, Izuku?”

“Well, he’ll have the entire faculty with him, so I doubt it. We can share the wok,” All Might grumbled and before All For One could reply there was another knock at the door.

Izuku, without thinking, opened it and heard a sharp gasp.

“Mum!”

“Izuku!” Inko Midoriya, thinner than Izuku had seen her in recent memory, her hair in its usual style, surged forwards to entrap him in a bearhug, which Izuku gratefully returned. “Surprise! Your friends at school saw some photos of how I used to look when I was younger, and well, they insisted.”

“How. It’s been, what, around a month?” Izuku struggled not to gape like a hapless idiot.

“Quirk exercises! Remember that time I used my Quirk on that bag snatcher?” Izuku had extremely vivid memories of a man going down in pain holding an extremely sensitive area after it had been violently wrenched towards Inko Midoriya. “Well, they said that using your Quirk burns fat quickly so I started using it around the house more,” Izuku’s mother nodded eagerly.

“Doesn’t she look great-” only to find that All For One and All Might had no such qualms and were both gaping like hapless idiots. Incidentally enough, All For One had gone with the dark green suit.

“Hey! Snap out of it!”

Izuku’s mother blushed. “Oh, it’s okay. I’ll just grab your father and we’ll be off because we’re late. Hello, All Might! Bye All Might! Bye sweetheart!” All For One, without a single word of protest was dragged by an arm out the front door by his wife, probably never to be seen or heard from again. At least he’d die happy.

“I think I’m going to throw up.”

“Me too,” All Might whispered and bolted in the direction of the bathroom with Izuku hot on his heels.

“All Might, what’s wrong?” Izuku asked, patting the hurling man on the back.

“Young Midoriya, your mother looks identical to Nana Shimura but for the colour of her hair,” All Might coughed without his gaze drifting upwards from the toilet bowl. “Identical. Do you not think that’s strange?”

“What…” Shigaraki’s grandmother and All Might’s teacher… Then Izuku remembered something.

“All Might… mum said that she was fostered,” Izuku hurried out and felt All Might buckle beneath his hands.

“Call Tsukauchi!” Then All Might heaved again, making use of his full stomach. “I’ll be alright… young Midoriya…” All Might managed to cough out between heaves.

It couldn’t be. It wasn’t possible, was it? Was All For One truly that low? Was it genuine? His treatment of Shigaraki was indifferent at best, but Hisashi Midoriya truly seemed to swoon at the arrival of the woman he’d bothered to marry and produce a child with or was it an act?

Izuku mashed the button for Tsukauchi’s number.

“What happened, Midoriya?” Tsukauchi’s voice urgently sounded from the phone.
“All Might and I need you to get the records for Inko Midoriya. Everything, her maiden name, who fostered her, everything nailed down or not.”

“I can’t do-”

“All Might thinks Inko Midoriya might be Inko Shimura. Mum was fostered and never knew her parents or family. Mum lost weight because of people from school and she’s Nana Shimura’s spitting image according to All Might.”

For a moment, silence and extremely faint *holy shit* echoed from somewhere on the other side of the line, but Izuku wasn’t sure if it was from the phone or his bathroom. Both were likely.

When Tsukauchi returned, Izuku was greeted with stoic professionalism. “So Shigaraki might have an aunt?”

“Yes.”

“Stay on the line, I might be able to call in a favour from Michaels at the Registry…”

It was the longest twenty minutes of Izuku’s life and All Might’s, who stumbled out ten minutes into the wait, with Izuku delivering a breakneck summary.

“I know there’s nothing left in me, but even without a stomach I never felt this ill,” a green All Might confessed. “I really don’t want it to be true, but this is exactly the sort of sick thing that bastard would do.”

It was ten minutes later Tsukauchi chose to put them out of their misery. “Well, Michaels threatened to end my entire family’s line for catching him as he left overtime, but there’s news and you didn’t hear it from me until the police warrant officially comes through. Inko Midoriya was indeed Inko Shimura.” Tsukauchi’s tired and utterly drained voice sounded through the speakers on the phone. “She was given up at birth by one Nana Shimura and her husband and had a male twin who was older than her. Congratulations, Midoriya, there’s another psychopath in your family, because that makes Shigaraki your first cousin.”

“If you’ll excuse me,” All Might said calmly and stood, pacing in front of the lounge, “I’m going to hunt All For One down and smash his head back through the concrete.”

Izuku swallowed down bile. “I don’t think you’ll have to, because if she finds out she’ll probably do it first. She married her mother’s murderer.” This time, Izuku ran for the bathroom.

“Tsukauchi, thank you, but we’ll have to call you back.”

For the next hour it alternated between silence and All Might’s explosive outbursts and Izuku’s attempts to work out what had possessed All For One to marry Nana Shimura’s daughter.

Eventually, Izuku had reluctantly been forced to kick All Might out of the apartment before the man started wearing holes into the carpet. It was bad enough that Izuku was going to leave holes before All For One came back, but All Might couldn’t be in the apartment when All For One returned. Not when All Might was going to get himself killed attacking All For One for something that could only be called truly heinous.

Nana Shimura. Who had Inko Shimura. Who was fostered before her mother was murdered by All For One? Why hadn’t anyone known about her? Inko Shimura who married Hisashi Midoriya who wiped out her family. Who shattered her nephew for a feud, who left her alone for over a decade to continue a feud with the student of her mother who he murdered.
Inko and Hisashi Midoriya who had Izuku Midoriya. Izuku Midoriya who now could only now look back at Kacchan’s torment and wonder if maybe pitching himself off that building might have spared everyone a lot of trouble…

What had possessed All For One to marry Inko Shimura?

All For One’s return had Izuku skidding to a halt in the carpet. All For One’s unnaturally blank expression stared through Izuku and Izuku stared back. How did one question their two hundred year old walking atrocity about an older entry in such a long book? Did All For One even care? Was it a joke to him? Another thing to throw in All Might’s face? Izuku’s nails bit sharply into his palms.

“He saw her, didn’t he?” All For One asked, more subdued than Izuku had ever seen him. He smiled mirthlessly. “It was going to happen eventually.” All For One padded past, hooking Izuku by the arm as he did so. “This… isn’t going to be good news. But he told you that already, didn’t he?”

Izuku shuddered. “Why did you marry Nana Shimura’s daughter?” Izuku rushed out in a breath, his knees flexing into his favourite couch and All For One disappeared into the kitchen. He was going to throw up again. Or drop from a heart attack. Or everything at once. It was going to be painful and embarrassing.

“The answer to that is quite simple,” All For One said after a pause, returning with something sweet smelling. He set both cups next to each other and casually shoved Izuku over to take the direct seat next to him.

“Really.” Nothing All For One did was simple. He was convoluted and petty.

“Yes. I’m an idiot,” All For One stated so matter of factly that Izuku’s jaw dropped. “Part of my longstanding practice has been to target family members of pests like All Might… only he didn’t have any.” All For One shrugged and Izuku’s attempted to inch away was foiled by the arm snaking its way around his shoulders. “Nana, on the other hand, had twins. A girl and a boy. She only told them about the boy, who she had kept, and the girl had been sent into foster care with her husband’s consent. At the time, it made logical sense…”

Izuku swallowed down bile. “I don’t like your logic.”

“I know you don’t,” All For One soothed, “which is why I spent sixteen years pretending that you didn’t exist. Ironically, it was easier to find the girl than the boy. I stumbled across your mother in a job application to one of my pharmaceutical companies. I couldn’t believe my luck.” Izuku’s breath caught. How long had All For One been trying to import Trigger for? “And Inko Shimura was…” All For One sighed in a manner that had Izuku edging away from him. “Stunningly unlike her mother. There was no ideology, no real care or concern for social beliefs or concerns. She minded her own business and was her own person. Vicious when required and stuck to areas which suited her strength. She was nothing like her mother,” All For One nodded approvingly with a glint in his eyes that had the lump in Izuku’s stomaching forcing its way ever higher.

“But she looked like her,” Izuku pointed out, feeling greener than ever. “Didn’t that ever… bother you?”

“Not really,” All For One inclined his head. “With my age you see so many people who could be the same person appearance wise, especially in this country. I’ve seen the same person so many times, with so many different personalities attached to the same face. You’re new though.” Izuku didn’t duck away fast enough to dodge All For One grabbing him by the jaw.
“Let go,” Izuku squeezed out. And All For One obligingly let go of Izuku’s face… only for Izuku to be reeled straight back into the man’s side.

“No, Inko has always been her own person… and that caused problems,” All For One explained, carding his free hand through Izuku’s hair.

“Me existing wasn’t part of the plan?” Izuku clarified. Which is what Izuku had always suspected anyway. That was the usual reason a parent never came back and Izuku didn’t expect to be any different.

“Getting married to the daughter of one of my brother’s long line of pests to torture another one of them was not part of the plan, no,” All One confirmed with an edge to his voice. “The plan was for her to be close enough to have All Might accidentally drop a building on her in one of our disputes.”

Izuku slammed a fist into All For One’s shoulder with as much force as he could get away without One For All. Instead of retaliating, All For One patted Izuku on the head.

“Understandable. But it caused other problems, namely that she married me.”

It didn’t even need elaboration. Not with All For One’s truly profound criminal history. Family members would never be able to escape links to criminal relatives, especially if criminal relatives kept giving them gifts and finance from dubious sources. The police would never leave and everyone involved would be held complicit. Inko was kept ignorant to shield her from All For One’s real day job… not that he should have married her in the first place. “You were trying to find a way to import Trigger, weren’t you?”

“Yes, and Inko was a huge help in assisting me in the discovery that doing it legally wasn’t going to work… It wasn’t long before you were on your way. After you were born, I sold the company and went on a business trip to America,” All For One explained, resting a hand on Izuku’s shoulder while sipping something that smelt like hot chocolate.

In contrast, Izuku had to set his mug down before he shattered it. “You really went to America.” Izuku couldn’t breathe.

“Yes, with All Might on the plane behind me. I entrusted you to Inko’s care, but I underestimated her isolation. She had no family thanks to my personal efforts and no friends thanks to the personal efforts of Mitsuki Bakugou and her ilk,” All For One snarled so deeply that Izuku felt his hair ruffle in the resulting breeze. “Already without my involvement she faced judgement and when you were found Quirkless it only worsened for both of you.” Japan’s archfiend sliced a hand through the air. “And where was I? Being hounded by All Might. Ripping through my organisation, almost flattening the family home in the process. Your favourite video was one of our past scuffles, to add salt to the wound.”

“It… was?” Kamino. Just like Kamino. They said it was a disaster, but what was All For One but a walking natural disaster? The ruins and flames, just like All For One’s favoured tactical area hitters.

“Yes, our first public one and his debut. I levelled an area to stage my escape, leaving him to clear up the mess. The fact that he was bleeding from the head should have been a giveaway, because, as much as I’m loathe to admit it, few other people could do that degree of damage to the area or him,” All For One grumbled. “Did it inspire you to stay away? No, it only inspired you further to help people under the government’s cute banner for child soldiers. I was devastated. Your mother thought you would grow out of it, but it was never about the heroes was it?” All For One frowned and chills ran down Izuku’s spine. “Our skirmishes grew and when you were nine, I died in the incident that All Might spoke of. It occurred to me in that moment that the last time I held you was before I left to
America when you were one,” All For One idly noted. “My body was recovered and I was revived by Tsubasa and a cohort of professionals that are no longer with us. By then, I realised that returning was a pipe dream.”

“You stayed away.”

“Then Shigaraki popped his head into U.A. and I became concerned about the green haired boy who shattered all of his limbs on national television, took out a serial killer in a dark alleyway, attended police raids of supervillains without permission, and was doing who knows what else without proper parental supervision,” All For One blithely continued with a touch of sarcasm.

“None of that matters if you didn’t tell mum,” Izuku cut in. Izuku knew All For One’s current history. Enough of it.

“But I did. After dinner.” All For One beamed. “She backhanded me and would’ve left a stunning bruise without regeneration.” A particularly dreamy expression crossed All For One face and Izuku cringed.

“If you’re making that face she didn’t hit you hard enough or she didn’t use her Quirk.” Izuku privately thought that his mother should have put her back into a full blow with the nearest and most solidly built chair.

“She hit me because of what it did to you,” All For One said bluntly. “I have no regrets about who I married.”

“She should have given you another one for luck.”

“I’m sure she’ll get around to it,” he shrugged, “but there was a more pressing concern to discuss.”

“Really?” Izuku asked as sarcastically as he could muster. “More important than you murdering her entire family?”

“She was much more concerned about the Quirk that came from her mother running the risk of killing her son.”

Izu almost dropped his mug. “You told her? Why did you tell her?” Oh dear god he was going to die. They were all going to die.

There wasn’t a single bit of guilt on All For One’s face. “Because this isn’t about the Quirk’s recoil or physical effects, Izuku.”

“Then what is it about? What’s more important than mum marrying her mother’s murderer?” Izuku demanded.

“Her mother’s Quirk being a sentient parasite hopping from wielder to wielder, draining them dry, then its absence driving them to suicide,” All For One snarled so viciously that Izuku’s hair shifted in the breeze.

“What?” That… couldn’t be right. All Might hadn’t mentioned anything about One For All having those characteristics. One For All was passed on voluntarily between wielders… but there were shades of the previous wielders in the Quirk. And a shade of All For One himself it seemed. But where was the evidence of people being driven to suicide? What was All For One talking about?
“Then what are you talking about?”

“With the sole exception of All Might, every single previous wielder of One For All has passed on
the Quirk and come to me to die. Every. Single. One. Of. Them. When my brother was bested by me at his pinnacle, he instinctively force fed someone one of his hairs and passed it on... Then I’m sure you can guess what happened next.” Thanks to the irritable twitch of All For One’s head, Izuku could hesitate a guess at what came next. The death of All For One brother at the hands of someone who had no idea that his brother could lose his Quirk at will. “And again and again and again... A never ending line of them, until it got to you. It saps them and moves to the next pawn.”

“But... How did you even work this out? Did you ask All Might?” What were the odds of-

“I did.” How did that even happen?

“Why didn’t it happen to him?” All Might didn’t seem to have a Quirk... unless the muscle flexing thing he did that was independent of One For All counted and Izuku had seen weirder things be counted as Quirks before.

“He was more determined to take care of you than he was to kill me, to his credit,” All For One uttered under his breath. “Which is why all of us agreed that One For All should remain and die with you. None of us want to take the risk of it having a similar affect on you, especially with your past experiences.” Without his consent, Izuku’s mind was drawn to Mirio and his hypothetical offer to Mirio and he shuddered.

“All of you?” Izuku repeated in horror. Was there a group council discussing Izuku’s health now?

“Your mother, myself and All Might,” All For One said with no small amount of unhappiness. “All Might intended to tell you himself, but he’s been distracted by a large amount of administrative work at U.A. for your group project.”

“How did you even end up asking All Might about it?” Izuku groaned.

“I confessed to making attempts to take it from you and was enlightened,” All For One sighed. The words slowed, then repeated themselves in Izuku’s head. “My apologies, I didn’t realise it was causing you pain.”

“YOU DID WHAT?” Izuku shrieked in spite of himself. “What’s wrong with you?”

“I’d like to ask you that, Izuku, because everyone else who’s asked you not to kill yourself has been ignored. What makes me any different?” All For One punctuated his complaint with the most unappreciated head pat known to mankind.

“That doesn’t mean you take someone’s Quirk off them,” Izuku snapped, smacking All For One again.

“Yes it does. A Quirk is a tool and you take tools off people who hurt themselves with them,” the elderly fiend shrugged.

“How did your brother live with you?”

“He didn’t.”

“I wonder why,” Izuku snipped.

The air wasn’t coming. He was breathing, but it wasn’t touching his lungs. All For One released him and he could breathe again.

“Is that all?” Izuku whispered. All For One had married Nana Shimura’ daughter and ruined her life.
One For All had the potential to be every bit as nasty as its parent Quirk, to the point where its
creator was bargaining for its transfer to be withheld… So nasty that All For One had gone from
trying to steal it to dropping it almost immediately.

All For One froze, averted his eyes and cleared his throat. “There… is one other matter… That I’ve
been meaning to discuss with you, but I haven’t been confident on broaching the topic.”

“You may as well,” Izuku struggled out.

“Izuku, I’ve had a… suspicion, ever since Shigaraki complained of a boy with a speed similar to All
Might and I found that it was you. Since then, the feeling has only grown more pronounced.” All For
One was many things, but very rarely did the fiend seem walk as though on glass. As if he might fall
trough the ground at any given moment and Izuku had a sinking sensation working up his spine that
it was going to be every bit as unpleasant as the previous topics. “When you were asked about your
Quirklessness, what did they test for?”

Izuku blinked. “They asked if I could pull objects to me and breathe… fi…re…” Izuku stared. Then
Izuku looked over his shoulder, to All For One’s room, where he knew all of his journals now sat,
filled with breakdown upon breakdown of various Quirks… with breakdowns of All For One’s own
Quirk. The journals that All For One was so proud of, that he rubbed in Kacchan’s face while
squeezing the life out of him. All For One which allowed him to steal a Quirk to breathe fire. All For
One who had an invisible Quirk that couldn’t be discovered without highly specific activation
conditions that could only be triggered by intent. “No. No.” Izuku shook his head insistently, eyes
filling with tears. “No no no, I don’t have a Quirk. I can’t.” Not that Quirk. Anything but that Quirk.

“How do you know?” All For One scooted closer, tugging the resisting Izuku into his arms. “My
Quirk isn’t like other Quirks, Izuku and you’ve never tried to see if you have mine.”

“No! I would’ve used it by accident? Wouldn’t I? Wouldn’t I?” Izuku couldn’t breathe and All For
One wasn’t letting go. All For One who only seemed to be holding on even tighter. All For One
who trembled and breathed deeply before he next spoke.

“Not if you convinced yourself that you didn’t have one. Not if you were never close enough to
people for the conditions to be relevant,” All For One said so gently that Izuku wanted to claw at him
blindly. “Unlike me, you never had the opportunity to be a normal person, Izuku.”

“That’s why you took the journals… To pry!” There wasn’t much Izuku could do with a single arm,
which was pinned by his side. “Tsubasa’s on your side anyway. Didn’t he know?”

“I never told Tsubasa that I was married or had a child,” All For One calmly stated and Izuku froze.
“I have a proposition for you. If you can, take one of my Quirks and you can either keep it, or you
can give it back to its owner.” With that, All For One released Izuku and allowed for an appropriate
amount of distance between them. All For One surely knew that Izuku would never willingly keep
someone else’s Quirk even if he could take them. Too many years of the misery associated with
being Quirkless to ever wish that upon someone else as All For One so easily did.

All For One held out his right hand and in slow motion Izuku watched a familiar shape bloom into
life and fade, before the familiar explosion reached his ears.

“You… stole… Kacchan’s… Quirk… That’s why he can’t use it in hospital! He didn’t fall, you
attacked him!” Izuku fumbled for the words, outraged ahead of himself. Kacchan was being kept
away from everyone for what? “Why? You already almost killed him!”

“I told him not to call you useless and he completely failed to abide by that request. So I took away
from him the only part that was even vaguely worthwhile,” All For One sneered. “Not that it’s my personal preference as far as Quirks are concerned.” Then, the expression faded back into a frown. “My deal stands. If you can take it, you can give it back to him.”

“Did you plan this? To use Kacchan against me?” Not that Izuku would put it past him. All For One was already cheerfully planning on torturing him to death.

All For One recoiled. “No. I didn’t specifically plan for Bakugou’s stupidity to get the better of him. I had… others shortlisted to sweeten the deal, but since you seem to want Bakugou to engage upon a career, I may as well offer this one. In an ideal world, Bakugou would suffer exactly what you did, but that’s not what you want…”

Biting his lip, Izuku stared at All For One, whose hand was still extended. What happened if Izuku didn’t have the Quirk? Would Explosion remain loitering in All For One’s graveyard for Quirks? Stockpiled, never to been or used again unless it was to personally taunt Kacchan? Why did Hisashi Midoriya care if his son had his Quirk? Was it a matter of prestige? Lost opportunity? “Why do you want to know? It doesn’t change anything.”

“Guilt,” All For One said simply, turning away. Guilt for what?

“Will you give it back even if I can’t take it?” Izuku prodded, wiping away tears.

“I will, if it makes you feel better,” All For One confirmed.

“How does it…” Izuku flailed.

“How does it…” All For One smiled blandly. “Amazing how exciting this would be if this conversation happened without this context.” It’d have been even more exciting if Izuku had no idea that the two of them were related and if All For One was still in prison and not in fact Hisashi Midoriya. “Skin contact, unless you managed to get a hybrid of your mother’s and mine, which might make this more difficult. So we take your hand…” With something resembling apprehension, All For One scooped Izuku up, tucking him in closer to his chest than any observer would agree was necessary. Each finger of Izuku’s left hand was prised open and All For One leaned into it, the edge of Izuku’s hand grazing All For One’s woolly hair. “Now, if you have it… All you have to do is think of the Quirk you want and pull.

Think of the Quirk and pull, huh? So All For One did require prior knowledge before he could take a Quirk, which limited him immediately from taking invisible Quirks like his brother’s Quirk. Kacchan’s Quirk Explosion was a straightforward Quirk. He secreted nitroglycerin as sweat… which surely had plenty of physiological issues, but could generate explosions provided his limbs could handle the recoil and the recoil was nasty from Izuku’s limited experience with Bakugou’s grenades…

Izuku blinked. In the inky depths of what must have been All For One’s being, Kacchan glared at him. “Oi, the fuck are you doing here?” Its hands popped and crackled wildly. Except the real Kacchan was drugged and in a hospital after his Quirk was stolen. This was Kacchan’s Quirk to be more precise. Was this how All For One saw Quirks? Izuku had the feeling that All For One probably didn’t or he would have a lot less of them.

“I take you’ve realised what’s happened,” All For One the Quirk noted from Izuku’s right, his voice carrying unlike the strained whisper from the dream. “That’s not Kacchan and I’m not your father. I’m the first,” it enunciated, smiling thinly.

“You’re my first Quirk,” Izuku whispered. “You’re me.” It was unreal. It shouldn’t have been real,
but this was well beyond any of All For One’s scheming capacities… and, Izuku suspected, something that he wouldn’t have been willing to even consider faking.

“If my skillset wasn’t so heavily associated with your father I’d even look and sound like you, but it’s a bit late in that regard.” All For One the Quirk paused. “Then again, if All Might hadn’t given you One For All, I wouldn’t have a form in the first place, so that’s a bit of a moot point.” If Izuku squinted, he could see the ghosts of One For All lurking almost of sight over All For One the Quirk’s shoulder. All For One the Quirk was doing a stunning impression of Hisashi Midoriya by glaring nastily at them over its own shoulder.

“So… Hisashi doesn’t have a version of you?” Izuku couldn’t help but ask. It wasn’t the time or place… What was the time actually? Was it passing the same as outside or was time perceived differently in the head of someone else?

“Oi fuckheads, what the fuck are you doing?” Kacchan’s Quirk snarled, moving forwards only to harmlessly bounce off both Izuku and his contempt filled Quirk.

“Oh, right, we’re meant to be taking that thing with us aren’t we?” All For One the Quirk made an expression of disgust startlingly close to the original. “Just take a firm hold of him and yank him back into your part of the endless abyss.”

“Do I have to?” Izuku asked with more sincerity than he intended. Just the thought of having a piece of Kacchan inside him was… Izuku cut himself off before the sensation of gagging could move any further up his throat.

“Now you know why your father doesn’t run around stealing the Quirks of everyone he walks past. Just look at him. Imagine the shoulder strain, the recoil, the damage to joints.” All For One the Quirk sneered magnificently, as though it were a particularly fussy wine critic out for a day at the nearest vineyard. “There are better options that don’t risk limbs being torn off.”

“The fuck is that meant to mean? I’m the fucking shit. Who doesn’t love blowing shit up? What the fuck are you even good at? Borrowing shit off other people and not giving it back, eh? Fucking parasite.” Was that really the Quirk or was Izuku’s Quirk giving it a personality? Or was that a side effect of One For All? Was he going to have to hear this after he took it from All For One. All For One who still might refuse to give it back unless Izuku took it himself? Izuku’s head ached, or did it, or was it a representation of external pain felt through the manifestation of the Quirk?

Either way, it hurt.

“It means, you inanimate lump of DNA given personality by guests, that if I had my way that you would be denied residence.” All For One the Quirk stated coolly, flicking an invisible speck of dust off its sleeve. “Mediocre blast radius, unnecessary damage to wrist, shoulder and finger joints. Some limited air propulsion… but really, is there anything you’re actually good at? What’s stopping me from tearing your arms off mid-detonation? How about a finger or a hand? Not much use without those, are you? You don’t even secrete any useful sweat from your feet which makes you a fairly pale clone of your parents,” All For One the Quirk drawled, notebook in hand and Izuku had a startling sense of deja vu. He’d seen this before. He’d done this before. Maybe not this brutally…

All For One had repeated similar comments to Kacchan while holding him dangling in the air. The same comments that All For One the Quirk spitefully made to Kacchan’s Quirk right now. The same ones in Izuku’s journal.

“You fucking looking down on me?” Kacchan’s Quirk screamed back at Izuku's unflinching Quirk.
“Of course I am, because your host is nothing without you and you’re nothing but a lucky strand in the first place.” With the last barb, Kacchan the Quirk faded to the same sort of shade Izuku had seen before and Izuku closed his jaw. All For One the Quirk shrugged apologetically and likewise faded without another word.

They weren’t real. Izuku didn’t know what they were and wasn’t sure if he really wanted to know, but if the Quirk gaining a personality was a result of One For All… What else was it doing inside Izuku’s head?

Surreally, Izuku reached towards Explosion, secured his left hand around its bubbling features and yanked.

In the real world, Izuku opened his eyes and gagged, allowing himself to sag further into All For One’s trembling arms. All For One who hadn’t just been suspecting All Might’s involvement and One For All. All For One who had been alarmed by another familiar habit that was telltale of something else. All For One who suspected that Izuku had something where All Might wouldn’t be of any help. Izuku struggled to hold down the burning sensation in his eyes.

With the purest dread, Izuku thought of Kacchan’s Quirk in the same way he did One For All, extended his sweating left hand away from the both of them and made a familiar gesture to a far more spectacular result. The resulting clap of miniature thunder rolled around the apartment’s walls.

“I’m so sorry, Izuku,” All For One whispered and Izuku could feel the additional weight press into his head and could feel droplets sink into his hair as All For One trapped him in a death grip. “I’m sorry. My brother… wasn’t happy about me giving him a Quirk either.”

For the first time, Izuku, exhausted, gently squeezed back.

Toshinori wasn’t meant to be here, but for some ungodly reason the door was open and at that point he was obligated to at least make sure everyone was alright before he left. Only Izuku. All For One could die really. Whatever news it was, it wasn’t going to be good news and Tsukauchi had confirmed as much for Toshinori. He wasn’t sure if he was ever going to be able to look Inko in the eyes ever again, but he’d do his best.

It was that line of thinking which had resulted in Toshinori almost tripping on Tomura Shigaraki who stood frozen at the entrance to All For One’s living room and, Toshinori really couldn’t blame him. All For One was entwined around his son in the style of a particularly invasive and parasitic ivy, latching onto the small boy, whose single exposed arm was wrapped around his father’s midsection. Toshinori might have been tempted to cause a scene, if not for the salty tracks clearly visible on the both of them. Unhappy news indeed. Unhappier news for Toshinori since it proved that Hisashi Midoriya was capable of human emotion.

Instead, Toshinori grabbed the catatonic Shigaraki by the elbow and hoisted the unresisted man out the door, latching it behind him as he went and made his way to the stairs.

“All Might.”

Toshinori leapt into the air. “Yes, Shigaraki?”

“Why was Sensei crying on his son?” Shigaraki’s lost voice asked. “What happened?”
“I suspect,” Toshinori, said carefully, trying to ignore the strange feeling of dragging the head of the League of Villains down a flight of stairs, “that he just confessed to murdering the boy’s grandmother.”

“What…” Shigaraki froze and refused to move.

Toshinori winced and patted Shigaraki comfortingly on the back in what was reflex more than anything else and felt the man stiffen. “Nana Shimura, mother of Inko Shimura and Izuku’s grandmother. Your grandmother, as well as my teacher. All For One murdered her then ran off and married her daughter. Young Midoriya is your first cousin.”

Toshinori wasn’t the slightest bit prepared for what happened next.

Naomasa blamed the night’s stress. Nana Shimura had twins and All For One had a kid with one of them. All Might was beyond devastated and that was bad enough, but stress induced hallucinations had to be a thing. Why else was Tomura Shigaraki having a fistfight with an All Might impersonator in the carpark in front of a fast food joint? Why else was there a strange flickering red light in one of the buildings opposite the carpark?

Naomasa blamed himself for getting a late night coffee. He should have known better and just caught a tax home. Instead he’d pulled up in the carpark to watch two lifelike figments of his imagination duke it out.

Shigaraki wasn’t even using his Quirk. It was wild haymaker after wild haymaker being flung at the All Might impersonator who daintily sidestepped each of the clumsy blows. Twirling, the All Might impersonator leapt gracefully through the air, hoisted a gasping Shigaraki by the waist and suplexed him into a quaint hedge. Naomasa even heard an indignant and incredibly realistic scream of rage through his tinted windows.

Naomasa had only stopped for a coffee. With the degree of accuracy of the physics of this hallucination, it was a good thing he’d pulled over. If it happened while he was driving, he would have destroyed his car. Probably driven clean into the hedge in disbelief.

“Come on Shigaraki, put your back into it! I’m a tired old has-been and you still can’t do anything!” The hallucination sounded like All Might, it looked like All Might… and it ripped up a nearby park bench in a batting position in a distressingly similar manner to All Might.

Naomasa blinked and rubbed his eyes.

They were still there. Naomasa experimentally opened his car door… and Shigaraki sounded much louder than before.

“How! Could! He! Do! This! To! Me!” Each screech was punctuated with a fist that was blocked by and increasingly distressed bench.

“Your form needs work, Shigaraki! Thumbs outside of fists unless you want to break them!” The All Might hallucination called and Shigaraki elected to charge in and was almost cheerfully swatted away with the bench. “No need to charge blindly.”

Naomasa blinked and left his car and inched closer, only to duck under a very real brick which Shigaraki had thrown at All Might. Naomasa knew it was real from the hole it left in his back
window and his car alarm going off.

“Careful! It’s me you’re after!” All Might’s hallucination scolded Shigaraki, flinging the bench at him. Shigaraki dived under it with an iron foot almost grazing his ear.

“What the hell was that?” Shigaraki screamed back.

“All Might? Shigaraki?” Naomasa coughed and stared between the… two?

“Tsukauchi?” All Might, because it was definitely him, called back. “Why are you he-Ouch!” All Might was smacked in the face by a flying plastic bottle. “Hey, leave that bin alone! Leave their waste out of it.”

“You threw a park bench at me!” Shigaraki screeched back, heaving, his chest moving erratically. First aid, strictly speaking, wasn’t Naomasa’s area, but Shigaraki seemed to be having a panic attack. An extremely volatile panic attack.

“You attacked me first, Shigaraki,” All Might said… soothingly? What the hell is going on here? “I understand you’re upset - who wouldn’t be? But taking it out on other people isn’t going to help you.”

“Sensei said-” Shigaraki unsteadily warbled, sinking into a crouch, his fingers twitching furiously. “Sensei said it’d make my problems go away.”

“And has it?” All Might asked gently, tiptoeing over to Shigaraki hunched over form on the tar of the carpark.

“No,” Shigaraki sobbed, rocking back and forth on the balls of his feet.

Naomasa needed something stronger than coffee.

Fifteen minutes later, after Toshinori had finished apologising to Tsukauchi for brutalising his car, all three of them were huddled inside the nearly abandoned fast food restaurant. Shigaraki wailed into his cheeseburger meal, hood drawn over his head, Toshinori feeling obligated to occasionally lean over and slap the current head of the League of Villains on the back when he began to choke. If someone had told Toshinori that this was how he was end his night, he would have requested they be sent to hospital for a check up.

“All Might,” Tsukauchi asked from around seven empty coffee cups, some of which were labelled from a neighbouring restaurant, “what happened?”

“We ran into each at Midoriya’s apartment,” Toshinori awkwardly began and was immediately interrupted by a particularly loud sob and reached over to pat Shigaraki on the back. “I’m assuming that Hisashi Midoriya failed to tell Shigaraki that he had a son and a wife and that Shigaraki is a first cousin of said son and that said wife is his aunt.”

“He’s really married?” Shigaraki groaned in a prolonged way. “He-he didn’t tell me anything,” the white haired man shuddered, attempting to sip on a drink to almost disastrous results. Toshinori confiscated it.

“Anyway, the elder Midoriya clearly gave young Midoriya the bad news… and Shigaraki saw the
consequence of that and took it poorly.” Young Midoriya had more parental contact from his father in one night than Shigaraki had in the entire duration of All For One’s guardianship. Seeing such blunt evidence of being lied to your whole life couldn’t have been good for someone as unstable as Shigaraki. “Then… we sort of made our way here.”

“Ah,” Tsukauchi responded, looking no less floored. “So how are we going to deal with this?” Tsukauchi asked Toshinori in a delicate manner with a slight twitch of a head directed towards Shigaraki.

Their options weren’t great. Shigaraki might be vulnerable now, but who was to say he wouldn’t go back to rabid All For One worship at a moment’s notice? Toshinori hadn’t been able to call for backup and Tsukauchi was verging on death, so that was him out of doing it. Options wise, there weren’t many. Shigaraki himself seemed likely to do himself some damage if left unattended.

“Shigaraki… he has a point. Where’s Kurogiri?” Toshinori prodded Shigaraki.

“I don’t know and I don’t care,” Shigaraki grunted. Toshinori winced. Shigaraki was too old for the rebellious teenager phase.

“You’ve got to sleep somewhere,” Tsukauchi pointed out. “Because you two have done enough damage for me to arrest you on it even without Quirks let alone everything else you have going for you, Shigaraki.”

“Then arrest me, I don’t care anymore.” Shigaraki turned his back on the both of them and Toshinori observed another savage bite of a cheeseburger. “That was Sensei’s end game anyway.” Shigaraki’s lip wobbled and Toshinori sighed. “He never cared. He hurt his son, what makes you think he cares about me?”

“Then why let it be his end game? If his entire plan was to hurt my feelings then why just go along with it?” Toshinori asked, maintaining a respectable distance. “All For One’s entire game plan was taking you, distorting you and keeping himself warm at night while imagining the look on my face. Why let him win?” Because if there was something Toshinori had picked up in his career, it was that spite was good enough for some people, even if it wasn’t necessarily the healthiest motivating factor on the planet. Tsukauchi’s nodding seemed to indicate agreement.

“Yeah, while he left his son to rot,” Shigaraki growled. “You know, I used to think that kid was just stupid… that he thought he could save everyone and that’s why he ran into all the stupid things he did… as if nothing was ever gonna hold him down.” Chest rising heavily, for a moment, Toshinori leaned backwards in anticipation of Shigaraki lashing out. “But it wasn’t. He did it because he didn’t expect anyone to come. He didn’t expect a hero to come. He didn’t expect his own father to come. He did it because he thought he was going to die anyway.” Shigaraki’s chest heaved, his right hand clenched and the table ceased to be in a shower of dust and tumbling coffee cups. Toshinori grabbed Tsukauchi, narrowly preventing him from falling forwards. “It was his fault that you weren’t there. It was his fault that Midoriya’s everywhere. IT WAS HIS FAULT!” Shigaraki screamed into the empty space where the table used to be.

Animalistic. Toshinori could only call it animalistic, the primal rage that crossed Tomura Shigaraki’s face as what seemed to a long missing puzzle clicked into place.

“And to think all these years I spent blaming you when he was the real problem. He had the ability and did nothing, even for his own family.” Shigaraki’s head was once again in his hands and, almost lost for words, Toshinori awkwardly patted him on the shoulder and was taken aback by the complete lack of a retaliation.
“How… how long have you been thinking about this?” Toshinori coughed through the dust. Tsukauchi’s mouth was firmly shut.

“Ever since I saw him at the new number one’s press event. He looked like Sensei, even *sounded* like him and Kurogiri said a while back that Midoriya had developed a Quirk out of nowhere…” Shigaraki snorted. “I started to think… so we went to talk to Midoriya at his house and nothing made sense. Not until I saw him again not too long ago and now tonight,” Shigaraki whispered. “Now it makes sense. His own son…”

Toshinori was going to ask Shigaraki to elaborate. Was. But instead dragged Shigaraki and Tsukauchi to the ground when a flicker of movement caught his eye as the stout building across the road detonated in a fireball. Glass didn’t have time to flex inwards, Shigaraki latching onto it on his way down and harmlessly scattering before it could do much of anything to do anyone. Instead the trio were pummelled by a rush of heat that left them gasping for air.

“What the hell was that?” Shigaraki gasped, immediately on his feet.

“Gas explosion or arson?” Tsukauchi hacked. “There aren’t that many Quirks that can do that much damage so easily.” Then Tsukauchi froze. “Shit. It can’t be.”

“What?”

“I saw a red light in that building earlier.” Even as Tsukauchi spoke, flames licked up the side of the building and jumped to an adjacent apartment building.

“Tsukauchi, call the fire brigade. I’m going to see if I can help, because that looks like a residential block.” Toshinori leapt through what was left of the window even as Tsukauchi dialled.

“What are you doing? Do you even have your old Quirk anymore?” Shigaraki called over the roar of the flames, footsteps following Toshinori. “You’re gonna die.”

“You know what would really upset All For One, Shigaraki?” Toshinori called to the footsteps behind him, ignoring Shigaraki’s assertion. Toshinori had almost died plenty of times. It wasn’t that scary anymore.

“What?” Shigaraki snapped.

“Human decency!” Toshinori charged the main door the apartments, slamming clean through it and setting off numerous alarms in the process and was greeted by a familiar lobby. “Residential block! The fire’s climbing the outside of the building from whatever blew up next door. We’re gonna have to be quick.” Which meant by default that people wouldn’t be scaling the outsides of their windows. Toshinori had no intention of waiting for the fire brigade to turn up when the happily burning building next door had a high probability of propellant speeding it along.

“What do you want me to do?” Shigaraki’s voice asked and Toshinori heard what was left of the front door crumble behind him.

“Help. We drag people out, room by room, floor by floor,” Toshinori grinned, flicking Shigaraki a thumbs up. “Just be careful not to collapse anything important with your Quirk. If people don’t listen to you feel free to insist and carry them out.”

“You people are crazy,” Shigaraki hissed even as he obligingly turned a door into nothingness for Toshinori to clear the room of an extremely confused family.

“It’s about encouraging people to do the right thing, trainee! Next room!”
“Trainee? You’re insane.”

Toshinori didn’t get another reply as they frantically emptied the building, but did notice Shigaraki taking entirely too much pleasure in bodily escorting unwilling individuals from the premises. It seemed, that like young Midoriya, Shigaraki too enjoyed rescuing people. Particularly the part where he indiscriminately threw them out the front door to the faces of extremely confused emergency services personnel.

Chapter End Notes

=D
Awakening of a Cryptid

Chapter Summary

Sleeping cryptids are to be treated be care. Awake cryptids are to be treated with terror.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Nightmares. That’s what should have been the cause of Izuku groggily opening his eyes. A conga line of nightmares with Izuku starting to full wakefulness, sweating, his heart beating erratically. That would have been more fitting after the previous night’s revelations. It should not have been a very real and very dead to the world All For One’s attempts to snuggle more deeply into Izuku’s voluminous hair. His breaths alternately warming and chilling Izuku’s scalp.

“Uh, Hisashi?” Izuku helplessly poked at the sole cause of every single tragedy within his family and then some. There was a warm puff of air as All For One exhaled instead of moving. “Hisashi. Can you move?”

“Mmm, do I have to?” All For One slurred and yawned in a puff of heat that made Izuku shudder. “Warm,” he sighed, tugging at Izuku who immediately stiffened his arm in response.

“After what you did to mum and Kacchan?” Izuku stiffly asked, his arm still locked against All For One’s efforts. And what had been done to All Might. And Shigaraki. And his mother. And everyone else. After last night?

“I almost forgot about that.” All For One moved in record time and Izuku was left glaring at thin air.

“Wishful thinking,” Izuku mumbled, more irritated than ever.

“Wishful thinking,” he asked, gazing down at Izuku. “Speaking of wishful thinking, do you wish for pancakes or waffles?”

“Are you trying to bribe me with sweets?”

“Yes.”

“Neither.” And Izuku stalked into his bathroom, only to stagger out fifteen minutes later with a crestfallen All For One nursing a plate of pancakes.

Izuku dodged him and instead made for the front door.

“Where are you going?”

“I… need some time to myself.” And, optimally, to have Hisashi as far away from Izuku as humanly possible as Izuku contemplated how he was going to give Kacchan’s Quirk back to him. “I’m going to go for a walk, okay?” It wasn’t really a question.

All For One frowned, but contritely bobbed his head Izuku was out the front door before All For One could change his mind or attempt to stop him.
It was early in the morning. Too early really. Breakfast didn’t matter. If he ate he was going to be ill.

Izuku settled for bounding down the stairs and skidding outside the door to the wild blue yonder that was the morning traffic jam in front of the building. There was a profane oath, someone else returned fire, followed by the sound of screeching rubber… It was almost soothing, compared to the conversation waiting back at the apartment. Izuku lengthened his stride and wandered off in no particular direction.

Izuku had Kacchan’s Quirk. Izuku had All For One. Izuku always had All For One. What was he meant to do with this information? With this Quirk? One For All was, well, not quite straight forward to use, but it had its place. All For One was boundless and limitless in its applications… If Izuku was willing to pull a Hisashi and throw all standards out of the nearest window. Izuku shuddered.

Quirk usage was largely banned outside of pro hero licences and usage generally unless… on… private… property… Izuku came to a stop near an alleyway. Private property. Where had most of All For One’s Quirks come from? Izuku had assumed that they were stolen, that no one would ever give a Quirk up… but Shigaraki’s Quirk was an absolute pain in normal life. Involuntary, attached to five fingers and contact points, limiting grip strength, requiring glove wearing for day to day life… Basic hygiene would be a disaster with a Quirk like that. If someone didn’t plan on using their Quirk, who would honestly want it? Izuku had spent most of his life thinking that he was Quirkless and… that hadn’t really stopped him from slamming Kacchan face first into the ground. There were ways around being Quirkless, as Hatsume’s technology had proven. If someone’s Quirk took away so much of their quality of life, could the government interfere with it being removed? Izuku didn’t think they would care so long it was kept from being on an industrial scale.

Did that… did that mean that someone could contract away their Quirk to someone with All For One? Could Izuku purchase or pay for a Quirk? Could he barter for one or trade for one? Could he take one as a donation? Why... why was there an assumption that he had to steal one? Could All For One have potentially obtained Quirks legally back when having Quirks wasn’t socially acceptable?

“That’s creepy,” a high voice remarked and Izuku frowned. There was a lady standing in the mouth of the alleyway, framed by shadows. Yeah, because this isn’t at all suspicious, an annoyed part of Izuku’s brain whispered. Dark haired, nondescript and unremarkable. Her clothing was likewise the case.

“Then why are you standing here listening to me?” Izuku asked shortly, feeling even more annoyed, spying a metallic glint in the woman’s hand. Probably a knife. Izuku’s hands were sweating. An attempted mugging to start the morning. He should have at least brought his gloves, but it was too late now. He wanted to leave before All For One thought to stop him.

“Do you wanna play?” She giggled, running her free hand through a curl in an attempted cutsey manner in a way that was more nauseating than cute. “Follow me, handsome!” And she bolted into its dark depths.

Clearly bait, but nothing Izuku couldn’t handle, even with one arm. One For All activated and within a moment he was at her back. Within another, Izuku lunged, extending his open hand to push her away and off balance and - BOOM!

That… wasn’t One For All, Izuku realised with a thrill of horror, his arm recoiling in one direction - and the would be criminal in the other. One For All didn’t generate heat. One For All definitely didn’t make his sweat evaporate into a giant explosion and skip wannabe villains down shoddily maintained alleyways. An alleyway now blackened from the combustion of nitroglycerin.

Sliding to a halt from the blast, Izuku bolted to the woman’s position, reaching for a wrist. She was
still breathing, her heart seemed alright, but with a blow to the head like that? There was a chance that Izuku had, however accidentally, caused a serious neck injury and he bit his lip. There wasn’t anything he could do. He definitely couldn’t risk moving her.

It was best to err on the side of caution and card it and let the police and paramedics deal with it. Without any hesitation, he pulled out a card and flicked it onto the dark haired woman and hurried back to the entrance of the alley and reached for his phone. It was one thing to judge strength with One For All, but Kacchan’s Quirk was entirely different in the sort of force it deployed. Using a Quirk was different to watching it and Izuku wasn’t even going to attempt to pick her up with the way her head had hit the ground.

It… wasn’t as hot as Izuku would have expected for the size of the blast. Did Kacchan’s Quirk come with a sort of secondary resistance for heat and concussive shock of the recoil? The joints themselves didn’t seem to have been adjusted by the Quirk because they felt it, but it was definitely less jarring to be on the using end than the receiving end. Maybe less hearing loss as well from the explosion or was Izuku just used to them? Is that why Kacchan yelled so much or was that just his mother? It’d need more test-

“-Well done,” smooth tones chortled, cutting through his thoughts and Izuku spun to see All For One beaming from the entry of the alley.

“Huh?” Izuku blinked and then did a double take. All For One hadn’t turned for the rest of Izuku’s alleyway tussles. “Wait, if you’re here, then-?” Then Izuku plunged back into the depths of the dank hole in the side of the buildings and the mysterious brunette was no longer so mysterious, nor a brunette, nor even the same height.

Izuku knew that Toga would shed the extra mass as some sort of substance, but what happened internally when the shift occurred? That explosion was nothing to sneeze at and the hit to the head wasn’t either. “Toga?” Entirely too much Toga and Izuku averted his eyes.

“Yes, but I see you didn’t require my assistance,” All For One noted over Izuku shoulder, his footsteps approaching. “Izuku… are those scorch marks?”

“I… had an accident?” Izuku cringed and it only deepened when All For One grinned knowingly at him, nothing but pearly white teeth.

“Did she even say anything to you before your accident?” Without a care in the world, All For One casually strolled over and prodded at Toga’s clenched fist with a toe, revealing a wickedly curved knife. “Hm, probably a good thing you had such a quick accident. Toga’s one of the League’s more unstable members.”

“She didn’t really get the chance to say much of anything,” Izuku shrugged. Not when Izuku saw her carrying a knife in plain sight. “Can I go give back Kacchan’s Quirk now?” Izuku hurriedly changed the topic, eyeing the blackened marks. At least it didn’t happen somewhere more populated.

“After what you just did to this poor hapless, piece of private property? Yes, it’s probably for the best. Think of what it’d do to the apartment.” All For One lamented, as if he couldn’t see Toga’s battered body in front of him. As if he didn’t have the funds to immediately jump on another full building. “Incidentally enough… I doubt Toga’s going to be needing her Quirk anymore. Do you want to take it or should I?”

“HISASHI, NO!” Izuku barked at him and All For One slapped Izuku on the back as he laughed wildly.
“I was joking. I do have standards, namely that clothes must stay on when I take a Quirk. It does get
cold in Japan, after all.”

It was all Izuku could do not to strangle him, even as he dialled emergency services. It was going to
be one of those days.

“Katsuki, you have a guest. Behave yourself,” Mitsuki snarled and Katsuki nodded and smiled. Then
poked his tongue out the moment she left. Which idiot is it this time?

“Kacchan?” A familiar voice queried and Katsuki world grounded to a halt.

“Deku?” Katsuki’s jaw dropped. “Holy shit you’re alive.” He was alive. At least Katsuki thought it
was him. Toga wasn’t fucking perfect and couldn’t have the mannerisms down so well. Deku was
pale and strained looking, his arm still in a sling, but he was otherwise in better health than he would
have expected. His unbound arm with filled with a heavy looking duffle bag which he seemed to
carry without effort and he gently set it on the ground, just under Katsuki’s bed.

“I’m… doing okay, I guess,” Deku seemed to fumble for the words, his face twisted in a type of
displeasure Katsuki hadn’t ever fucking seen before. “Had a bad night. Turns out Hisashi was
keeping secrets from the family,” Deku said pointedly.

“Does that prick know you’re here?” Katsuki asked, an unpleasant sensation in his chest, because if
All For One didn’t, there was going to be hell to pay for both of them.

“Yeah, he brought me here. I threatened him with mum and he blew over like a house of cards,”
Deku said easily, even with huge fucking raccoon rings under his eyes. “She’s already really upset
with him.”

“What the fuck. How? Did your mum know?” Did Inko Midoriya know she married a fucking
psychotic, criminal? How the fuck was that tiny woman going to do anything about a bastard like
that?

“She had no idea when she married him and, well, let’s just say she found out last night and… He
finally outed himself to me as stealing your Quirk…” Deku said quietly, almost under his breath,
fidgeting. Wringing his hands. What the fuck had happened.

Katsuki squinted at him. “Then why the fuck isn’t he here to give it back? It’s not like you can do it,
right?” Deku only had his borrowed Quirk from All Might. He didn’t have anything else. Right?

Deku remained silent. “Well, you see, that’s what we thought as well… But then Hisashi mentioned
that they didn’t test me for his actual Quirk. You know, since he doesn’t really breathe fire.”

Katsuki froze. “What the fuck do you mean by thought?”

It was then Deku stood and stepped closer, hesitantly, as if approaching a wild animal and Katsuki
would never admit to feeling like a cornered animal in that instant either. “Maybe… maybe it’s easier
if I just show you?” Deku nervously suggested.

“You’ve got to be fucking kidding me, Deku.” How the fuck? What the fuck? When the fuck? Just.
FUCK. “Fine. Just. Argghhhh. Get over here. Just don’t fucking strangle me, okay?” This was
fucking surreal. Fucking Deku with the fucking lottery… that he didn’t even fucking use to own
most of the villains he came up against. What the fuck? Who was the fucking weakling now then, if Deku always had it and didn’t even fucking need it?

And Katsuki braced himself as Deku placed his hand gently on his forehead.

All For One was a fucking prick and a half.

“Ah, here we are, Bakugou’s head,” All For One the Quirk inhaled deeply. “I loathe this place already.” It was no different to All For One’s head. Dark, empty and endless.

“Fuck off,” Kacchan’s Quirk yelled and Izuku winced.

“Let’s make this quick,” All For One the Quirk suggested, with the expression of someone who had stepped in something particularly revolting on a dark, morning walk.

Izuku hefted Explosion by one side, All For One the Quirk hefted Explosion by the other and together they swung Explosion back… once, twice, thrice and on the fourth swing they released. Explosion tumbled gracelessly though the air, through the barrier that separated Izuku from Kacchan and straight back into Kacchan’s head. Explosion hit the ground with a roar of noise and profanity.

“Thank god, I didn’t think we’d ever be rid of him,” All For One the Quirk sighed. “We are never taking him back for any reason. Ever.”

“It’s a piece of DNA,” Izuku faintly whispered. This was never going to be not surreal.

“So am I,” All For One the Quirk winked and Izuku blinked back into the real world.

Kacchan stared at him and Izuku shuffled backwards. Kacchan just stared, then extended his hand and Explosion gently popped into life with far more finesse than Izuku had managed in his brief possession of it. “Kacchan?”

“Deku, can I borrow your phone for a minute?” Kacchan asked in the strangest tone of voice Izuku had ever heard him use. Strained, it didn’t belong with Kacchan.

“Sure, just make sure you delete the records of whatever you send.” So I don’t know about it. Izuku silently handed over his phone and Kacchan rapidly texted for ten minutes in complete silence, then he handed the phone back. “So, Kacchan…”

Kacchan held up a hand and spoke in a level voice. “Deku, I’m gonna be honest… I don’t know what to fucking say to what just happened. I just don’t. You clearly can’t fucking leave and nobody seems to fucking know what’s going on, but you need help and I’m gonna give it to you whether you fucking want it or not.”

Izuku stared. “Kacchan, no!” All For One had already-

“Shut up,” Kacchan cut Izuku off and Izuku was on the receiving end of a haunted expression. “You’re in no fucking position to be doing shit. Am I gonna bust in Quirk blazing? Probably fucking not, because I’m not an idiot like you, but I’m sure as fuck gonna do something.” Kacchan grunted. “What’s in the fucking bag?” Kacchan changed the topic and Izuku knew that attempting to warn Kacchan off provoking All For One was a battle that was already lost.

Izuku smiled thinly. “Homework.”
Izuku left twenty minutes later, under All For One watchful gaze, with the vague hope that Kacchan knew better than to try something without his Quirk. Izuku was used to doing insane things without a Quirk for most of his life. Kacchan wasn’t.

These people were morons. Katsuki couldn’t remember the last time he’d smiled at anything let alone forced his lips up so sickeningly in his entire life. It felt wrong. It probably looked wrong as well. Didn’t seem to matter to his mother. She smiled like a halfwit and strutted from the room with her Doormat. Did this woman not notice that something was wrong after Deku’s visit? That Deku was crying when he left?

As soon they were out of sight, Katsuki let it slip from his face with revulsion and dived for the bag that Deku had left him. Those fucking idiots knew full well that he wouldn’t be doing any homework with the poison they were giving him. Didn’t bother to correct Deku or tell him any differently, or stop him from wasting his time. Didn’t even check the bag. Oh well. That was gonna be their problem.

Condescending pricks. Meanwhile, Katsuki hadn’t taken anymore of the shit they were trying to give him. They never checked his mouth, so it was enough to hold them until he could get to the bathroom to spit them out.

There were no more nurses watching him around the clock and that made life easier. Security also wasn’t posted at his front door like it had been when he collected the old hag, which meant he had time before anyone dived on him if he got caught sneaking out with Todoroki.

All For One taking Explosion had only bought the bastard time and in the end alerted Deku to what the asshole had done in the first place. But Katsuki didn’t need Explosion to work out when the nurses changed shift, or to position himself in the best spot to hear handover or to know to sneak a look at rostering when the medical emergency alarm went off. He didn’t need his Quirk for the important shit in getting away from these bastards and getting word out about Deku.

And there were his parents, treating him like he was… like he was a useless invalid, because he didn’t… have a Quirk. How fucking wrong those morons were. He’d show them. But first, the bag.

There was a fucking honest to god brick in the bag. A brick. Deku left him a fucking brick. A Quirk and a brick. That was Katsuki’s homework. A fucking cinderblock and his Quirk. Taken directly from some construction site, left in a bag and walked through the front door of the goddamn hospital. Why did Deku have a fucking brick in the first place? It wasn’t beyond Deku to use improvised weapons, but this was taking it to strange new places.

Not that Deku had ever fucking needed improvised weapons as it turned out, but he didn’t have time to think about that shit now. It didn’t matter. He couldn’t think about. There were more important things to do.

The point remained, what the hell was Katsuki meant to do with a brick? Throw it at someone? Pfft. If only he could. He had a list for all of the bastards that kept drugging him in this shithole of a hospital. He’d get around to it eventually. Maybe Inko Midoriya would like to see it. Seemed like the sort of thing she’d enjoy these days.

Deku wasn’t entirely stupid though. There was no fucking way he would have risked raiding All For One’s arsenal without having something in mind. Not when All For One was the phenomenally
huge bastard that he was. No, Deku gave him the cinderblock for a reason.

And the reason had nothing to do with being in the hospital. Katsuki couldn’t do jackshit to bail Deku out while he was stuck with Dr Shitpants or Shithead or whatever he was called. If that useless moron couldn’t listen to Katsuki about being attacked by the resident psychopath, Katsuki sure as fuck wasn’t putting in the effort into learning his name. But there had to be a reason for the brick specifically that could get him outs-

Outside. That was the fucking ticket.

He was ten fucking storeys up as All For One himself had so helpfully pointed out. With nothing but a sheet of glass between himself and the fresh air. He was ten storeys with his Quirk back and a brick. He was just about unstoppable, wasn’t he?

Katsuki smirked to himself.

“KATSUKI! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?”

Katsuki thought what he was doing was fairly clear. At the moment he was done giving a fuck about his hag’s shit. None of them had listened to him, why should he listen to them? Simple. If she was to weak to stop him from putting a brick through a window, that was her problem as a parent. And maybe hospital security, but who cared about them?

In Katsuki’s left hand, his Quirk, like an old friend, experimentally roared to life, firing furiously as he adjusted to his muscle wasting. His wrists flexed dangerously as he knew they would, as Deku knew they would, but if he fired sooner rather than later he could slow himself with smaller blasts before he reached the ground and hopefully delay any breaks. Then hope to god that his legs hadn’t gone to shit as badly as his wrists, but if they had he could always break fall instead of attempting to land it like an idiot.

In his right hand, he spun Deku’s gift bag of a cinderblock by the handles in an arc. It was too late when the old bag walked in. They were getting complacent, just as Katsuki had been counting on. As his bag of homework reached its final arc of appropriate trajectory, Katsuki released and it rocketed forwards. Force equals mass times acceleration and while a cinderblock was nothing much compared to a solid building, being propelled by centrifugal force and Katsuki’s helpful Quirk based push was nothing to laugh at. With his Quirk alone he might have broken his wrists in his current state, but with the cinderblock?

Katsuki’s tenth storey window exploded with the force of a small bomb. Glass blasted outwards and down to the street below.

Moments later, Katsuki followed, the voices of his shrieking parents following him down. “Later losers!” Katsuki screamed as he rocketed down the side of the building, his hands firing as he went. Fresh air for the first time in weeks soared into his lungs and he cackled.

A familiar head of hair came into view and a sheet of ice arced itself underneath Katsuki and he eased the strain on his wrists with one final detonation. Hitting Todoroki’s ice slide solidly, Katsuki flew down it at speed, feeling the texture ever so subtly shift from smooth to rough as it levelled to a flat. Looks like Thirteen’s rescue training was finally getting a workout, fucking finally. Katsuki was wondering why he had a job at U.A.

The slide lifted into one final bump then Katsuki was launched into the door of an open car and
impacted into the middle passenger. “He’s in! Drive! Drive!” Kirishima screeched, dragging him into position, slamming the door shut and hammering Katsuki’s seatbelt on.

“Fucking hell, how many people are here, Todoroki?” Katsuki yelled at the split coloured boy who shrugged at him at the far side of the car.

“I dunno, I just said that I was getting a taxi here and other people could come visit if they wanted…” Todoroki shrugged and Katsuki found himself nodding grudgingly. Plausible deniability at its finest. That sneaky bastard.

“You know, I didn’t think you kids were serious about busting someone out of a hospital,” a nervous voice garbled from the front seat of what was unquestionably a taxi.

“S’all good man, we’ve got your escape covered!” Kirishima nodded. “You might want to not look in your mirrors for a bit.”

“How-?” And Katsuki was immediately blinded by a flash of light that flew in the back window of the car. “The fuck? Was that Invisible?” Katsuki clawed at his eyes and swore loudly.

“I dunno,” Todoroki shrugged. “Maybe she came? I didn’t see her…”

“That’s not fucking helping,” Katsuki barked. “We have a serious fucking problem.”

“I dunno, you blowing out the side of a hospital building is pretty serious, man,” Kirishima noted. “There’s no way you’re not gonna get in trouble for that. We thought you’d use the front door like a normal person.”

“I meant Deku being kidnapped by All For One, or didn’t anyone tell you the news?” Katsuki hissed under his breath, watching Kirishima and Todoroki stiffen.

“No,” Todoroki said slowly, the blood draining from his face, “when did he escape? When did he take Midoriya?”

“Remember when Deku got fucking kidnapped? Guess who they asked to get him back? Turns out Deku’s extracurricular project was on the bastard’s Quirk…” Katsuki trailed off, biting his tongue. He could say more, but would he? Deku hadn’t fucking known. No one had known. Deku clearly didn’t know shit all about his old man or his Quirk, but that didn’t mean he’d be safe from any of the assholes who thought otherwise.

“But why Midoriya?” Kirishima hurriedly mumbled as the driver swerved around a line of traffic and they were all flung to the side.

“Deku likes Quirks. That bastard likes Quirks. Why do you think, genius?” Katsuki snarled, shoving down the twigging of his consciousness. “They met up and that bastard was flattered that Deku was so interested in his Quirk. Turns out he liked the company.” After sixteen years of being a useless fucking deadbeat and making his family miserable while he had some shit feud with All Might. No wonder Inko Midoriya never fucking mentioned him.

“What’s the plan then?”

“We get back to U.A., tell the teachers and let them work something out.” Katsuki couldn’t take on All For One while he was posing as lowly Hisashi Midoriya let alone the bastard in full flight. Even All Might struggled with the bastard. They were going to need either an army or an assassin to take him down and get Deku back and if All For One was back at his old strength then neither was looking likely. “Whatever happened, Deku couldn’t tell them directly, so we have to be the
messengers and get this shit done. Deku was speaking when I saw him last at the hospital… but…” Katsuki trailed off and swallowed.

“But you texted us with his phone,” Todoroki seemed to realise, knuckles turning white, “and Midoriya was with his… father and had a phone.”

“See the fucking problem yet Icy? Realised why he doesn’t call Hisashi dad yet?” Katsuki spelled out.

“Holy shit,” Kirishima whispered.

Katsuki would’ve told Kirishima to fuck off for being so mild… if the building in front of them hadn't just exploded.

“Oh for fuck's sake!”

Gran Torino was a man of many virtues. At the moment, patience was not one of them, and Toshinori found himself leaning backwards as the elderly man almost foamed at the mouth over his kitchen table.

“WHY IS TOMURA SHIGARAKI WATCHING A SOAP OPERA ON YOUR TELEVISION?” Gran Torino screamed across the gap and Toshinori shrugged.

“He… couldn’t sleep?” Toshinori awkwardly explained. It’d been a really stressful night with the amount of floors evacuated. Seemed like someone had tried to set the building next door on fire for insurance money. They didn’t really have to wonder who. Shigaraki had only been too happy to sprint into the crowd after the lone smiling individual watching the adjacent building burn and pounce on him. With one, single, terminating scream of terror, Shigaraki had their man. Much to the relief of the police, who mysteriously hadn’t witnessed the individual who carried out a citizens arrest with a commandeered roll of duct tape. Tsukauchi hadn’t offered it either and they’d sped off in Tsukauchi’s assaulted car before anyone could ask.

Some blurred photos had later turned up of what appeared to be the leader of the League of Villains staging an evacuation, but fortunately for everyone involved, they were ignored and laughed off online.

“It was a busy night,” Tsukauchi said agreeably. Tsukauchi hadn’t had any problems dozing off when they crashed at Toshinori’s apartment. Shigaraki had picked one side of the lounge and Tsukauchi the other and the former had ignored the latter who had unceremoniously passed out in spite of dangerous caffeine intake of the night. Instead Shigaraki had gazed emptily at the TV without seeing much of anything, without commenting, almost catatonic, until Tsukauchi had jerked to awareness six hours later. Only then had Shigaraki slunk off into Toshinori’s bathroom and seemingly attempted to drown himself in the shower.

Toshinori had been asleep in bed the whole time and absolutely no intention of telling Gran Torino that. His teacher was already upset enough by Shigaraki being in the apartment, but god help them all if he knew that Shigaraki had been unsupervised for most of the night. They had survived the unsupervised Shigaraki. They probably wouldn’t survive the old man knowing about it.

“Do you have to yell? It’s too early in the morning.” The subject of the discussion in question droned, shuffling to the freezer and moving away, a tub of ice cream under one arm. Toshinori
doubted he’d be seeing it ever again and made a mental note to buy a new one when he went grocery shopping later.


“Sensei lied.” Shigaraki shrugged and walked off. Gran Torino facepalmed and Toshinori shrugged as well.

“What he said,” Tsukauchi nodded, flipping through a notebook.

“Shouldn’t you be arresting him?” Gran Torino glared across the table and Toshinori swore that his vase full of daisies wilted from the action. “He's already tried to kill all of us numerous times. He's a danger to society.”

“I should be arresting All For One as well, but all know how well that'll work. If I do arrest Shigaraki, they’ll toss him into a deep dark hole, not treat him for whatever problems he does have and give All For One a victory he doesn’t deserve,” Tsukauchi sighed. “After the amount of paperwork I’ve been through looking for Dr Tsubasa, I’m not inclined to give All For One much of anything for free.” Toshinori on the other hand would be happy to give All For One a free kick as he walked past. “The police still haven’t formally told the public that All For One exists yet let alone that he’s escaped. Formally arresting Shigaraki might also force All For One back into the limelight.” Tsukauchi shrugged. “As it is right now, Shigaraki’s willing to help out and All For One’s busy making his son’s life miserable. While I don’t like leaving Midoriya with him, our options aren’t great…” Though young Midoriya didn’t seem to be making life easy for the bastard either.

“Is he now?” Gran grunted. “Oi, Shigaraki, you really throwing your precious Sensei away to help this idiot evacuate buildings?”

For a moment, there was a pause and only the dull noise of an advertisement. “Throwing? Like the park bench All Might threw at me last night?” Shigaraki asked with a definite note of petulance.

Toshinori groaned. “I apologised for that! You tried to kill me first!” Toshinori returned fire and heard a snort from the other room.

“Then maybe I am him throwing him away like All Might did the park bench,” Shigaraki confirmed and Toshinori held his head in his hands.

“Absolutely wonderful, Toshinori,” Gran Torino growled. “Looks like I’m moving in because you decided to take in an unstable lunatic.”

“That’s not very nice,” Shigaraki indifferently called from the other room. “I might be a lunatic, but I’m not unstable like Toga.”

“Shut up!” Gran Torino screamed back.

Toshinori’s stomach twisted. “Move in? That’s unnecessary.” And a breach of privacy. And disturbing. And, quite frankly, terrifying. Young Midoriya’s recounts of Gran’s behaviour during his internship only made Toshinori even more worried by the prospect. “I can manage.”

“No you can’t,” Gran Torino snorted. “I’ll start making arrangements.”

“Yes, I can,” Toshinori sank his heels in. His apartment was much too small for dealing with this on a daily basis. His neighbours were also much too respectable to not lodge a complaint with the building’s management. Shigaraki was a quiet handful. Gran Torino was not.
“Hey, you should see this,” Shigaraki’s voice cut in, with an underlying edge of something sounding suspiciously like glee.

“I DON’T CARE ABOUT SOA-”

“Trust me old man, you’re gonna wanna see this one,” Shigaraki positively giggled and it was only then Toshinori sprinted for the TV. A happy Shigaraki was a concerning Shigaraki and the rest of the table followed.

“Breaking news! Riots have broken out in front of the National Diet building following the publication of a damning report by the Heroes Mirror!” The camera panned and Toshinori was met with the sight of a brick being hurled towards a police officer in full riot gear. “The exposé revealed the Japanese government’s suspension of the Constitution and extensive abuse of emergency powers in the creation, maintenance and enforcement of professional heroes system. The implications for this are far reaching, with it now speculated that laws forbidding the usage of Quirks are in fact entirely illegal and unconstitutional and always have been, resulting in the implication that our prisons are filled with innocent members of the public-“ It was at this point in time that Toshinori’s jaw closed and he turned to his fellow dumbstruck audience members.

“Someone find the article! Who wrote it?!?” Toshinori urged. The Mirror. All For One’s newspaper.

“Pass me your phone, scrub,” Shigaraki demanded, snatching Tsukauchi’s phone from his hands and four fingering the search terms in record time. “Found the article. Someone called…,” Shigaraki’s face twisted unpleasantly, “A41.”

Tsukauchi grimaced over Shigaraki’s shoulder and were it in any other circumstance, Toshinori might’ve laughed. “He was the one who wrote the article for Conspiracy.”

Gran Torino uttered such profanity that Toshinori was fairly sure he’d be banned from any nearby churches if they knew about it.

Shigaraki delicately plucked his hand from his face and tucked it into his pocket and turned to look at Tsukauchi with a broad smile. “Aren’t you glad you didn’t arrest me?”

Toshinori snorted in spite of himself. There was another escapee who hadn’t been formally trialled, charged or arrested yet. Dear god… If pro heroes weren’t acting legally… what the hell were they going to do about All For One?

“Ah shit.”

Shū was laughing at him. Or rather, Shū from earlier in the month was laughing at him, as Izuku numbly gazed as his published article which brightly gleamed on the Heroes Mirror website. Opinion: The Pro Hero System and Quirk Regulation Are Illegal And Unconstitutional By A41 and it was such a small and innocuous seeming title. A small title that caused such a large public upheaval.

“I completely forgot that we had this queued…” Izuku mumbled, looking over his laptop screen to the television as a protester hurled a molotov cocktail into a crowd of police, only for it to be extinguished by Manual in a blast of water. Not a smart idea really, that would cause a chemical reaction… It wasn’t the only location either. Police stations were being attacked, local government buildings… Anywhere and everywhere people could get to… In the few hours since the news had
broken, even prisons had been attacked with varying amounts of success.

All For One was glued to the proceedings, perched next to Izuku, alternating between the news coverage and the article. “You did in six months what I couldn’t in over two centuries and you weren’t even trying,” All For One laughed, long, deep, almost hysterical, holding onto Izuku for dear life. Izuku couldn’t breathe. Had they really been this close to publication? Izuku couldn’t remember. When had they written so much? How much had Shū written? “However am I going to explain this to your mother?” All For One asked, almost rhetorically, wiping away tears. “Ah, Tomura, is going to be so disappointed.”

“But rioting isn’t the right way to go about it!” Izuku shot back indignantly. “Successful revolutions are almost never violent.” Izuku hadn’t expected… this. The Mirror had coverage, but this sort of coverage? Newspapers weren’t easy to read at the best of times, even a rag like the one Izuku wrote for. Who else was involved for it to have spread so far so quickly? How had so many people become exposed so quickly to the article? Why was the mainstream news reporting on it? “How did this happen?”

“Izuku, they’ve had this coming for years,” All For One growled. “You and Shū wrote it yourselves, the existing laws already covered using Quirks. There was no need for such aggressive legislation and the way they treated others… and now it’s finally caught up to them.” All For One’s arm was entwined around Izuku’s shoulders. “I think it’s in the best interests of the the Mirror that everyone work remotely for the next year or so…” He absentmindedly added, resting his chin on his hands.

“No! How did it spread?” Izuku demanded. “Your papers are tabloids, people usually don’t care. How did this happen?” Sure, his other article had resulted in a stampede at their front door, but that was Zach troublemaking. Probably. Or people looking for a day off. It wasn’t anything like this.

“That is an excellent question, during the one week I didn’t review our publication schedule as well,” All For One murmured. “Could it be that we have our own internal leak in the Mirror? If so, why weren’t we raided to prevent us from going to print and e-publication? It’s not like they didn’t have time.”

A leak who seemingly had facilitated the spread of the illegality of Japan’s government with such fastidiousness that it had in turn triggered riots. Few people had that level of influence outside of the media. “Do… do you think maybe someone with links to a pro hero was behind it?” But everyone at the Mirror had piles of contacts to pro hero agencies. It could have been anyone.

“Oh, I don’t doubt it in the slightest,” All For One purred, his lips curling up in such a knowing manner that Izuku’s eyes narrowed. “An extremely influential pro hero, beloved by all…”

“I… I just wanted to do my school assignment for All Might,” Izuku whispered, his head in his hands as his work email inbox exploded before his eyes.

“And I wanted to be a normal person,” Hisashi Midoriya agreed, “but this is what happens when the government starts arresting people for being born wrong instead of doing the wrong thing.”

“We have an update on the story! There have reportedly been discussion behind party room doors relating to temporarily suspending funding to hero schools while the questions relating to their legality are addressed.” A nasally reporter sneered across the screen.

Izuku immediately elbowed Hisashi in the ribs for laughing.

Chapter End Notes
Please stay tuned for more in Woes of a Cryptid.

Also, apologies for typos and the like, but my migraines are killing me. I'll pan back over and fix what's slipped through.

One more thing, can Korean translators stop stealing my work and translating it without permission? That'd be wonderful.

End Notes

I still can't bring myself to write meta.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!