Do What You Will, If That's What You Want

by stanzas

**Summary**

“What do you mean you’re retiring?” Bakugou asks nicely, or at least as nicely as someone like Bakugou can ask. The question is phrased more like a demand.

“Call it a mid-life crisis,” Shouto answers, like Bakugou asked him what the weather would be tomorrow, and takes a deep sip from his coffee. “I’m thinking of changing careers.”

The world of heroes is quick to adapt to surprises, but Pro Hero Entropy’s (very premature) retirement announcement throws almost everyone for a pretty impressive loop.
(pulls off a large hat, revealing the same smaller hat beneath it)

- i had this sudden idea about todoroki deciding to leave the hero world in the future. he's a dramatic useless gay so i had a lot of fun writing from his point of view. including social media is as always, a challenge, but fun when you really get into the styling/formatting aspects.
- no beta because in this universe we edit our own work and hit post and accept death. i caught 99% of my errors and if i ever fix them i'll make a note here saying i updated the chapter but in a perfect world i would catch them all...(pokemon theme).
- as usual translations are hover for desktop and in the end notes of the chapters for mobile users

disclaimer: i own boku no hero academia and the rights to all the characters because horikoshi has pants that cannot wait to be filled with my pee and i hate that i've become a little fixated on this series...also bc i hate him so it's mine now

**edited as of 5/29/18:** the chapter count was updated from 4 to 6 because the chapters were getting so long. at the moment i'm considering making this a series, because i have a whole extended universe i'd love to get into. we'll see how inspired i am by the time i finish this.

**edited again on 6/2/18:** this is now a series! you can find the link up top. i also updated the character tags because brennan told me to and i dont understand ao3s tagging system so :-

**extra note from 9/4/18:** [TV TROPES PAGE]!!! and a [discord server] for this fic where you can ask me questions and hang out.

**one more note from 1/6/19:** NO i didn't abandon this fic. i've been busy with school and my body has been slowly turning into soil over the course of the semester. ecks dee

**final chapter update 10/5/19:** i lived bitches and this is finally OVER  
**epilogue:** SIKE epilogue part 1 is out, enjoy your meal. epilogue part 2 will b out soon

See the end of the work for more [notes]
Chapter Summary

Todoroki invests in some serious bug spray, Yaoyorozu is enjoying this a lot more than she should be, and the media is having a field day.

Chapter Notes

i wanted to add emojis for the hashtag realism but ao3's html formatter is homophobic so you get no emojis
- there are multiple points of view throughout this, mostly todoroki's but it is broken up by a few others (a few ocs for the sake of introducing new aspects of their characters and unbiased/stranger accounts)
- momo is a lesbian and so am i
- this is set around ~9/10 years after the assumed date class 1-a graduates yuuei
- todoroki worked as a sidekick for 4 years after graduation to find himself...and he didn't want to start his own agency/wasn't comfortable at the agencies he served under until he joined yaoyorozu
- i took extreme artistic liberty with their adult personalities & the hero names of the people who don't currently have hero names (it's like...season 3 in the anime and some bullshit happened in the manga but you'll see what i mean)
- todoroki's hero name is entropy because thermodynamics. science. (owen wilson saying wrow)
- endeavore sucks hashtag toe sucker
- **edited 5.13/14**: finally fixed the remaining problems i missed when i posted. i had to go back and change some honorifics because i used them inconsistently...im sowwy. i also fixed the weird spacing issues between the social media comments because ao3s html formatter wishes me to die. **2nd edit** HOLY SHIT I FORGOT MIDORIYAS BIRTHDAY IM SUCH AN IDIOT ok i changed the dates on some of the tweets.. how the fuck did i miss that....im so sorry midoriya. what a terrible birthday present

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

“Are you sure you want to do this?”

...  

“I can’t know how I’ll feel about it in the future. Only how I feel in the now.”
NUMBER FIVE PRO HERO ENTROPY RETIRES

October 9, 20XX

TOKYO -- The rumors in July were confirmed this morning at a press conference hosted at Creati Pro Hero Agency. Pro Hero Entropy (#5, Todoroki Shouto) addressed the rumors and announced his planned retirement at the end of the year. The Pro Hero appeared in good health, dismissing claims about life threatening injuries or otherwise that would force his leave from the industry.

One reporter questioned the soon to be retired hero about additional rumors concerning his relationship with Pro Hero Deku (#2, Midoriya Izuku) that surfaced at the same time as the hero’s retirement in July. The Half Cold Half Hot Hero cited his long term relationship with Deku and stated the heroes are on good terms.

“I’ve reflected a lot about myself, my career, and my future.” said Todoroki, to a room of silently stunned reporters. “I realized that there are other ways to be a hero besides fighting criminals on the streets.”

The hero wouldn’t disclose his reason for the sudden career change, only that he would remain at Creati Agency in Tokyo and complete his contract through the end of the year.

Continued on Page 9.

BEFORE

If nothing else, the media is reliable for one thing -- news spreads faster in all directions faster than a bullet train or a missile. For that reason, Shouto is unsurprised (but somewhat exasperated) to see his own face staring down at him when he looks up to catch the early news in the breakroom at seven.

Shouto sighs and starts a mental countdown from a hundred. The news host on television runs down an excited summary of the announcement.

“-- Pro Hero Entropy could not be reached for comment, but it is believed his agency’s spokesperson will hold a press conference later today to address the alleged retirement.” While the newscaster talks he waves his arms enthusiastically and Shouto spares a moment to wonder if he’s somehow related to Iida Tenya, the speed hero. “We at Live Hero Nightly can’t express enough of our gratitude to this particular Pro Hero and his heroic service. The rumor was exchanged from a reputable and highly trusted reported source, and Hero Entropy’s total silence on social media and other outlets led many to raise concerns about the hero’s wellbeing. Many are questioning the announcement, asking if this is the result of a life threatening injury, or perhaps a -”

The door to the breakroom flies open and slams into the wall. Shouto sighs again. His countdown was almost perfect, spare a few more seconds. He sets his coffee on the table behind him at a safe distance and holds up both arms over his face to swat away the incoming rubber projectile.
He successfully dodges the first three, but the unexpected fourth rubber missile nails him in the stomach. The football. He’s off his game this morning if he fell for that rookie level error.

“Todoroki-san!” Yaoyorozu cries and throws another mini basketball at his head. Shouto doesn’t make an attempt to dodge it and accepts defeat when it smacks him in between the eyes. “Come to my office for breakfast, we’ve got much to discuss about our case!” Her words imply an innocent, completely average, and friendly morning work meeting. Her tone and shadowed expression contradict all the above statements. Shouto considers her one of his closest friends and he remained a frequent guest at her house more than a dozen occasions in the last few years given his unfortunate and unpredictable housing situation. That does not stop the involuntary reflex swallow he makes at her thunderous expression.

The break room was not the best location for this...sudden...public display. Shouto wishes his quirk was time travel for a moment, if only to go back and head to the gym instead of gambling a confrontation in front of a dozen sidekicks first thing in the morning. In the sanctity of the breakroom, no less. Shouto watches one of the sidekicks duck their head under the table. Another sidekick lifts his hand to force his jaw closed. He withholds another sigh; no doubt this will spur more rumors and media attention by the end of the day. The interested (but frightened) stares remain at his back, even though most wither under the murderous one directly in front of him.

Yaoyorozu takes his silence as admission and drags him by the wrist to the second level of the agency complex. Shouto mourns the loss of his coffee, still sitting in the breakroom and undoubtedly cooling to room temperature. Not that cold coffee would deter someone with Shouto’s abilities.

He knows, logically, the show in the breakroom was not a real threat. Still, he can’t hold the small and growing apprehension forming in his stomach when Yaoyorozu shoves him into the chair before her desk. She points at him and says “Stay.” like admonishing a misbehaving pet. Shouto bristles slightly and cows under the return of her shadowed glare.

“So.” Yaoyorozu addresses him at her desk, arms folded and legs crossed in front like a proper businesswoman. “Todoroki-san. I saw the most interesting report on the news this morning.”

“Well...” Shouto doesn’t make the first word out because Yaoyorozu stuffs his face with three spearmints (the same ones sitting in a glass jar on her desk). Shouto accepts this punishment for what it is, and silently stews his contempt. He hates spearmint.

PRO HERO ENTROPY TO RETIRE?

July 10, 20XX

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Shouto lifts his eyes from the article to meet the steel grey eyes towering over him. Yaoyorozu fits her palm over the tablet and slides it out of reach. “And what were the chances you were going to mention this at all to your dear, very special, incredibly patient and forthcoming --”

“Ah,” Yaoyorozu says.

Yaoyorozu leans forward over her desk and primly flutters her eyelashes. She slides a tablet with the free hand she isn’t using to brace herself above the desk. Shouto glances at the headline.

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“-- darling, beautiful, incredible and amazing friend...” Yaoyorozu deflates when she completes her rant. Shouto opens his mouth to speak again, and closes it just as quickly when Yaoyorozu raises another hand with mints. “...and didn’t think to mention to their best friend...they were planning to RETIRE?” Shouto doesn’t hold back his wince; her raised voice likely gathered attention from the dawdling sidekicks and heroes in the bullpen outside her office. If they weren’t paying attention before, they certainly are now.

“Are you done?” Shouto’s weariness is a palpable, physical object in the room.

“For now.” Yaoyorozu hands him a tiny wastebasket from behind her desk. Shouto takes the can and spitefully empties the mints into it. A truce.

He runs his hands through his hair and peers through the hair over his face at her. Her face is open, her eyes expectant. He sighs, again. He folds too easily. “I wasn’t planning on announcing it until after the new year,” Shouto knows Yaoyorozu will dig the truth out eventually, whether he wishes her to or not. “It was...I was planning this for a while.”

Yaoyorozu leans back in her chair. Above her head, CREATI PRO HERO AGENCY glimmers above her head where the first rays of sunlight strike the logo. She looks like a hero; ethereal, beautiful, captivating. A physical testament to her success. “I can’t say I understand why now...” she shoots him a calculating glare. “...Or why you felt the need to hide this from me. We’re partners, Shouto. Anything you do -- or don’t do -- reflects on the agency, and me.”

“I wasn’t --” Shouto selfishly thinks of his apartment, and the soft 1200-count cotton sheets on his bed he left that morning. Cruel fate rose him from those soft sheets, where he should have stayed. “I wasn’t thinking...I was working on it.”

Yaoyorozu raises an eyebrow, unimpressed.

“Yaoyorozu,” Shouto says, softening his tone. “I was going to tell you. Eventually. In fact, I wasn’t for sure myself until last night.”

She nods. “I figured as much.”

“What will you say at the conference?”

Yaoyorozu pours herself a cup of tea from the ornate white and gold pot on her desk. In an instant, a second matching cup appears from her arm. “Tea?”

“No, thank you.” Shouto says. Yaoyorozu pours him a cup. Shouto takes the tea because he knows better than to turn down a cup of tea given the predicament he’s landed Yaoyorozu in.

“For now, settling the pot of rumors is for the best.” Yaoyorozu hums behind her tea cup. “We don’t want to stir the media until we can control it. I’ll handle the press.”

Shouto slumps in his seat and bites down the clear relief in his reply. “Thank you.”

She smiles at him; the sun breaking out from behind a sheet of clouds. “In the meantime, you should find your leak.”

Shouto grimaces. “I have a feeling I already know who -- or what it is.” Yaoyorozu, for all her talent, doesn’t have the same mask of emotions like Shouto. He reads her easily. Or maybe that’s because he’s known her for this long that the gleam in her eyes betrays her intrigue.

“Oh?” she prompts. “Who, besides myself, would the stoic, handsome, mysterious Entropy reveal
“There’s only one person that knows. Besides you, now.” Shouto interrupts before Yaoyorozu can launch into another grandiose rant. “And I know he’d never leak something like this.”

Yaoyorozu tilts her head to the side, thoughtful. Shouto imagines the wheels and immense machinery whirring inside her brain. “Perhaps it was a spy, or someone eavesdropping. Or maybe your meeting was bugged.”

Shouto breathes out, low and quiet. “It’s a possibility.” With clear dismissal in his voice, he stands. “I’ve got to follow a lead on my leak. I’ll see you at lunch.”

“I hope you don’t mind Kyouka tagging along?” Yaoyorozu asks slyly. Like her Mt. Fuji sized crush is not glaringly obvious to anyone with a set of working eyes. Like she hasn’t brought Jirou to lunch every week for the last six years isn’t an obvious indication that Jirou is in fact, the third unspoken member of their lunch outings. Shouto doesn’t say anything, of course, because he values the current lack of projectiles thrown at him.

He nods and Yaoyorozu leaves him with clear instructions to hunt down the source of his unexpected breach of privacy.

Shouto nearly wipes out when he steps out her door and stumbles over the sidekick with his ear pressed to Yaoyorozu’s door. At least, where her door used to be. Without the door to lean against he falls flat on his face and right into Shouto’s path. Shouto glares at the wall of various sidekicks and staff waiting outside their door. He knows none of them are there for reassignment. A few of them are staring at the ceiling or fidgeting, like they think acting innocent would convince Shouto they weren’t all eavesdropping up until a moment ago.

“Don’t you all have work to do?” Shouto demands. The sidekick he almost trampled squeaks and flies -- literally -- out of the way.

“Yes, Entropy-sama,” the guiltiest looking sidekick replies softly, and admonishes the other sidekicks and heroes for wasting their pay hours on gossip. He catches Yaoyorozu’s laugh behind him, but Shouto does not smile.

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DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
おはようございます #Tokyo!! @HeroWatch is correct and I am here for the next week..Thank you for the exciting welcome & if you see me out don’t be afraid to say hello !!
instagram.com/p/wU9bfHJ1n
3,736 retweets | 902 favorites
9:54 AM - 10 July XX

HeroWatch @HeroWatch
@herodeku ようこそ #DekuInTokyo!! We’re excited to have you in our city, we hope you enjoy your stay!
2,005 retweets | 374 favorites
9:59 AM - 10 July XX

明日香 @soo7
@herodeku おはようございます!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
90 retweets | 54 favorites
9:59 AM - 10 July XX
akira NO!! @a_keyra8
@herodeku @heroentropy ENTROPY IS RETIRING????????????????????WHAT????????
#RipEntropy #giveanswers #dekuintokyo
207 retweets | 114 favorites
10:10 AM - 10 July XX

Magic mike’s lost oscar @meh3kx
@herodeku @heroentropy @PHJnews RETIREMENT FORWHAT EXPLAIN PLEAESE
93 retweets | 41 favorites
10:12 AM - 10 July XX

DEKUデク ✔ @herodeku
ありがとう Thank you #Tokyo fans for all the kind welcome messages !! 後でまた来ます。
937 retweets | 633 favorites
10:17 AM - 10 July XX

Uravity ✔ @uravity
Replying to @herodeku no fair!! I wanted the trip to Tokyo this year ⌊_⌋ #DekuInTokyo #betrayal
564 retweets | 255 favorites
10:21 AM - 10 July XX

akira NO!! @a_keyra8
@herodeku @heroentropy @uravity the people want ANSWERS #RIPentropy
207 retweets | 114 favorites
10:30 AM - 10 July XX

todotaku @otaku_119
the only reason hed retire is from an injury and there’s literally no other explanation #RIPentropy
103 retweets | 12 favorites
10:37 AM - 10 July XX

iida i stan YOU @in_genius
I woke up 2 mins ago and had a gd stroke when i saw the top trending #RIPentropy #HesNotDeadGuys
158 retweets | 93 favorites
10:39 AM - 10 July XX

senpai pwease notice me @softdeku
im crying why is the number one trending on twitter #DekuInTokyo and the number three is #RIPEntropy pls it’s not even noon yet
449 retweets | 299 favorites
10:48 AM - 10 July XX

HeroWatch @HeroWatch
Thank you for all your messages, however we are a fact/verified source Hero News account and
we cannot address the alleged retirement of @heroentropy without a substantial claim. Until a
statement is released, we will refrain from commenting on this account.
171 retweets | 464 favorites
10:51 AM - 10 July XX

HeroWatch @HeroWatch
#5 PRO HERO ENTROPY SPOTTED IN DOWNTOWN TOKYO CAFE (thanks to our diligent
“It must be important if you’re wearing your uniform for coffee.” Shouto hears the voice behind him before he looks up to see the owner. He doesn’t need to; the speaker slides into the empty booth across him.

“You’re late.” Shouto replies. A gloved white hand reaches out and covers his screen. Shouto stubbornly locks his gaze on the hidden phone and grunts. “I’m reading something important.”

“I’m sure you can forgive me.” Teasing, smooth. “You really should give more details about things like this.” The hand flips over and swipes the phone out of his grasp, like a magic trick. He refrains from looking up, and glances down at the small fly walking across the windowsill. The hand from before waves in front of Shouto’s face, demanding his attention. “Does this have anything to do with what’s trending on Twitter? I have over a dozen texts asking if I know what’s going on.”

Shouto is saved from answering when the waitress from earlier returns to his table. He watches her approach from the corner of his eye; a trembling and uncoordinated figure. He has nothing against the waitress at all, really -- but she clearly wasn’t expecting to be serving a Pro Hero at her modest cafe in downtown Tokyo. “Your coffee, E-Entropy-sama,” she stutters. Her cheeks are a rose-blush color, almost the same color as her shirt.

“Thank you,” Shouto lifts his head to acknowledge her. Trembling, she sets his coffee on the table in front of him. Shouto blows the steam from the surface, releasing a flutter of small ice flakes and takes a sip.

She adjusts her apron uncomfortably and turns to his companion. “A-and for you, takeaway or --?” She halts there, as if he activated his right side and froze her in place. Shouto suppresses a sigh and finally addresses his guest in the booth.

“Midoriya, please stop blinding her.” Midoriya lowers his megawatt smile a few degrees and dims his broad grin to a sheepish grin.

He has nothing against the waitress for this, either. Few are invulnerable to the Number Two Hero Deku’s billboard size smile at full force. Even without his smile, Deku is a formidable figure. His boyish face and green curls aren’t the most intimidating combination...but that smile could level a city.

“I’m alright for now, thank you!” Midoriya chirps in response to her question. The waitress emits a small noise like a mouse being stepped on and scurries away. She returns to the counter at the door and stutters through the next order. Shouto knows the people in line aren’t too bothered by her stammering and odd behavior. The moment the Number Two Hero Deku walked in the cafe, all eyes went to the booth holding him.
Shouto spots no fewer than eight phones held out in the cafe with cameras pointed directly at them. It's quite the spectacle for a Tuesday morning with two recognizable Pro Heroes in a cafe. Usually, Shouto would duck his head or pull up a hood to evade nosy fans or press. He certainly wouldn’t show up to a cafe like this in full uniform on a regular day.

“So,” Midoriya turns the smile on him. Shouto wipes his expression into something neutral because the glint in Midoriya’s eye has an edge of intense focus he distrusts. “I saw some strange things on my Twitter feed this morning. Ochaco-san wouldn’t stop texting. Iida-kun left eight voicemails. I’d say you got a leak.” Shouto agrees with a small noncommittal noise. The moment he knew the story broke, he put his phone on silent and left it locked in his office. Out of sight, out of mind and all that. “Who else knew?”

“As of last night?” Shouto sets down the mug. The ceramic is warm to his touch in contrast to the cool frost in his breath. “Only you.”
Midoriya hums. “And now?”

“Besides everyone with cable or tuned into the rumor cycle...” Midoriya props a hand under his chin, patient. “...Yaoyorozu, early this morning. She had to know because she’s handling the press at the agency. I only told her the small details.”

“Two then. One of which *didn’t* know until after the story broke,” Midoriya lowers his voice and Shouto catches himself leaning in to hear his next words. “And one who did know, but would never tell.”

“You know I’d never accuse you of anything.” Shouto answers mildly, before Midoriya even utters the question. “But this timing is... *inconvenient*, wouldn’t you agree?”

Midoriya’s mouth twitches like he’s holding back a smile. “Which leaves a spy. Somebody quiet enough to slip under both our radars.” Shouto doesn’t answer. He raises an eyebrow and takes
another sip of his coffee.

“Well,” Midoriya leans forward in the booth, forearms braced on either side for balance. Shouto resists the urge to sink back into his own chair, if only to regain a few inches of breathing space between them. “We can only hope they missed the dangerous details. But, I have a few questions of my own. To start, why Pro Hero Entropy, allegedly rumored to be either dead --” Shouto shakes his head, the corners of his own mouth twitching as he forces a neutral expression on his face. Midoriya’s muttering is a familiar comfort, and if he notices Shouto’s clear amusement, he doesn’t mention it. “-- or worse, retired, would so generously stroll full uniform into a small cafe in downtown Tokyo, in one of the busiest streets in Japan, for a cup of coffee. This is without mentioning he sends an urgent text to the Number Two Hero in Japan, demanding an emergency meeting about the benefits of coffee. Again, attracting as much public attention as possible.” Midoriya leans in closer. Shouto wonders if Midoriya is going to headbutt him in the middle of his rambling.

He has a crazy energy in his eyes; a kind of unpredictable fire that raises Shouto’s guard on instinct. He looks like he’s about to do something crazy. Knowing Midoriya, that could be any number of possibilities.

Shouto wonders if that same look is reflected in his own eyes -- as he, too, is about to do something...that would cause most to question the soundness of his sanity. A delicate gamble about who and how and what knew the truth of his future Pro Hero career. He’s here on a guess. And banking on a whole lot of luck.

The erratic decision making process lends itself more to insanity.

“Maybe he came for the coffee.” Shouto hides his smile into his mug and leans back into the booth. The heartbeat in his ears recedes now that he’s able to breathe without Midoriya’s breaths ghosting a few inches above his own, and out of range where he can count Midoriya’s individual nose freckles.

“Or he came here for the attention.” Midoriya smiles and leans back in his seat, and his smile is small but strangely proud. Pleased to find the last piece in the puzzle. The fly at the window climbs higher, tracking a crooked zig-zag pattern on the slowly rising frost on the glass.

“Maybe he did,” Shouto says in a low voice, setting down his mug. He swallows and forces the next sentence out as neutrally as possible. “It is always possible I did want to have coffee with you, Izuku. You know I love our talks.”

Midoriya bats his eyelashes -- the eyelash fluttering and coyness is unlike Midoriya, but it reeks of Yaoyorozu’s influence. Shouto ducks his head and hopes Midoriya knows what he’s doing.

“Oh, that’s so kind of you to say, Shouto.” His voice drops at the end of the word. Shouto, strangely, feels the skin under the right side of his face warm. Yes, Midoriya definitely caught on. He can only hope he was subtle enough their uninvited guest didn’t catch on, too. “But I think we’re done teasing.” The fly on their window buzzes, wings open and fluttering, but the frost sticks to it’s leg, trapping it in place.

Midoriya’s gaze follows Shouto’s line of sight over to the fly at the window. “Something, or someone, so small,” he murmurs. “And yet capable of creating such a big problem.”

Shouto, from the side of his mouth, speaks on an exhale so his voice remains soft. “Midoriya, why don’t you lean in a little.” He keeps his eyes locked on the fly, but he sees Midoriya’s openly dumbfounded expression in the reflection on the window. “Midoriya.”
The reflection of Midoriya jolts into action, hovering a few centimeters from the side of Shouto’s face. Shouto has a brief lapse of sanity where he thinks, *if I turned my head we would kiss*, before he banishes the thought deep into the Forbidden Realm of his mind. The frost on the window stops growing, but it’s clearly visible to anyone a step away. Leaning in, Midoriya should be able to cover the strange frost without drawing attention to it.

With Midoriya’s breath on the side of his cheek, and the extreme awareness of the twenty or so cameras pointed their way, he whispers to the fly on the window, speaking low and quickly: “You don’t have long to decide, but I am going to release the frost on the window. We can either make a scene and expose you here, or I crush you against the window without making a fuss at all.” The fly tugs at the frost, frantic. “Or...when you’re released, you stop writing about secret conversations between Pro Heroes. The next time I catch you, I guarantee you’ll leave with something much worse than frostbite.” The fly stills, both wings extended, and lowers its legs so it’s entire body is pressed against the glass. It’s small body shivers against the pane.

“Message delivered?” Midoriya asks, and his voice is so close to Shouto’s ear...Shouto mentally shakes himself.

“I think they got the message nice and clear.” Shouto replies. He can feel the change in Midoriya’s breathing, which means Midoriya is smiling. Shouto breathes out with a twinge of ash in his breath and the frost on the window retreats. The fly spares no second in the time the frost leaves it’s legs and flies out of sight. Shouto releases the tension in his shoulders with a small sigh.

The tension resumes full force when a quick press of warm skin touches and retreats from his cheek.

Shouto swivels his head around to Midoriya’s retreating back. “You -- Midoriya!” he calls after him. Midoriya is already halfway out the door before Shouto scrambles to dump an enormous tip on the cafe table.

The waitress looks very overwhelmed when Shouto addresses her directly and yells *keep the change! Have a nice day! Sorry!* as he dashes out the door.

He catches Midoriya at the traffic stop outside the cafe. Midoriya’s shoulders shake with laughter, which is very clear to Shouto once he’s directly behind him. He’s easy to spot, especially in broad daylight; a wall of muscle in green spandex and bright red shoes against a backdrop of a grey and beige cityscape. Shouto resists the urge to tackle him, but he decides the display at the cafe is enough news attention for the day. “Midoriya, I can’t believe you --” Shouto shakes his head. He can believe, actually. “At least come to lunch with Yaoyorozu, me, and Jirou, you...”

Midoriya spins to face him at Shouto’s voice. “Me,?” Midoriya’s eyes slip closed and releases the full Number Two Hero Deku smile. A pedestrian behind Shouto whimpers and mutters Midoriya’s full name and hero title. Shouto sympathizes completely. “Why, how kind of you, Shouto.”

“You’re trying to kill me.” Shouto strangles the whine in his throat that nearly escapes his own mouth. “Death to me, death to my career…the tabloids are going to go wild tomorrow. Rumors aren’t what kills my career, it’s you.”

This public persona Midoriya beat in to replace old Midoriya is too much for Shouto to handle, especially at a high dosage. His only contact with Midoriya for the last ten years (small high school reunions and hero conferences unaccounted for) is over text or phone. He knew Midoriya evolved under the camera and celebrity status, but he never expected it to be like *this* in person.

“At least you’ll have plenty of time to practice your obituary on Twitter tonight,” Midoriya laughs
again, which is dangerous territory Shouto is treading. “I’m sorry about lunch, but I’m afraid I can’t let you hoard all my time in Tokyo. People to see, press to evade, important Number Two Hero stuff to do. How about dinner?”

This week is exhausting, and it’s only Tuesday. His lungs are going to give out if he keeps up this rate of heavy sighs. Shouto blinks slowly and sighs, defeated. “If you don’t mind eating takeout, I suppose.” He’s sure Midoriya won’t mind. Last night they did eat out for dinner at one of Shouto’s favorite places in downtown to celebrate Midoriya’s arrival.

“It’s a date, then.” Midoriya laughs at the expression on Shouto’s face. For a moment, Shouto bitterly mourns the loss of Old Midoriya, who would’ve fainted at the mere utterance of those words. Now he says them like a joke, despite the slight reddish hue on his cheeks and nose.

Shouto is about to send him off when he feels another warm press against his other cheek and Midoriya escapes in a flash of green lightning, laughing. Shouto stands at the corner of the road and dumbly presses a hand to his cheek like a lovesick princess in a fairy tale. One of the pedestrians holds up a phone and Shouto’s brain restarts at the bright camera flash.

“Turn off the flash, you fucking moron.” grumbles one of the other bystanders.

Shouto takes this moment of distraction to make a brave and decisive retreat, leaving trails of frost and smoking pavement in his wake.

Lunch is a disaster, predictably. The only relief he clutches close to his chest is the knowledge Midoriya is far away, and therefore not beside him and the two most cruel and uncharitable entities in the city.

“And he kissed you!” Jirou cackles. Yaoyorozu wheezes beside her, pressing a hand to her chest like she’s having trouble breathing. “The media is gonna love that.”

“On the cheek,” Shouto corrects, grumbling into his soba. Not even soba can cheer the truly miserable situation he’s fallen into. He doesn’t want to look at his phone. There’s probably a hundred texts and a thousand Twitter notifications. He can’t imagine Midoriya is faring any better. He closes his eyes and groans. He imagines the state of his inbox is minefield. Knowing his father, there’s likely a thousand voicemails from him that each contain a separate recording of Endeavor’s guttural unintelligible screaming.

“Oh, cheer up, grumpy.” Jirou teases. “It’s not a bad move, attention wise, especially since you got that awful stalker reporter to bug off.” She laughs like she made the joke of the century. Yaoyorozu snorts, but her giggle dies the moment Shouto summons his glare on her.

This isn’t the first time a reporter used their quirk to listen in on secret conversations between heroes: the fly is the newest of a string of irritant nosy pests.

A few years ago Midoriya got in trouble with a reporter with a quirk that allowed them to trade consciousness with animals, and nearly killed the reporter when he swatted at a mosquito. Shouto thinks, there’s a price to pay for abusing your quirk to make a story. Objectively, Shouto’s threat at the cafe was a little extreme. He expects whoever was behind the fly -- shapeshifter quirk, consciousness swap, some other unknown quirk he has yet to encounter -- will probably take it out on him in the press anyway.

Likely in the form of something large and very embarrassing.

Jirou continues, blissfully unaware of the conflicted dialogue inside Shouto’s mind, “It’ll take the
heat off the retirement rumors. And let people lose their shit about the Number Two and Number Five Heroes summer bromance.”

Shouto squeezes his shoulders in tighter and stares down at his soba. “Yeah,” he replies, with the enthusiasm of a corpse.

“I’ll clear everything up at the press conference at four,” Yaoyorozu assures him. “And if they ask about you and Deku-kun’s sordid love affair --”

Shouto would throw his soba at her, except soba is delicious and he would rather not waste good food.

“-- I’ll say he was helping you out for a top secret infiltration operation. Surveillance and recon. The public attention was a ruse. All the other details are very classified.” Yaoyorozu finishes. Shouto stares at her.

“I take it all back. I’m not retiring, and I’m announcing my declaration of love to Yaoyorozu for her sheer genius display of social manipulation and brilliance --” Yaoyorozu lowers her voice in what Shouto assumes is supposed to be an imitation of him. “-- for she is truly, the most magnificent Pro Hero in Tokyo, my love, the air I breathe, the wind beneath my --”

“We got it, babe,” Jirou picks up a sushi roll with her chopsticks and shoves it Yaoyorozu’s open mouth. Yaoyorozu sputters and chokes, and Shouto knows the pink in her cheeks has nothing to do with the off-guard sushi attack. “You’re a genius and Todoroki would die without you. Leave the guy alone, he’s had a wild day. You know, top secret infiltration.”

Shouto is going to buy her a fruit basket. She is a much better friend than Yaoyorozu.

Jirou’s lips twist, and she smirks. “Top secret infiltration leaves you sore sometimes, yeah? It’s good to rest up and recover. I imagine Deku was --”

Shouto reaches over and freezes her plate of food into a block of ice without breaking eye contact.

“A-ah, come on!”

Shouto slurps his soba with forced casualness, thanks Yaoyorozu for lunch, and leaves.

The next morning is somehow worse.

Jirou places a tablet in Shouto’s face the moment he sits down at his desk in the morning. He deliberately wore earphones and avoided any screens on his walk into work. He ignored the bright lights he passed by the technology and equipment department. The severe scowl he sports scares off any sidekicks from coming up to ask questions. Jirou calls it his “resting bitch face.”

PRO HEROES DEKU AND ENTROPY SPOTTED AT ROMANTIC CAFE DATE IN TOKYO, the headlines greets him, along with a slowly building headache. The picture under the headline raises his blood pressure a few points, as well as the temperature in the room. It’s the photo of Midoriya covering Shouto’s side while the frost stuck to the window. He knew to the outside world it would look intimate, but this photo is...

something.

Shouto pushes the tablet away and shoves his hands over his eyes, pushing at the sockets until he sees spots of color.

“You kind of deserve this,” Jirou tells him, with no trace of sympathy. Shouto folds his arms onto his desk and drops his head to the table. He groans.
“At least they’re not talking about the retirement thing, right?” Jirou asks. Shouto grunts. A good distraction it may be, but... It’s humiliating the reporter would take petty revenge after Shouto threatened to turn them into a bug stain on the window.

Maybe if Midoriya asked (or threatened, nicely), he wouldn’t be in this situation.

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CREATI AGENCY DISMISSES RUMORS ABOUT PRO HERO ENTROPY’S RETIREMENT

July 11, 20XX

TOKYO -- Creati, founder and CEO of Creati Pro Hero Agency (#3 JPHA), confirmed in a press conference yesterday afternoon Pro Hero Entropy did not announce any plans for retirement.

Amidst further rumors of a brief encounter with Number Two Hero Deku the day the retirement rumor story broke the Creation Hero denied any “romantic intentions” and claimed the two heroes were spotted in a small Tokyo cafe for surveillance and could not reveal further details to the public.

The owner of the joint-hero agency had no comment about the hero’s future or whether the Number Five Hero would be resigning to pursue a solo hero career at a new agency. Entropy’s contract holds until the end of the year, and the Hero Office of Public Affairs claimed the Number Five hero had not submitted a request for a contract renewal.

The Half Cold and Half Hot hero’s father, Endeavor (#1 PHR), declined to comment.

---

Yaoyorozu corners him after the full staff meeting before regular hours close and the night crew arrives. She slips into his office and closes the door with a quiet click.

“We need to talk,” she says, apropos to nothing. Shouto nods, because her firm declaration didn’t include a “no thanks” option.

“Where are you going after you retire?” she asks. Shouto meets her gaze for a moment before flickering to the bookshelf behind her.

“I can’t tell you.” he says, and the heaviness in his stomach tightens.

Yaoyorozu crosses her arms and takes a step towards his desk. It’s an odd reversal: Shouto at the desk, Yaoyorozu interrogating. “Can’t or won’t?”

“Can’t.” Shouto returns his gaze to her face. “I’m sorry.” Her lips turn at the corners. “If I could, and it wouldn’t put you in danger…”

“So you’re sticking your neck into something you shouldn’t be again.” Yaoyorozu huffs and blows the swirl of bangs fallen across her eyes. “It’s unlike you to do something that reckless. That’s not really your style.” It’s more like Deku’s, she says, but Shouto doesn’t need to hear it to know that’s what she means.

“I’m not sticking my neck into anything.” Shouto replies, icily. Too cold. “I was asked to do this.”

Yaoyorozu perks up. “Are you being blackmailed?”

“No.” He reaches underneath his desk and pulls out a sheet of paper. “I really can’t say more, I’m sorry.”
“Does Deku know? Does he have anything to do with it?”

The question knocks the breath out of him. Yaoyorozu sees his hesitation and pounces. “Did he ask you to retire?”

“No!” He says it harsher than he means to. Yaoyorozu blinks at him, and Shouto inhales and exhales slowly, collecting himself. “Midoriya would never ask me to do something like that. This isn’t about the hero rankings.”

“Is it about your father then?”

“I’m not in high school anymore. I don’t make decisions based on how bad it’ll piss my old man off anymore.”

“It will make him angry.”

“Oh, most definitely. But this has nothing to do with him.” Shouto brushes the hair in front of his right eye out of sight. “This is about me.” He picks up the paper on his desk. “My letter of resignation at the end of my contract, and a request for public leave from the Pro Hero ranks.”

Yaoyorozu takes the letter and turns it over with an indifferent expression. Her eyes flit across the words on the page. “I’ll have to draw up a full declaration for your leave. And I’ll have to process this through the office of Public Hero Affairs. It’s going to take a while.”

“Do it then.”

“When do you need it done by?”

Shouto draws his brow together, considering. Aloud, he muses, “The rumors won’t die down for a while, but since the story broke I’ll need to make it sooner. The end of the year will be too late. I’ll have to announce it before then.”

She folds the paper in half. Although her face is otherwise blank, the slight twist of her mouth reveals an uneasy frown. “So soon, though? I’ll be a little short staffed.”

“I’m sure you can find a replacement for me.”

Yaoyorozu shakes her head, resigned. “That’s not what I meant.”

“I know you didn’t.” Her frown deepens.

Shouto knows she doesn’t intend to find a replacement for him. There’s no one that could replace you. He sees it in her grim expression, the clench of her fists. She doesn’t say it. He hears it anyway.

[Photo 1a: Todoroki’s young determined face, one side of his body coated in ice with the other aflame. He’s wearing a blue Yuuei uniform which is torn on one side.]

Photo 1b: Midoriya, around the same age and wearing the same uniform, with one arm bloody and broken and the other with broken fingers clenched in a fist.

Photo 2a: Todoroki and Midoriya, in their high school uniforms, seated next to each other. There’s an arm wrapped around Midoriya’s shoulders but the owner is cropped out of frame. Midoriya is smiling and making a peace sign at the camera holder. Todoroki wears a close lipped smile, but he’s looking at something below the camera holder.
Photo 2b: Midoriya is high fiving a surprised Todoroki. They’re wearing casual clothes and Midoriya is caught in a freeze-frame, mid-jump.

Photo 3a: Midoriya captured laughing with Todoroki smiling beside him. Uraraka is laying across their laps and winking at the camera holder.

Photo 3b: Todoroki is smiling with a few teeth showing. Midoriya is leaning over his shoulder and grinning, his hand is blurred at the edges, like he’s waving.

Photo 4a: Todoroki is smiling, but it’s a determined smile. He’s wearing the blue uniform and staring down the viewer.

Photo 4b: Midoriya is wearing the same uniform and grinning, with one side of his smile higher than the other. His hand is held out, almost a “come here” gesture.

Caption: The slow progression of lil Todoroki’s smile and the moment when we all fell in love with these two and Todoroki fell in love with Midoriya - photo credit to the Class 3-A instagram & the u.a. class of 20X-9 picture archive

Comments

jelly-babee: I can’t get over those first two they look so SMALL

Heart-felt-78: they are, i mean they’re in their uniforms and midoriya’s arm looks………..bad, which places that photo around the first ua sports festival right? I think they’re like 15 there. Im crying because of the last two like….look how much they’ve grown….i know they’re both grown adults now and could technically adopt me but im so proud of them

999erke: gay

je0jej: Agreed

gaydeku: okay But…………has anybody checked the hero watch or phj stuff in the last 24 hours becaause this shit is crazy. Like full on #entrodeku confirmed type crazy shit

todosotos: I SAW IT AND IM STILL SHOOK BECAUSKJWESKFJS>SDFS>F>SDFSFS>F? FSLFILKW?S?FS????SD@@?@/@JJSDFDFSJWKASKW

gaydeku: yeAh!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! bithch i was sweating so hard when i saw the retirement rumors but the caFE DATE???? MIDORIYA WHISPERING INTO TODOS EAR FOR LIKE A FULL MINUTE WITHOUT MOVING AWAY?? THE CHEEK KISS?? THE /SECOND/ CHEEK KISS?? HELLO???????? 911???????? AMERICA EXPLAIN??????? My ass is literally quaking

entropyotaku1: (puts on tin hat) how about the bystander accounts that midoriya called him shoto like 3 times in a single sentence or are you just screaming like me

gaydeku: bystander accounts?? ????????? Who do think i am. I found VIDEO PROOF (heres the links and i asked a friend to translate the conversations for me and OH BOY its SOMETHING…) and he calls him shoto two times but that’s still fuckgin…waht the fuck is happening dudes…..the smirk???? Mido blushing??? Todo speechless??? FuuhkJkh what the fcukk

Posted 3 hours ago via ice-ice-baby source fyreandice
1,809 notes
“You’re what.” Shouto asks, flatly. The question intonation flies out, misses, and lands somewhere in the Pacific Ocean.

(Midoriya snuck in before he left for the night. Yaoyorozu asked Shouto to close a few files before heading home. Shouto thought he was alone in the building and turned the water cooler in the bullpen into an ice sculpture while getting a drink when Midoriya said “Hi, Shouto,” behind him.

Shouto said “Ah,” which is the Shouto equivalent of a surprised shout.

This might explain the off-kilter feeling in the pit of his stomach.)

Midoriya, the bastard, has the audacity to smile. “Momo-san asked me to stay a little longer. I’m totally fine with it, I really love Tokyo! Plus, I got roped into a few advertising contracts my manager arranged, so I would have to be back in a few weeks anyway. Also, a whole bunch of photoshoots and invites I can’t ignore. That would be very rude.” Shouto lowers his head and rests his chin on the edge of his desk. “There’s also the problem with the sudden spike in crime, but that could be due to my appearance, but crime rates always spike in the summer and that’s...” He trails off at the end and picks up a short trail of unintelligible muttering. Shouto takes comfort in the familiar nervous energy radiating from Midoriya. This he remembers. This he understands.

Shouto lifts his head and glares at the door, like he could summon Yaoyorozu to his office by sheer will and incinerate her under his gaze.

“I suppose I have no say in this.” Shouto needs another cup of coffee, despite the late hour. He isn’t awake enough for this conversation. “I’ll need to talk to Yaoyorozu about raising medical insurance savings if you’re joining us.”

Midoriya doesn’t react to the jab. He’s always been good at reading between the lines. He smiles and says, “I’ll see you at work bright and early, partner!”

The problem with Midoriya’s smiles is if they catch someone off guard, it’s impossible not to smile back. Shouto returns the smile (not as bright as Midoriya’s), and strategically begins his plan to destroy Yaoyorozu at the next given opportunity.

Midoriya waits for him to finish his work. Shouto catches him dozing in the chair by the door and tells him to go sleep in his hotel room. Midoriya hums and crosses his legs, content to break his neck on the awful guest chair in Shouto’s office.

Shouto asks, when they leave, “Why are you here so late?”

Midoriya shrugs, hiding a yawn in his hand. “Caught some trouble a few blocks from here. Momo-san gave me a key earlier and said you’d be staying late. Decided I was too tired to get lost on the subway to find my hotel.”

“Is this your polite way of asking to crash at my apartment tonight?”

The guilty shift of his eyes is an answer in itself. “If it is, would that be a yes?”

“Six nights in a row with me,” Shouto muses aloud. He took Midoriya out for dinner the night
before to celebrate his birthday. Midoriya insisted he didn't want to do anything special, claiming his trip to Tokyo was celebration in itself. Dinner was better than nothing, given the year before the most either of them had time for was a phone call. “You must really like me or something.” When Midoriya fails to reply, he turns around. He somehow walked ahead and left Midoriya at the door, who’s staring at the handle like it holds the secrets to life’s greatest mysteries. Shouto stares at him, and nudges Midoriya out the front door, careful to keep Midoriya in his sight. He must be dead on his feet. Walking behind him, Shouto notices a streak of dirt across Midoriya’s back and some rubble in his hair.

“It’s fine. You can take the guest room.” Shouto answers, finally, like there’s any other option. He’s not sure if Midoriya hears him or not.

By the time they reach the subway, he remembers: “What kind of trouble?”

Midoriya blinks. “Wh-wha-huh?”

“You said you ran into trouble earlier.”

“Oh,” Midoriya laughs softly. “Just a light armed robbery.”

“Midoriya...”

“It’s fine! I didn’t come to Tokyo for a vacation, after all.”

Shouto purses his lips. “Are you injured?”

“...No.” Shouto narrows his eyes. Midoriya raises both hands in a gesture of surrender and winces. “I’m fine! Nothing that needs a hospital.” At Shouto’s look of disbelief, he ducks his gaze. “It’s only bruises. Swear.”

Under his breath, Shouto mutters darkly, “We’ll see about that.”

Two steps into Shouto’s apartment, Midoriya stops in the entrance. “This is your apartment?” he asks, and with his back turned Shouto can’t read the expression on his face. He imagines it’s a forced casual smile to mask his surprise at the nature of his apartment. Shouto knows it looks bare. He’s been too busy with work to worry about interior design, which is why his apartment looks like a storage closet.


Midoriya spins around, a playful smirk dancing on his lips. “O-oh, Shouto, I thought you’re supposed to buy me din--”


While Midoriya strips off his uniform in the living room, Shouto escapes to the bathroom. He runs the tap and wipes cold water down his face, cursing under his breath. He grabs the gauze and bruise salve from his own care supply and returns to the living room where Midoriya is crouched on the chair. Even from a distance, Shouto spots the dark purple and blue stain across Midoriya’s skin, and the yellow green hue across his side.

He calls Midoriya’s name, quietly, and receives no response. Failing to capture his attention, he walks over to Midoriya’s side and touches his shoulder. Midoriya startles at the contact but relaxes at the soft press of Shouto’s warm hand.
“Told you, no hospital.” he grunts. “Just a little bruise.”

“A little bruise.” Shouto repeats, unsuccessfully wrestling the incredulity out of his voice. He opens his mouth to argue, closes it, and readjusts.

The last time he saw Uraraka at a small reunion, they both got drunk and philosophized something Uraraka coined “The Deku Complex” which summarized the irritating, awe-inspiring, contradictory, and puzzling mass of heroics and self-martyring in a tower of green spandex. (Shouto might’ve made a comment about Midoriya’s suit at one point which sent them both to tears: Uraraka, in hystericics, and Shouto in a spiral of misery.) The Deku Complex started as a joke, then a hypothesis, and now as a widely accepted theory.

The theory states: Midoriya is the first to volunteer to break his back to help the closest person in need, but when the attention is returned he shuffles deep into his shell like a sensitive hermit crab.

Tonight, his goal isn’t the unravel the deep seated insecurities and self-suffering pain party woven into Midoriya’s being. From experience he knows those kinds of problems aren’t healed with a few words and clinging to the hope it gets better like a lifeline.

The best he can do right now is this.

He tosses Midoriya the tv remote. Midoriya catches it with the other hand not pressed against the tender skin on his side. “Put on the weather. I want to know whether it’s going to rain on my funeral or not.”

Midoriya laughs, then winces at the movement. “You could always have it inside.” He turns on the television while Shouto lays out the first aid kit. “Ah, you’re out of luck. Rain in the forecast.”

Shouto ignores him. He gently pries Midoriya’s hand away from the side he covered and prods at the bruise. Midoriya sucks in a sharp breath. Careful of the injury, Shouto presses lightly on the span of his ribs. He counts from the bottom up. By the fourth rib, Midoriya hisses and jerks away at the contact.

“Don’t be a baby,” Shouto gripes. “Stop moving. Now, tell me if this hurts.” He moves his hand back to the sensitive rib and prods it again, harder.

Midoriya curls his lip. He smiles, but the smile is warped into a grimace. “Ouch.”

Shouto withdraws his hand. “Not broken, but definitely bruised. Maybe a hairline fracture. Did you fall off a building?”

“Direct hit,” Midoriya mumbles. “There was a bystander in the way. It was either me or them. I took the punch.”

“They had super strength?”

“I flew through two walls and created a body cast in a brick, so I’d say...yeah. It’s likely.” He allows Shouto to wrap his side in and clean the tiny scrapes and bruises with a disinfectant wipe with minimal complaint. Satisfied, Shouto rests his cold hand on Midoriya’s other side.

“Better than an ice pack,” Midoriya slurs. He slumps over, dead weight in Shouto’s arms. Shouto freezes for a moment. In the end, he’s too tired to argue or move Midoriya; too tired to leave and seek out the comfort of his own bed. “Thanks for the check up, Todoroki-sensei.”

“Sleep.” Shouto insists. He makes no move to pull his hand away, even when Midoriya’s hand
falls limp and his breathing evens out. Shouto closes his eyes and remains there; his neck at an awkward angle and Midoriya’s soft snoring beside him.

[Video: NIGHTINTOKYO!!! LIVE !!! Pro Hero Deku guest star on 19/7/XX.

Thumbnail image: Pro Hero Deku in a black suit and green tie, seated on a red couch next to a desk with NightInTokyo’s host. Deku is seated comfortably and smiling in the still.]

Posted 20 hours ago by Deku_UpSubs | Subscribe
153k views

Subtitles also available in Español, Français, and русский. The interview with Deku starts around 3:38 right after the clip about the girl with a quirk that allowed her to jump two stories and save her brother from falling from a fire escape.

Timestamps:

3:38 - Intro
4:18 - Deku talks about the criminal capture assist the morning of (date of airing)
4:45 - Deku and the evolution of his hero costume
5:14 - Friends in Tokyo, new temporary contract at Creati Agency in Tokyo
5:43 - Pro Hero Entropy and the Cafe Stakeout
6:30 - Fans in Tokyo

FULL TRANSLATION IN ENGLISH (translated by @h_hiroh2):

H: That story is truly incredible. The world is full of incredible things, wouldn’t you say? Speaking of incredible things, we’ve got an amazing guest backstage. Most of you probably saw him in the news earlier today and trending on Twitter last week. He showed up here in Tokyo about -- what was it? A week ago. A week ago...

H: Somebody sounds excited. (Laughs) I am too! He’s a tough one to catch, and despite his ranking he’s apparently one of the hardest individuals to track down for a quote, at least according to broadcast. I know for a fact fans have no problem tracking him down, but we’ll get to those later and a few photos we pulled from fan accounts. Tonight, in Tokyo, let’s please welcome -- Number Two Hero, Deku!

D: Hello! Hello everybody! Thank you for having me! Hello! There’s so many of you, amazing!

[Read more]

Comments 1.8k

Twistxz - 14 hours ago (edited)
Am i gonna be the one to say it but...since when did deku call entropy by his first name? I thought that was a big deal in japan ive always heard him refer “todoroki-kun” and i’m not japanese so i have no idea what the difference is it a professional/friends thing?

edit: okay it is a big deal i know now calm down please
View 73 replies

bakuuugo - 12 hours ago
Deku is so cute!!! I didn’t realize how funny he is too
View 11 replies
Six months ago if someone told Mari she would work for one of the brightest rising Pro Hero agencies in Japan, she would’ve said “Well, I hope so!”

Creati Agency is not what she was expecting.

Pro Hero Creati is not unprofessional, rude, or challenging to work with. The few days Mari patrols as a sidekick under Creati are some of the best days of her week.

The office, however, is a lot like running an adult preschool program. The sidekicks roam unchecked and most of the additional Pro Heroes in Creati’s agencies are basically...toddler sized adults.

Somehow, they’re the third highest ranking agency in Tokyo despite being one of the youngest startups. Creati Agency started out as a single hero, Creati, opened only months after her graduation from Yuuei. A year later, Pro Hero Earphone Jack joined her agency as part of their intelligence gathering team. Four years after the doors to the agency opened in a downtown Tokyo complex, Pro Hero Entropy entered the office adjacent to Creati’s as the third Pro Hero under one agency. Joint-hero agencies are a rarity; but slowly increasing in popularity as heroes fight for territory and arrest quotas.

Ten years later, Creati Agency is number three on the Pro Hero Agency list. There’s five Pro Heroes under the agency, and over a dozen sidekicks. The agency’s reputation is scattered across Tokyo on billboards, tourist shirts, mugs, and even action figures.

Despite its size and success, Mari doesn’t know how any work gets done in the office. There’s always things exploding or on fire, and she’s moved her desk into the records room so she can resume her actual work in peace.

All of the noise problems, fires, and building damage come down to lack of oversight and poor management. Creati rarely leaves her office except to stop in during meetings or check in on progress reports at the end of the week. It can’t be helped: Creati is the sole founder of her agency
(and therefore very busy). The second Pro Hero listed under her name in the billboard outside is Entropy -- Todoroki Shouto, the son of the Number One Pro Hero. He should be the one picking up the slack. He’s obviously a good hero, if his ranking at #5 is any indication, but he’s out of the office more than Creati. If it’s difficult to schedule a meeting with Creati, scheduling one with Entropy is completely outside the realm of possibility.

Mari isn’t sure what to make of Entropy. The other sidekicks share their bizarre fascination, marvel, and fear of the Number Five Pro Hero at lunch meetings.

Mari doesn’t know enough about him to form an opinion. Purely through observation, Entropy is quiet, focused, and stand-offish. He doesn’t smile; or if he does, it’s only for photos. The only full conversation she’s witnessed him partake in was between him and Creati, but Creati contributed to most of the conversation. He knows the names of all the sidekicks, and she’s been called to his office on more than one occasion for a report correction. He doesn’t raise his voice. He doesn’t speak unless there’s something important to be said. He radiates a cold intimidation that raises the hair at the back of Mari’s neck.

The last week was a strange change of pace. The news about Entropy’s retirement rattled the office, and the sudden appearance of Deku in Tokyo raised the room’s energy levels to new heights. Mari isn’t a Hero Fan like many of her coworkers -- but even she is tentatively excited at the prospect of running into the Number Two Hero on patrol. Excited. And somewhat terrified.

Mari’s quirk isn’t very flashy, or showy, or remarkable at all. Nothing compared to Entropy or Deku’s quirks. The best she can do in a fight is weave and dodge, but she’s good for rescues because of the versatile nature of her quirk.

If she met Pro Hero Deku, she wouldn’t even know what to say. He seems so friendly in interviews, but that smile is...distracting. She’s also not good at starting conversations, and her quirk isn’t a particularly strong area of interest in conversation.

She’s not sure what would be worse: if she never meets Deku here in Tokyo or she does meet him and embarasses herself with her awkward socializing skills. She buries the thought under the combined stress of her job and the mountains of files she has to finish and slides her finished reports into the drawer outside Entropy’s office. The light in his office is still on, which isn’t out of the ordinary...but unusual for a Friday night.

Her worries return in full force on Monday, where she is greeted by a few startling universe-shifting discoveries. Mari exists the elevator and walks into the office to a sanity-questioning spectacle at nine in the morning.

“Shouto, I got your coffee!” Number Two Pro Hero, Deku, announces, sitting in one of the revolving chairs at the center of the bullpen. He’s wearing the signature green spandex and black guard. The metal face guard is crooked around his neck.

Either ignorant or unaware of the starstruck silence occupying the other half of the room, he continues a conversation with empty air. “If you don’t hurry, it’s going to be my coffee.” He emphasizes the statement by spinning and hoisting the cup over his head.

Mari blinks. She hears a whimper behind her and slowly turns at the noise. Ikeda is hiding behind the water cooler, frozen in a similar state of shock. Mari glances to her left and sees at least four other sidekicks muttering and pointing at the Pro Hero in the middle of the room.

Entropy snaps his office door open and marches over to the bullpen. Annoyance flickers across his sharp features. He plucks the coffee out of Deku’s raised hand and chugs it. When he’s finished, he
drops the empty coffee cup in the trash by Fujioka’s desk. “That’s not your chair,” he says. “Now get in my office, you’re terrifying my staff.”

Deku grins at him and jumps out of the chair. “That’s awfully rude of you, Sho--” his reply is cut short when Entropy grabs his collar and yanks him towards the door of his office. As he’s dragged away, Deku glances at the sidekicks by the door and waves. “Sorry, I’ll see the rest of you later!” Ikeda whimpers again and Mari, inexplicably, thinks yeah, same. Todoroki forcefully shuts the door to his office.

“Was that…?” Katou starts, after a beat of uneasy silence.

“Deku?” Fujioka shrieks.

“What is he doing here?” Ikeda asks, her voice slightly shrill.

“Maybe he’s helping out with a case?” one of the other sidekicks suggests.

Mari grunts; someone elbows her in the side and pushes forward to the center of the bullpen. “No,” Asume growls. He holds out his phone, allowing Mari and the others to lean in and read it.

“Number Two Pro Hero Deku signs temporary contract with Creati Agency,” Mari reads aloud under her breath.

“I’m pretty sure they can read just fine, Himura,” Asume says, because Asume is an asshole. Mari ignores him.

Ikeda is pale, but the two bright red spots in her cheeks are a good sign she isn’t going to pass out. “Why would he take a job here?” she asks, dumbly.

Mari sighs and rubs at her temples. It’s time to take charge. There’s a reason Creati appointed her as the sidekick captain. She’ll have to work around the headache she woke up to which is steadily exponentiating. Her brain rolls out a map of questions she knows she’ll likely never find the answers to. Like Deku’s new position at the agency. Or why Deku refers to Entropy by the hero’s first name.

But those questions don’t matter.

She has to reassure her team and settle their uncertainties. “We’ll find out later, I’m sure. Creati has a mandatory staff meeting later. Reports need to be in by end of day. Try not to bother Deku-sama, we still have work to do. Get on it!”

“Right!” her team replies. Some express their enthusiasm more than others.

The sense of control is little more than a carefully crafted ruse: by the time sidekicks are assigned patrol, the office is in chaos again. Mari leaves to use the bathroom and returns to find half the sidekicks fawning over Deku in a circle. The other half is hiding at their desks or standing against the wall farthest from the bullpen like they could phase through the walls.

“Midoriya!” Entropy barely raises his voice, but the sound of his voice cracks through the office like a whip. The sidekicks pestering the Number Two Pro Hero disperse like a sea of startled pigeons. “Come with me on patrol, you’re being distracting.”

Deku grins, splitting his lips with a wide row of gleaming teeth. Mira wonders if that’s his default facial expression. He smiles a lot, like it’s his job to exist in the negative space where Entropy’s smile is absent. Deku gestures to the spooked sidekicks at the opposite end of the room. “I’m just
being friendly!”

Entropy sighs. Mari wonders if she fell through a portal on her way to work and entered an alternate dimension. “Himura, Fujioka. Suit up. We leave in ten.”

Mari suppresses a squeak. She has patrol with her unreadable stony boss and the Number Two Hero. A terrible combination on her frayed nerves.

“This is a disaster,” Fujioka moans while she waits outside Mari’s changing stall. “How am I supposed to talk? What am I supposed to say? What do I do, Himura-san?”

“That’s easy,” Mari says, sliding the door open. “Don’t say anything.” Mari’s plan is foolproof. If she turns temporarily mute, she doesn’t have the opportunity to embarrass herself in front of two Pro Heroes.

The plan is a success. Mostly.

Deku starts and holds a conversation all on his own. He takes an immediate (and rather intense) interest in Mari’s quirk, which sustains his attention for the next ten blocks.

“There’s so much vagueness around flexibility,” Deku mutters as he walks. Mari tries not to hyperventilate. She swallows and counts the seconds between her breaths to regain some semblance of control. If the Pro Hero senses her discomfort, he doesn’t acknowledge it. “I mean, it works well in close range since you could mold your form outside of an attacker’s reach, but for long range I suppose that would require more careful manipulation...maybe becoming part of the environment. It depends on the range of motion allowed, and how long you could hold the body contortion.” He lifts a hand and strokes his chin. “But that would require some level of effect, and if the flexibility would be capable of holding or grasping other objects while still maintaining form. That would limit long range attacks to more of a catapult like approach, using the flexibility of…” his mumbling trails off unintelligibly, covering his mouth with the hand on his chin.

Mira looks to Entropy, dumbfound. Entropy’s expression is hard to read in general, but she thinks he looks exasperated. Or exhausted. He’s a hard person to read, period. Fujioka, on the other hand looks like a slight breeze would tip her over. Her lips are pursed in a thin line and her cheeks are a permanent cherry stain. Mari wonders if her own blush is prominent. It’s hard to tell because every cell in her body feels like it’s sitting over a fire.

At least Mira’s plan is working. She hasn’t said a word beyond introducing herself and her quirk at the start of the patrol...

Mari half-wonders how long Deku could talk barring any interruption. It seems like it could go on for a while. And he’s still talking. “That also brings to question the physics of such a quirk, and the suspension of our understanding of the movement of matter...if stretched far enough, would your body be capable of returning to its natural state?” Then he leaps onto a tangent about bone density and the conservation of mass. Mari’s head spins.

Sometime after his rant about the conversion of mass into energy, Deku notices his companions silence. “Ah,” he says, rubbing the back of his neck. He smiles, and Mari isn’t entirely sure but his cheeks take on a slightly pinker hue under his freckles. Could be sunburn. “Sorry for talking so much, but it’s rare to run into people with body enhancement quirks. It’s just so fascinating how some quirks change a person’s entire genetic structure! Yours is actually a lot like Mt. Lady’s quirk, or Battle Fist’s, now that I think about it…” He finishes with a sheepish smile.

Mari bites her tongue to restrain the timid noise in the back of her throat.
“You can talk too, you know,” Entropy says, when the group settles into uncomfortable silence. “Midoriya only talks like that when he’s nervous.”

Deku’s pink flush reaches his ears. “I-I am not nervous! I just got excited.” He turns to Mari with an wide eyed expression that reminds Mari of her brother’s dog. “I’m sorry if I made you uncomfortable, Himura-san.”

“A-ah,” Mira clears her throat. “It’s -- it’s alright, Deku-sama.”

Deku shakes his head. “Deku is fine.” He nudges Entropy by the shoulder. “Do you tell your sidekicks to call you Entropy-sama?”

Entropy’s brow twitches. He glances at Mari and Fujioka like he’s checking they’re still behind him. “I never told them not to.”

“Shouto,” Deku draws out the last vowel. “You need to loosen up.”

“And you need to --” Entropy’s march stops so abruptly that Fujioka stumbles not to bump into him. His face transforms, and the unreadable gaze from earlier hardens. A moment later, Mari hears a tell-tale screech of metal from a distance.

Deku’s face changes too, brows drawn, sharp eyes. Focused. Determined. The smile on his face remains.

“Fujioka,” Entropy commands. “Search.”

The sidekick doesn’t hesitate. “Movement two blocks down.” Fujioka presses her entire palm to the ground. She closes her eyes. Her quirk is amazing, especially honed in a busy and ever changing city like Tokyo. “They’re fast. Two -- no, three on foot. They’re making their pursuit towards the construction zones.”

A small explosion rounds the corner. Entropy purses his lips into a thin line, but Fujioka shakes her head. “Just a small one. No civilians nearby.”

“Seismic energy control,” Deku says under his breath, barely audible over the pounding of Mari’s heartbeat in her ears and the drone of city traffic. “Incredible.”

“You should see it when she’s really honed in. I’m pretty sure she caused the mini earthquake last week.” Mari says, before she realizes what she’s doing. She clamps her jaw shut.

Deku lifts an eyebrow. The smile on his face stretches wider. “Well, today I might get to see a demonstration. Shouto, you go on ahead. I’ll handle civilian evac.”

A second of deliberation, and Entropy focuses his attention to her. “Call it in, Himura.” Mari jolts to attention, clicking her headset and rapidly firing off their location and reason for pursuit to the tech department.

Entropy pauses, dropping a hand on Deku’s shoulder. “I trust you’ll be quick about it.”

Deku slips the metal guard over his face and raises his own hand, mirroring the shoulder pat on Entropy’s opposite shoulder. Green lightning rises from his skin, lifting the curls in his hair with an invisible wind current. Number Two Hero, indeed.

Although his mouth is covered, Mari hears the smile in his voice. “You know me, Shouto. I’m never late to a party.”
“At this rate, you’re going to wear a hole through my floor.” Momo quips. Todoroki’s steps hesitate, but he easily returns to the steady motion as he paces across her office.

“Midoriya isn’t one to be late,” Todoroki mutters, frowning. Momo agrees with a light hum.

The other hand not fidgeting with his hair rubs absentmindedly at his jaw. “He’s only late when he runs into trouble.” Todoroki continues, tilting his chin to gaze at his feet while he paces. “But it is a rush hour, there might be traffic. His last text would place him somewhere around…”

Momo summons a rubber ball from her palm. She bounces it in her hand, before shifting to observe Todoroki. With a twist of her wrist she sends the rubber missile to its intended target.

Todoroki says “ow” when it smacks him in the jaw.

“You’re muttering. Have you been hanging around Deku-kun too much? Kyouka was right, you are wound up.” Todoroki’s downrighted mouth softens her teasing. “I’m sure he’s fetching some poor kid’s cat from a tree. He’ll be here soon. Sit down. Have a cup of tea.”

“I don’t want tea,” Todoroki grumbles, taking Momo’s spare seat. Momo doesn’t roll her eyes at him because she’s a professional.
She does, however, throw another rubber ball at him when he checks his phone again. She’s channeling all her nice energy into deliberately avoiding the obvious question hovering over the room like an oppressive fog. But Momo is not a patron of patience, so she’s throwing rubber balls to vent her frustration. If some of them happen to hit Todoroki, well... he should learn to dodge better.

“You are obsessive.” Momo says. “Nothing’s wrong, okay? My phone would be buzzing with alerts if there was a surprise villain attack in downtown. As would yours. Now drink your tea before it gets cold.”

Todoroki, fueled by spite or some other unknowable act of unrestrained emotion, freezes his tea cup. Momo throws another rubber ball at him.

“We should spar after this.” Momo decides, while Todoroki moodily defrosts his tea. “It’s been a while, hasn’t it?”

“I suppose.” Todoroki says. He checks his phone again. “What type of tea is this?”

“Green. I know you’re only asking to dodge the question. Sparring? Yes or no.” Momo smiles, darker and dangerous. “Or are you afraid I’ll keep my win streak?”

“I’m not afraid of --”

The door to Momo’s office slams open. Deku wheezes in the doorway, red faced and drenched in sweat. Todoroki is on his feet in an instant. Momo straightens her back and tenses.

“Sorry,” Deku rasps, breathing heavy like he ran all eleven flights of stairs to reach Momo’s office. “Got... stuck... in... t-traf... traffic…”

“I’ll get you some water,” Momo says diplomatically. She eyes the blood dripping from his forehead and types in a request on her computer for the service staff. “And the first aid kit.”

“Midoriya.” Todoroki says. Momo suppresses a smile at the way he says the name. Relief, annoyance, fondness, familiarity, all wrapped into one. “You should’ve told us you were going to be late.”

“It’s only been like forty five minutes, tops,” Deku coughs and clears his throat. “Also. I might’ve... well, it wasn’t on purpose but, well, obviously, b-but... I might’ve... broken my phone again.”

Momo doesn’t even blink. She pulls open a drawer in her desk and sets a brand new cellphone on the surface. “Here. Try not to break this one too, if you can.”

Deku falls into the chair across her desk with a groan and sinks into the cushion. “Thank you, Momo-san…”

Momo’s door opens again; one of the hospitality staff stumbles in holding a bottle of water and a box with a red sign. “You can leave it on the table there,” Momo orders. “And please close the door behind you, thank you.”

She passes the water to Todoroki. Todoroki blinks at her. “Cold,” she says, as explanation. Todoroki purses his lips and the bottle takes on an icy sheen in his hand. He passes the bottle to Deku, who takes it without hesitation and chugs it greedily.

Momo steps to his side. “Do you want me to do it, or you?” she asks Deku. Deku holds the water
bottle up to the side of his face and sighs at the cool relief.

“Better off you,” Deku’s eyes slip closed. He raises the hand not holding the bottle and holds it out; his hand is trembling. Adrenaline, or an old injury breaching the surface of his nerves. “If you don’t mind.”

Momo procures a pair of latex gloves from her wrist. She snaps them on and opens the first aid package. “I wouldn’t have offered otherwise.”

Todoroki enters a one man staring contest with Deku while Momo cleans the blood from his face and pats on a fresh bandaid. Deku doesn’t open his eyes until Momo says, “You’re done.” and he scrunches his nose, cautiously opening one eye.

“Thanks,” he says, patting the bandaid. “And sorry for being late.”

“It’s fine,” Todoroki’s face is as unreadable as ever. Momo observes the careful pull of his brow, the smallest twitch reveals his worry. “You aren’t late without good cause.”

“Y-yeah, I, uh,” Deku runs a hand along his jaw. Momo narrows her eyes; there’s a light bruise forming around his neck and in the unmistakable shape of a hand. “Sorry I made you wait, though. You could’ve started without me.”

Based on the slight raise of Todoroki’s eyebrows, the thought never crossed his mind.

Momo intervenes with a soft shove and gifting Todoroki a horrendous stack of paper. She preemptively cancelled her meetings for the rest of the day. Given the delay, it was for the best. “Good thing I came prepared. I had my lawyer draft the resignation and disclosure. Almost everything is filled out, you just have to sign the final forms.” Todoroki stares at her, gratitude painting his features with a soft smile. Momo smiles back, fighting the sharp sting of sadness at the back of her throat.

Deku lightly dozes in Momo’s office chair while Todoroki reads through the forms. He’s a fast reader, and he sits so still Momo considers the possibility he froze himself by accident. If not for the steady rise and fall of his chest, he could be a statue. The office settles into silence, aside from Deku’s wheeze when he exhales. Momo brews a new pot of tea.


“It’s okay,” Momo says, lowering her voice. “Tea?”

“No, I’m perfectly --” Momo drops the cup unceremoniously into his flailing hands. She pours tea wordlessly into his cup. While Deku drinks his tea, Momo settles into the chair beside him. She takes out her phone and scrolls through missed emails, appointment reminders, crime alerts, and news alerts.

Kyouka texts her an update about the surveillance crew on the Tachibana residence. Momo skims the intel report, frowns, and replies with a question about additional occupants.

“Are you sure you want to do this?” Deku asks. His question startles Momo, glancing up to watch Todoroki flip to the last page of the form. She pockets her phone.

Todoroki lifts his head from the document. “It’s a little late for second thoughts, Midoriya.”
“N-no, no, I meant --” he swallows. Momo watches Todoroki’s sharp eyes follow the bob and drop of his swallow. Momo organizes the action into the deep recess of her mind to examine at a later time. “I meant...you’re not going to regret this, are you? Once you go public...I-it’s just...you could change your mind later. I don’t want you to feel like you missed out on anything.”

“I can’t know how I’ll feel about it in the future,” Todoroki says sagely. “Only how I feel in the now.”

“Still,” Deku protests. Momo sinks deeper into her chair, trying to disappear. She feels like she’s intruding on a conversation she shouldn’t be witnessing. “I know you’re...I want you to make the right choice.” Deku’s eyes widen comically. “N-not that this is a mistake! And not that it’s the right one, either. I just...want you to be happy. For yourself.” The last words come out softer than the rest of the sentence.

Sitting beside him, Momo eyes the dark purpling-blue bruises under his eyes. She wonders if he’s getting enough sleep. On top of hero work, staying on call for first responders, press meetings, and promotional shoots, it’s a wonder he’s even able to stand. It’s a marvel he’s able to form coherent sentences at all. The hero world doesn’t slow for anyone, especially not for the Number Two Hero.

Todoroki’s lips thin. “Midoriya, at some point you’re going to tire yourself out from worrying about everyone.” Momo hears the undercurrent in his voice; you’re going to tire yourself out from worrying about me.

With a sense of finality, the last paper is signed with a hurried scratch across the bottom. Todoroki stands, holding out the stack of papers for Momo. She straightens her spine and holds out her hands. He drops them gently, and holds out his hand. Momo lowers the tower of forms and stares at his hand. She raises her own, takes his, and shakes. The deal is done.

“I’m gonna miss you, you know.” Momo says quietly. She eyes Deku, who takes a sudden and intense interest in the painting on her wall. She blinks quickly. If Deku has dry eyes, as should she. “The agency -- no, the world isn’t going to be the same without you.”

Bizarrely, Todoroki smiles. His smile is a rarity, especially a smile like this. It’s happy, it’s sad, it’s soft and ill fitting for his face. Or maybe the sadness is her imagination. “I’m not gone yet. I don’t leave until December.”

Momo sighs, dropping her shoulders. “Well, you better brush up on your public speaking skills. The press will catch wind of this by tomorrow after your papers are processed. Do you want to stick around and practice your announcement speech?”

Todoroki nods. Deku raises his hand with a thumb up. “I’m gonna nap.” he announces, and leans back in his chair to do exactly that.

Todoroki’s smile returns, stronger, more genuine compared to the last one. Momo knows the smile isn’t for her.

Chapter End Notes
edited 1/11/19 (HBD TODOROKI!): this chapter has BEAUTIFUL art of the cafe scene now, made by blirb. check it out!!

translations for mobile users:
おはようございます- Good morning
ようこそ- Welcome
ありがとう- thank you
後でまた来ます。- I will come back later / I'll be back later

Todoroki-sensei- a tease at Todoroki acting as a doctor; he refers to Todoroki as "sensei" which is a title used from patients to doctors as a sign of respect/mastery of a skill

[note: i used forums/websites specific to learning japanese and avoided using google translate as best i could, that being said japanese is clearly not a language i am fluent in but i gave it my best shot! if you want to correct my terrible attempts at introducing some hashtag realism please do let me know i wont take offense i love learning]

- about this timeline: midoriya has his own hero agency outside of tokyo (on the border of the next prefecture), and he's very busy so he doesn't usually take trips outside of where he's needed (for villain/crime related reasons) so his trip to tokyo city makes headlines (on twitter, anyway) because it's out of the ordinary for him to travel someplace w/o it being for a quick hero rescue. also because he says he's planning to stay for a while. he does visit musutafu from time to time to see his mother but that's usually off the radar/he's intentionally not revealing his presence in tokyo. (i added this note on 6/10 because i realized i never explained it and im sure some people were like "wait but why is deku visiting tokyo city a big deal?" and thats why)
- when i said i took artistic liberties with their adult personalities i mostly meant midoriya. BUT there's a reason for that in the #nextchapter. the basic idea is he adopted a very confident/kind of flirty exterior personality but around smaller groups of people/one person he reverts back to a more recognizable awkward and muttering nerd that we all love. if you noticed that then congrats and if you didnt then i am a bad writer
- if you're super curious why i chose entropy as todoroki’s pro hero name you are free to ask. i wrote like a 300 word short essay defending my choice and i'll unleash it upon you should you question my Correct decision
- next chapter: a wild angry bakugou appears! and then leaves which is very anti climactic. uraraka also finally makes a complete appearance. todoroki pines some more, midoriya is embarassed, and twitter fans are very thirsty

i like hoarding chapters and giving myself extra time to edit so part two will probably be out sometime over the weekend. at the moment i'm almost finished so it will probably only be four parts, unless part 2 is too long in which case ill break it up and make it 5 instead. (i hate writing...and planning...because i ALWAYS go over my predicted word count)

please leave a comment if you enjoyed this!!! i am like a plant, if you do not water me with the occasional positive comment or encouragement i will wilt and turn into a husk
Bakugou is angry. He's generally an angry person, so there's nothing new to be gained here.

Uraraka makes an appearance, Todoroki has the subtlety of a drunk rhino in a Fine China shop, and Midoriya considers buying a big rock and living out the rest of his days underneath it.

Chapter Notes

(pulls off another hat to reveal an even smaller hat beneath that hat)

the author would like to inform you if you briefly saw chapter 2 posted and vanish, it's because im a Big Dumbass so please ignore that, im such an idiot

i'm back, i edited this chapter while kind of drunk and ended up having to spend 2x as much time editing because of it. im a chaotic disaster gay, and i accept my fate.

edited again: ao3s fucking html formatter is gonna kill me and i finally fixed all the weird spacing between the tweets. i got rid of the strange single spacing between the social media stuff too for readability purposes.

- i cant decide where iida fits into this story so he'll probably appear in a plume of smoke wearing a giant prom dress at some point so you'll definitely notice him when he does show up
- like todoroki i took artistic liberty and made up bakugou's hero name and it is, objectively, one of the better fanon hero names for him. explanation available in the end notes
- i love uraraka
- if i forgot to update the tags, there's a scene with a lot of drinking and a few characters are under the influence. they're all adults but i know some people like a heads up anyway
- thanks for coming to my ted talk

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“It’s selfish of me, I know. I don’t want him to get hurt. And he is hurting, I know it. He’s acting like this because he doesn’t want you to know, but I know he is.”

...
“I’m hurting too.”

... 

[Video: ENTROPY RETIRES -- PRESS MEETING 9/10/XX FULL.  
Thumbnail: Pro Hero Entropy in a formal suit and black tie. He’s frowning at a round table, the backs of reporters and cameras in the foreground.]

 Posted 3 hours ago by descaramaya | Subscribe  
11k views

TOKYO - Creati Pro Hero Agency  
Oct 9, 20XX

Comments 149

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

HeroWatch @HeroWatch
Pro Hero Entropy (#5) announced his official retirement from Pro Hero Work after six years of service at a press conference hosted from Creati Agency this morning. @PHJnews  
https://t.co/vyge3c5MnEw

[Photo attached before article: Todoroki Shouto, alias Pro Hero Entropy, pictured in hero uniform.  
Half his face is frosted with ice, the other half is ablaze. His face is determined and strong. His hair is windswept and wild, red and white mixing among flurries of snow and fiery ash.]

NUMBER FIVE PRO HERO ENTROPY RETIRES
TOKYO -- The rumors in July were confirmed this morning at a press conference hosted at Creati Pro Hero Agency. Pro Hero Entropy (#5, Todoroki Shouto) addressed the rumors and announced his planned retirement at the end of the year. The Pro Hero appeared in good health, dismissing claims ab...

4,065 retweets | 6,622 favorites
1:29 PM - 9 October XX

HeroWatch @HeroWatch
We at HeroWatch want to express our gratitude to Entropy for his years of work and service, and we wish him luck and happiness for his next great journey. お疲れ様でした @heroentropy!

2,144 retweets | 130 favorites
1:32 PM - 9 October XX

deku deserves no 1 @dekusana
Yall know i would literally die for midoriya izuku in a heart beat but this shit got me SO upset rn...what the fuCCCCCK #feels #thankyouentropy

121 retweets | 30 favorites
1:37 PM - 9 October XX

CRYING EMOJI @doubletodo
My mom: why are you crying / me, still sobbing: HeS LEAVING US TOO SOON...SO
YOUNG… #ByeHero #ThankyouEntropy
20 retweets | 11 favorites
1:39 PM - 9 October XX

DYNAMITE ✔ @iamdynamite
WHAPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPP)$%^*((*&^%%EJK(&*^EVGHBJI)
(^%$#$$%W#$WETTE$%DRGFHO_))(_)(+(I){P+)+}{:L”::J*&^R%$%^&*
(POKMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMKJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJJTLLLLLLLLLL
829 retweets | 997 favorites
1:42 PM - 9 October XX
all might sexy @d_dynamight
is @iamdynamite okay lol #hacked
28 retweets | 80 favorites
1:45 PM - 9 October XX
cookin by the book @creatisbian
@iamdynamite mood
110 retweets | 93 favorites
1:46 PM - 9 October XX
DYNAMITE ✔ @iamdynamite
Sorry for the confusion.. @RRedRiot is taking control of the Hero Dynamite account until further
notice. Hero Dynamite expresses his good wishes to @heroentropy and his future!
#ThankYouEntropy
431 retweets | 604 favorites
1:48 PM - 9 October XX
Red Riot! ✔ @rredriot
Sad to hear the hero world is losing an incredible and talented pro hero..I am honored to have
worked alongside you and wish you great success wherever you go next @heroentropy !
#ThankYouEntropy #DontWorryAboutDynamite
429 retweets | 309 favorites
1:49 PM - 9 October XX
Liked by heroentropy
shrek mouth @bu999n
im fucking crying today is so wild first entropy retires now red riot took over dynamites twitter
becus im pretty sure dynamite read the news and his head combusted. Anyways back to crying
#thankyouEntropy
30 retweets | 94 favorites
1:49 PM - 9 October XX
Uravity ✔ @uravity
I have lots of words to say, and so many thank yous to tell you in person...@heroentropy
#ThankYouEntropy #UravityInTokyo (soon) :o)
788 retweets | 380 favorites
1:48 PM - 9 October XX
Liked by heroentropy
DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
All the words I want to say here you already know #ThankYouEntropy


Sometime after he posts a thank you on his Twitter account, Shouto’s phone abandons the world of the living in favor of ascending to the great beyond of phone heaven in the sky.

“That’s shit luck,” Jirou says, nodding sympathetically. Shouto turns the useless brick over in his hand. In one hand he holds a charger. In another he holds the device that once served as his faithful communication device. He plugs in the phone. Like the other four times previous he tried, the phone does not react.
Jirou nods again at the ineffective phone revival act. She stands and pushes her chair at the lunch table out. “I’ll tell Momo to order you a new one.”

“It’s fine.” Shouto says. He saw fourteen voicemails from Endeavor before his phone decided the demand of functioning was too great and died without warning. If he doesn’t have a phone, he doesn’t have to listen to them. Jirou leaves. Shouto places his phone face down on the table and holds in a sigh.

The break room is silent, a rare and monumental occasion. To keep the sidekicks from “losing their shit” (Jirou’s phrasing) about Shouto’s morning announcement, Creati assigned all the available sidekicks on a scouting assignment. Shouto knows bribing the sidekicks with more attention from the Number Two Hero Deku didn’t hurt either.

It means Shouto is alone. It means he gets a chance to breathe.

_Wham!_

The thin tightrope of peace in Shouto’s mind snaps. The door to the breakroom slams against the wall. For a moment, Shouto’s mind whisks him away to a time before this, when things were still simple.

It seems like a lifetime ago Yaoyorozu chased him down in this exact cafeteria. There’s no rubber balls this time. He looks up at the intruder and is met with a death glare from the Number Four Hero, Dynamite, and a fistful of explosions. He misses the rubber balls.

“YOU FUCK!!” Bakugou screams. Shouto blinks. He raises a hand, wipes Bakugou’s spit off his face, then wipes his hand on his pants.

“Good afternoon,” Shouto says, for lack of a better greeting.

“FUCK YOUR AFTERNOON,” Bakugou replies, angrily. He inhales sharply, puffing out his chest. Shouto braces himself for a rant. “AND FUCK YOU. FUCK YOUR NUMBER FIVE. FUCK YOUR RETIREMENT. RETIRING MY ASS. FUCK YOU, HALF AND HALF. YOU’RE FUCKING GIVING UP SO EASY, YOU RAT FUCK COWARD. YOU’RE GONNA FUCKING QUIT ON ME YOU SHITHEAD COWARD. DON’T MAKE ME LAUGH. LIKE YOU’RE GONNA GIVE UP LIKE THIS YOU FUCKING MORONIC FUCK. FUCK YOU.”

Shouto thins his lips and doesn’t say anything. He looks at his phone, silently begging for it to revive itself and ring and give him a decent excuse to leave. His coffee sits in front of him, tempting. The best way to deal with Bakugou is to wait. Patience is key. (A lot of patience.)

Bakugou paces around the breakroom, tossing chairs over tables and wiping discarded plates and forks from their arrangements. Shouto doesn’t move, staring at his coffee and desperately wishing for the floor to open underneath him and drop him eleven stories onto solid cement.

Bakugou calms down (after a very long and exhausting span of time) and marches back to Shouto’s table. His arms are still smoking, but he’s no longer spitting incoherent curses. He still looks like he would very much like to strangle Shouto.

Bakugou hasn’t changed much in ten years. He’s crossed paths with Bakugou, only briefly, while he served as a sidekick at Endeavor’s agency. He never saw Bakugou at any of the reunion parties. Besides the scar on his upper lip and the extra muscle, Bakugou looks like he walked right out of the dorms at Yuuei. His hair is still an untamed mane exploding from the top of his head. His anger is still potent, easy to ignite. Shouto has a guess as to why he’s throwing a fit, and it boils down to
that irrelevant rivalry from their high school days. Bakugou still treats him like competition, especially with Shouto chasing his heels on the rankings. Bakugou won’t be happy that Shouto is stepping out of the competition -- to him, it’s an insult.

“What do you mean you’re retiring?” Bakugou asks nicely, or at least as nicely as someone like Bakugou can ask. The question is phrased more like a demand.

“Call it a mid-life crisis,” Shouto answers, like Bakugou asked him what the weather would be tomorrow, and takes a deep sip from his coffee. “I’m thinking of changing careers.”

The coffee is cold. Shouto mindlessly runs his left hand over the surface, gathering heat into his palm, and expelling it into the cup. The next sip is much better.

“You’re -- you’re --!” Bakugou steams in front of him. Shouto picks up his phone to see if it’s miraculously returned to the realm of the living, and is only a little startled with Bakugou slaps the device from his hands. “You’re twenty six, you fucking ass!”

“Twenty seven.” Shouto isn’t surprised Bakugou forgot his age. He wouldn’t be surprised if Bakugou forgot his name, given he only refers to Shouto as “half and half” or “shithead.”

Bakugou shakes in place. Trembles of anger, Shouto assumes. His hands are curled into fists, but sparks flicker and release from his skin.

“You’re gonna fucking retire.” Bakugou grits out. “You’re a fucking coward.”

Shouto stares at him impassively. “If you say so.” It is wrong to provoke Bakugou, but it’s very easy.

“You got new fucking job? What the fuck does that even mean? You gonna fucking go to school, be a fucking doctor or some shit? What fucking game are you playing?” Bakugou’s face rivals a stoplight. He’s breathing heavy, and one clenched fist moves viper-fast and catches the front of Shouto’s suit. He leans in, breathing heavy, and his mouth smells as foul as his language. Shouto wrinkles his nose. “Don’t fucking disappoint me.”

Make me proud, Shouto. You know I don’t like disappointments. The familiar burn and twist in his stomach clenches around him like a fist. He hasn’t heard his Endeavor’s voice in years, but the memories of his voice haunt Shouto when he least expects it to.

“I don’t care.” Shouto brings up his hand -- this right one -- and wraps it around Bakugou’s wrist. “Now, let go of me.”

Bakugou’s eyes bulge. The vice-like grip on his shirt tightens. “You fucking bastard. You think you’re better than us? You think you’re enlightened or some shit? Bastard. I’ll fucking kill you.”

Shouto, briefly, considers what Bakugou’s blood pressure readings are. It’s probably somewhere around 180/120.

His musings are cut short when a small voice at the door seizes and yanks the attention away from Shouto. Midoriya steps in awkwardly, eyes widening and laser-focused on Bakugou’s hand where it’s clenched in Shouto’s shirt.

“Oh, Kacchan.”

Midoriya doesn’t sound surprised, but the uneasy twitch of his eyes as he flickers his attention between Bakugou and Shouto displays...uncertainty. Caution. With a tell like that, Shouto knows:
he didn’t expect Bakugou to be here.

Neither did Shouto.

“Deku.” Bakugou growls. “Fuck off. I’m having a talk with half and half.”

Midoriya spares no moment to consider the warning in his voice. Shouto’s shirt starts to smoke. Midoriya walks towards them, slowly, like one would approach a large animal: a bear, or a dragon, maybe.

“Maybe we should take this talk outside.” Midoriya suggests, but the steel in his voice implies it’s not a suggestion. With Shouto’s fire and ice and Bakugou’s tendency to, well, explode, it’s not a bad suggestion. If things get physical -- and with Bakugou here, statistically, that’s very likely -- it would be best to escape closed quarters.

“No, fuck off.” Bakugou snarls. “Get out.”

Midoriya drops a hand on Bakugou’s shoulder. Lightning and steam curl around his arm, dancing and skipping across his skin like oil sliding over water.

Midoriya never climbed as tall as Shouto, or Bakugou even, but the knife edge smile and eyes set off a dozen alarm bells in Shouto’s radar: danger!

Sometimes Shouto forgets Midoriya is terrifying. Most people would: he smiles too often and too easily to be a source of fright. He doesn’t radiate the same cold and hard iron aura like Shouto. He isn’t loud or abrasive with his anger. He isn’t passive aggressive and snappy.

The worst mistake Shouto ever made was assuming Midoriya couldn’t be angry. The crying and emotional speeches about hope distracted him from seeing Midoriya, truly seeing him, for a long time. He thought he understood the concept of Midoriya before he really understood the person it belonged to. The smiles and bright eyes are as much of a mask as Shouto’s cold exterior.

Midoriya is -- super strength aside -- human. He’s the same as the rest of them. Except his anger boils and shifts under the surface just out of reach, but never far enough to be out of sight.

This is the same boy that broke an arm and a leg to prove a point. This is the same man that would break that and more to do anything.

“I’m asking nicely.” Midoriya’s smile doesn’t change, but the bite in his voice strikes the weak points in Shouto’s legs and settles there, coiled. Ready to strike. “Let him go. We’ll talk outside.”

Bakugou drops Shouto’s shirt. With one last venomous glare, he turns and stomps out of the breakroom. The moment he’s out of earshot the fire and brimstone in Midoriya’s eyes melts. His whole body shudders and he pitches forward. Shouto catches him.

“Is it silly…” Midoriya trails off, a small catch in his throat as he laughs. He wipes a hand down his face and laughs again, quieter. “Is it silly if I say I’m still… Scared. His face off with Bakugou was an act, as Shouto assumed.

“No.” Shouto says, taking the hand Midoriya dropped from his lap. He rubs the scars and uneven bumps lining Midoriya’s hand. Midoriya stiffens, and Shouto nearly drops his hand again but Midoriya curls his fingers around Shouto’s palm.

Shouto clears his throat, picking up where he left off. “No, you’ll never be silly. You’d never say that to me if I said that about my...experiences.” Midoriya raises his head, his eyes narrowed and
confusion dotting his expression before smoothing out into an unconvinced smile.

He runs his fingers along the calluses of Midoriya’s palm. To any others, he imagines this scene would strike them… in some way. Shouto’s mind drops a new question into place. “Where are the sidekicks?” Shouto asks, breaking the easy silence he and Midoriya settled into.

“Still on patrol.” Midoriya flips his hand and soothes his thumb over Shouto’s knuckles. Shouto’s chest tightens at the unexpectedly gentle gesture. The board of unspoken things between him and Midoriya stretches from one end of the Earth to the other. But every day, every moment like this, Shouto feels like he’s standing at the summit of a great mountain. He’s looking down and preparing to fall. The two of them are locked in an unsteady circle, stepping and skipping and touching and retreating all while trying to stay on, without being the first to falter. Lately, Midoriya’s been the most daring, and Shouto is barely keeping up.

Someday he knows the unspoken things will overwhelm them, and break whatever restless truce they’ve formed. Someday he’ll have to lay all his pieces out on the great board of wordless promises and play the game for real.

Someday. Not now.

“We’ll have to go out there and face him sooner or later.” Midoriya offers quietly. “Do you want me there, or…?”

“If you don’t mind.” Bakugou doesn’t scare Shouto in the slightest. He never did.

Midoriya drops his hand. He stands, hesitates, and offers Shouto his hand. Shouto takes it.

Bakugou is waiting for them outside on the steps as promised. His scowl deepens when he spots Midoriya.

“Please don’t set him off,” Midoriya warns at Shouto’s back. “Or make a scene.” Shouto stiffens his spine and walks with determination towards Bakugou’s seething figure.

“Fuck off,” Bakugou grunts, when Shouto is within hearing distance. At least he isn’t yelling. “What do you want?”

“I think I should be the one asking that question.” Shouto sidesteps the small ball of sparks Bakugou sends his way. “Are we going to talk or fight?”

Bakugou sizes him up. Shouto looks him dead on, undeterred. He wasn’t lying to himself, before; Bakugou does not scare him. Shouto does not scare Bakugou.

At this particular impasse there are few options. They can agree to walk away, or throw a punch. That is how it was at Yuuei, and Shouto doesn’t foresee any change to their dynamic anytime soon.

Like Midoriya, his relationship with Bakugou is complicated. Unlike Midoriya, Shouto doesn’t care about Bakugou’s warped complex of pride. Bakugou’s words can’t dig in or take hold. His skin was beat black and blue under Endeavor’s roof for sixteen years and Shouto’s skin is thicker than steel.

“Sounds like you wanna fight.” Bakugou crosses his legs and leans against the railing. Lowering his voice, he scoffs. “Whatever.”

Uncomfortable silence divides them. Shouto considers walking away but Bakugou asks suddenly, “Is this about your shitty dad?”
Shouto’s mouth twitches. Bakugou sharpens his gaze, narrows his brow. “It is, then.” He turns his back to Shouto. “Fuckin’ figures. You’re gonna let that shitty old fuck win, huh?”

“It’s not about Endeavor.” Shouto says, which is the truth. The chance of Bakugou believing him is slim to none. He knows he’d have a better chance arguing with a wall. “This is about me. It’s a choice I made for myself.”

Bakugou’s shoulders hunch. He kicks a stone from the path, walking away. “Yeah, well it’s a fucking shitty one.” Almost out of Shouto’s hearing range, he adds, “You better fuckin’ know what you’re doing, half and half.”

Shouto startles at the soft brush at his elbow. Midoriya steps out beside him, eyes locked on Bakugou’s retreating back. “That went better than I expected.” He says, colored with disbelief. “I thought he’d punch you.”

Shouto snorts. Midoriya snaps his focus back to Shouto, his mouth falling open slightly. “Maybe he’s matured.” Shouto says, like he doesn’t believe it.

“Maybe.” Midoriya says, like he doesn’t believe it either.

[Video: ENTROPY RETIRES & NEW HERO RANK PREDICTIONS - HWWU for October 13th, 20XX (#503).

Thumbnail image: Screen split in half by silhouettes of Pro Hero Dynamite, Endeavor, Best Jeanist, and Deku. The second half is divided into a black and white still of Pro Hero Entropy with a solemn expression. The fire and snowflake emoji are positioned over his head.]

Posted 22 hours ago by HeroWatch ✔ | Subscribe
263k views

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Months of speculation and rumors are over -- the standing #5 Pro Hero will retire at the end of the year.

Hero ranking season is almost upon us, we thought we’d give a little taste of our predictions/hopes for this year’s rankings. Tell us what your predictions are!

Comments 722

sernijj - 11 hours ago
my predictions:
#1 Endeavor

#2 Deku (if he didn’t get the spot last year i don’t see it changing anytime soon :c)

#3 Dynamite

#4 Best Jeanist

#5 Dragonflame

#6 Night Light

#7 Laser Eye
#8 Uravity (LET ME HAVE THIS)

#9 Optimo

#10 Creati

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JJRISE - 11 hours ago
Im so sad..................entropy wtf are you doing….my mans….
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freesh avahcadoo - 10 hours ago
#ripentropy :’(  
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>nokiya01 - not again

all might’s real son - 9 hours ago
Im a time traveler and a future seer so i have the ACTUAL hero rankings for this year
#1 deku
#2 deku
#3 creati
#4 optimo
#5 uravity
#6 My mom’s shake weight
#7 laser Eye
#8 dynamite
#9 night Light
#10 Dragonflame
View 115 replies

>hastimata - you forgot endeavore
>>all might’s real son - who
>>>hastimata - Lol
>>>>TWCSIT - IM CRYINGHGJWEANMWJWKW THIS IS SO PERFECT
>>>>>>>dd_deku - deku is number one and number two. Explain
>>>>>>all might’s actual son - youll see
>>>>>>>sayonan - that’s so ominous
>>>>>>>>0grimes - dynamite is beneath yur moms shake weight.........keep talking

Ayoyaomo - 8 hours ago
If deku doesnt get number 1 this year im gonna shit a fuckign brick he was ROBBED last year if
ythat fuckighn flame asshole dickshoot gets number 1 im tearing off my skin and launching my
husk into the sun
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>hooroorki - jesus christ man

ALL MIGHT IS #1 IN MY HEART - 7 hours ago
Say i if you’re still in denial
View 77 replies

Recommended videos:

DEKU ABOUT ENTROPY RETIRING (THNS INT OCT11XX) - presomer
88k views
Ochaco spots a familiar streak of red and white soar and coast above her head on a trail of ice. It’s gone before she gets the chance to call the name of the owner.

She’s outside the financial district, where a criminal with a spitting acid quirk is disrupting rush hour. Deku and Todoroki were supposed to meet her an hour ago for an office tour. Before her friends arrived, her hero alert on her wristband activated. She sprinted towards the incident site. A hero doesn’t get days off, after all. She’s a registered Pro Hero. There’s no way she would ignore a massive alert like this. She’s needed here. She has a job to do.

Deku and Todoroki were already in action by the looks of it. Ochaco heads to the support tent. Tokyo is different from her full time contract; too many buildings clustered together, lots of people. Search and rescue is what she’s best at, and she has a feeling she’s needed here.

Outside the tent, she overhears the rescue staff barking out orders. “We’ve got a building collapse and eight trapped civilians, the rescue team can’t move the rubble. We need a new plan.” She walks up to the supervisor and taps his shoulder. He whirls around, spitting and red-faced.

“I can help with the building.” Ochaco explains. At his blank expression, she remembers she left her uniform in the luggage in her hotel room. She’s in civilian clothes, making her indistinguishable from any other person on the street. “Pro Hero Uravity, here to help!”

The man’s face pales, reddens, and sputters out directions for the rest of the staff. Ducking and weaving under excess acid spray, Uraraka spots the building with ease. Fire crews and police are directing the crowd and pulling survivors from windows of the lower rooms.

“Uraraty is here!” one of the civilians yells, recognizing her face despite her lack of costume. Ochaco doesn’t smile and wave back: her focus is search and rescue. The smiling and waving comes after everyone is safe.

Tapping the rubble in the way, she activates her quirk and lifts the heaviest rubble off the ground. Rescue teams deploy under the shadow of the enormous chunks of rock and cement floating eerily over their heads.
The building isn’t the heaviest amount she’s lifted, but her stomach turns uneasily. Not because of her quirk. She can hear the echoes of battle on the other end of the block: the roar and crackle of fire, the groan and release of ice. The sound of wind tearing off the roof of a building. Car alarms. Screaming.

She can’t worry about that right now. Deku and Todoroki are strong, they make a good team. They’ll be fine.

(She worries anyway.)

Long after the civilians trapped under the apartment structure are free, Ochaco flits around the medic tents. A first responder shoos her from the area after she assures him she is uninjured and tells her to make room for actual patients. Gravity pulls her towards another row of tents. She hovers near the first responders, hoping to catch sight of red and white and green. She spots Todoroki first, again. His unmistakable hair is easy to spot, even in the chaos of flashing lights and crying victims.

“-- was reckless. You should’ve waited for me.” she hears Deku’s voice before she sees him. She knows he must be nearby if he’s chastising Todoroki. A team of paramedics lift and move a stretcher out in front of her. When the wave of staff and rescue teams pass, she spots him.

His green suit is dulled and every inch of him is covered in grey dust. Deku’s back is turned to her, but she recognizes the wild mass of dark curls and broad shoulders. Todoroki sits on a stretcher with his arm tucked in, like he’s protecting it. His suit is torn -- or melted -- around his shoulder on the same side as his injured arm.

“Deku-kun!” She shouts, even though her voice is carried away and lost over the crowd of shouting and crying.

Somehow, Deku must sense her. Or he turns around at that exact moment. The anxiety on his face melts and withers, replacing the unnatural scowl on his face with a broad grin. Ochaco runs to meet him, launching herself off the ground a few steps away and into his arms.

Deku grunts when she lands, but he laughs and spins her around. “Ochaco-san! I thought I heard somebody say Uravity was at the scene.” He pulls away and Ochaco slips back onto the ground. He delivers a full beam smile, and even after all this time it makes her heart flutter erratically. Those feelings faded a long time ago; his smile is just too powerful. “It’s good to see you!”

Ochaco laughs and returns the smile. “I feel like it’s been forever! And you barely answer the phone, ever since Todoroki-kun stole you away in Tokyo…” at the mention of his name, Todoroki’s head snaps up. Up close, she sees the burns on his arm and areas where his suit melted on his skin. Acid, most likely. It doesn’t look like a heat burn.

“Uraraka,” Todoroki nods his head politely in greeting. “You look well.”

“Oh, Todoroki-kun...you haven’t changed a bit.” She deliberately draws her eyes to his arm. “Is your arm alright?”

Todoroki curls his fingers at his elbow, flexing his hand. “I will be.” He levels a glare at Deku. “I’ve had worse.”

Deku’s grin takes on a vicious energy. “He refuses to go to the hospital. Maybe you can convince him?”

She isn’t sure, but she thinks she hears Todoroki mutter “Hypocrite.”
Uraraka claps her hands together. “Well, we certainly can’t go out with your arm looking like that.” Todoroki blinks at her, silver hair falling and overlapping his grey eye. “And if you’re injured, I can’t share the nice present Iida-kun sent me with.” She pouts a little. “What a shame…”

Todoroki narrows his eyes. She sees the careful measurement and shift behind his eyes before he opens his mouth. “Fine,” he says, and Deku chokes.


“It’s my sweet girlish charm, of course!” Ochaco giggles at Deku’s frown. Lowering her voice, she adds, “And the promise of alcohol. Lots of alcohol.”

“Ah.” Deku nods, like the puzzle he’s been working on finally slots the last piece into place. “Bribery. I’ll keep that in mind.”

“I am right here, you know.” Todoroki interrupts, annoyance present in the twist of his mouth. Ochaco laughs at his expression, unable to temper the giggles bubbling in the back of her throat.

The great perk about being a Pro Hero is the express hospital visits. Heroes take immediate priority over most patients; they’re the ones defending the city, and nobody knows when the next incident will occur. After Todoroki’s arm is cleaned, wrapped, and bandaged, the three heroes return to Creati’s headquarters to shower and change their clothes. Ochaco borrows one of the staff shirts from the women’s room, with Jirou’s permission. (“Keep it,” Jirou says, when Ochaco walks out. “Think of it as a souvenir.”)

Deku is arguably the filthiest of the three. Todoroki, freshly showered and dressed in new clothes, joins her in the atrium while she’s watching the news and waiting. “I didn’t know you’d be coming so soon.” Todoroki gestures to the seat beside her, raising an eyebrow with a silent question; can I sit here?

Todoroki hasn’t changed at all. He’s infuriatingly quiet, in a polite yet impolite manner. “I pulled some strings,” Ochaco answers, deliberately vague. “Plus, after the news about you…”

At Todoroki’s nod, she prompts; “So. Retirement, huh?”

She almost expects Todoroki to ignore her question. His soft smile blindsides her. “Yeah. I think it will be good for me.”

“That’s good!” Out of the corner of her eye she spots the b-roll of the fight from earlier. The clip is short, but Todoroki’s ice and fire are unmistakable. “But, I had a different question in mind.”

Todoroki’s smile straightens. “What kind of question?”

She braces her arms on the chair. Todoroki blinks slowly, expectant. She decides to ask the question plain, because as smart as Todoroki is he’s also very dense. Emotionally, that is. “What’s going on with you and Deku?”

Todoroki’s face doesn’t change, but his eyes...waver. “I’m not sure what you mean.”

Dense, she thinks. Like an iron wall.

“Deku’s been really good at dodging questions in the press.” She fishes her phone out of her pocket and pulls up the screenshot she saved in her conversation with Momo. “He’s not talking to me either, and I hesitated to bring it up with you. Until I saw this.”
She holds it out to Todoroki, watching his eyes skim across the words on screen. She knows what’s inside already; Deku called in a panic at two in the morning the day of the release after he received the first edition copy from his agent. *My life is a nightmare, I can’t believe they actually published that,* he groaned. It was hard to hear him over his muttering and apologies about bringing up Ochaco in the interview, but Ochaco assured him it was fine.

The article was short, only a small clip in a segment about “Heroes: Beyond The Costume” and their lives outside hero work. Ochaco had her own section to herself about her parent’s construction company and what it was like going to school at Yuuei.

Deku’s section is a little different.

**NUMBER TWO HERO’S LIFE & LOVE!**

*I: A question a lot of fans have been asking is -- do you have anyone special in your life?*

*D: Besides my mom, you mean? (laughs)*

*I: (laughs) Your mom is a special person, for sure! But it’s rumored you dated Pro Hero Uravity while you were in high school, correct? Did the two of you ever…*

*D: Uravity and I dated in our last year at U.A., yeah. But after we graduated, we chose agencies that weren’t close to one another. We’d been growing apart for a while before graduation, too. I think we both had to come to terms with the fact that we were both young, both starting our careers, and we knew we had to sacrifice something. It was mutual, in the end -- but, you know, Ochaco-san and I -- we’re still great friends!*

*I: You still call her by her first name?*

*D: Yeah, yeah. She calls me Deku, which is a nickname more or less based on my first name. Like I said, she’s still my best friend. We’re still friends, really good friends.*

*I: What about Entropy -- Pro Hero Entropy? On a talk show on NIT (abr) back in July, you referred him by his first name as well, correct?*

*D: Oh -- I, yeah. That was -- not a mistake, I mean, but it’s kind of. It’s hard to explain.*

*I: Does he call you by your first name?*

*D: No, he’s -- it’s a long story. He calls me Midoriya, and I’ve never heard him use my hero name. Well, I guess -- I, well, no. He only calls me Midoriya.*

*I: You’re really flustered, wow! Sorry!*

*D: No, no, it’s fine! You surprised me, it’s fine. Shouto and I are really good friends, and we’ve been friends since we met at U.A. With my temporary contract in Tokyo, I’ve been working with him a lot more, and it’s been really good. We’re friends, though. I know the rumor mill kicked up a storm in July, but we’re just very good friends.*

Ochaco read the full interview, but the two screenshots are the most incriminating and solid evidence she’s gathered thus far. Todoroki’s reaction is the second.

He hands the phone back to her. His eyes burn with a hard, cold fire. “I don’t understand,” he says, sounding very much like he *does* understand but doesn’t want to admit it.
“Do you know why Deku stayed in Tokyo?” Ochaco asks, point blank. At Todoroki’s slight head shake, she throws her careful temper away and says, serious, “He stayed for you.”

Todoroki closes his eyes, brow twitching like he’s in pain. “You don’t know that.”

“I do.” His eyes pop open. “That thing in July, your fake secret relationship -- or whatever, it’s not a joke anymore.” A scowl forms on his face, and Ochaco fights past the burning in the pit of her stomach: she will endure, she will go beyond.

Softly, she admits, “It’s selfish of me, I know.” The scowl recedes, slightly. “I don’t want him to get hurt. And he is hurting, I know it. He’s acting like this because he doesn’t want you to know, but I know he is.”

Quietly, Todoroki replies: “I’m hurting too.” His soft spoken admission steals the breath from her lungs.

Deku rejoins them in the atrium. Water drips from his curls, scattering on the marble floor like rain. He adopts a guilty expression as he pads over to them. His hero uniform is gone, replaced by a tshirt, jeans, and red shoes (of course). He misreads the uncomfortable atmosphere and breaks the silence; “Ah, sorry! Have you been waiting long?”

Todoroki answers first. “No,” he says, turning away from Deku’s curious gaze. “We were just…”

“Talking.” Ochaco supplies. Todoroki’s hand twitches.

Concern flashes across Deku’s face, chased by something unnameable, before he breaks out into an easy smile. “Well, talking is good. I think. Does anybody want dinner?”

“Only if you’re paying.” Ochaco teases. “We can’t all live on the Number Two Hero salary!” It has the desired effect: Deku laughs, Todoroki huffs, and all is forgotten.

The subway ride is quiet, broken only by rare interjections from Ochaco. Todoroki is quiet; while this is par for the course, his silence seems different. Thoughtful.

Deku orders takeout and they agree to settle at Ochaco’s hotel room. Her booking came with a balcony area with a table and chairs, which is where they sit and eat. Ochaco fulfills her promise and reveals the gift she brought from Iida -- fancy Japanese whisky.

“Oh no,” Deku whimpers when he sees the bottle. “Last time I felt like I was hungover for a week.”

“That’s because you drank an entire bottle for yourself.” Ochaco says. “This one is to share!” Deku eyes the bottle with palpable wariness. Todoroki blinks at the label while Ochaco innocently smiles and pours them each a glass.

The three of them aren’t light weights. They’re heroes. They’re all in good shape. Out of the three, Ochaco knows she’s the smallest. Her tolerance isn’t as high as Deku’s, but she can handle her whisky.

She can handle it better than Todoroki, surprisingly.

“Just a moment,” Todoroki slurs, trying and failing to grab the remote out of Deku’s hand. “Change th’ station. Wanna see.”

Ochaco’s giggles easily turn into bursts of full laughter. Deku laughs, too, waving the remote out of reach. He’s easily the most sober person in the room, drunk only on the joy and sense of elation
that comes with being around friends.

“Everytime,” Ochaco starts, falls back into giggles, and tries again. “Every -- everytime I see you, Todoroki-kun, we always get drunk. Why is that?”

“Y’sneaky,” Todoroki mumbles, pointing an accusatory finger at her. He misses by a large margin, pointing at the painting behind her head. “B’cause you...you’re sneaky.”

Oops. Maybe he did notice she refilled his glass more often than the others. Deku laughs and climbs off the bed, lifting Todoroki with him.

“I’ll get this one home,” he says, gesturing to Todoroki. Todoroki hums in agreement, patting Deku’s face softly with his hand.

“S’good,” he says, stumbling into Deku’s side. “M’good.”

Ochaco makes a comment about being a lightweight, but it goes unheard. Deku says he needs to use the bathroom before he goes, retiring behind the door.

“M’not gonna hurt him.” Todoroki says, suddenly. His head rolls back a little, graceless. Ochaco raises her eyebrow at the unexpected delivery. “Promise. I’m...I’m...M’gonna figure it out.”

“Okay,” Ochaco says, closing her eyes. She’s drunk, Todoroki is plastered, and she doubts he’ll remember this conversation in the morning. But the alcohol loosened him up, and she knows he’s genuine. She knows he means it. “I believe you.”

Deku collects Todoroki from her room, says goodnight with Todoroki hanging off his arm, and leaves. Ochaco turns the news back on the television and rewatches the fight of the day, arms pressed to her sides, sightlessly watching her friends battle for victory on screen.

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HeroStyle ✔️ @HeroStyle
This year’s poll is out -- HOTTEST HEROES OF 20XX [http://poll.co.j/92hj2KM29](http://poll.co.j/92hj2KM29) Vote now! #HottestHeroes
5,122 retweets | 8,928 favorites
9:11 AM - 18 October XX

Red Riot! ✔️ @rredriot
Replying to @HeroStyle If i don’t make top 10, i’ll cry. #:(
928 retweets | 177 favorites
11:20 AM - 18 October XX

can i please have a waffle @alachni
Replying to @rredriot Thats not very manly
11 retweets | 5 favorites
11:29 AM - 18 October XX

Red Riot! ✔️ @rredriot
Replying to @alachni Actually, I’d say crying is VERY manly! Lots of people seem to think being emotional makes you weaker, but I like to think of my emotions as the fuel that makes me stronger, as long as they’re controlled. #HeroTips
788 retweets | 381 favorites
11:38 AM - 18 October XX
all might’s real son @smallmight
We all know whos gonna get number one this year. Hint: he’s green, has muscles that could crush me in an instant, and wears red shoes #HottestHeroes
459 retweets | 822 favorites
11:46 AM - 18 October XX

I’m an iida stan @speedgenium
Replaying to @smallmight Piccolo?
[Image attached: Piccolo, the green alien character from Dragon Ball Z, flexing and wearing red shoes.]

392 retweets | 739 favorites
11:55 AM - 18 October XX

all might’s real son @smallmight
Replaying to @speedgenium im………..you win this round. im gonna go sit down and contemplate my place in the universe for a while.
174 retweets | 318 favorites
12:01 PM - 18 October XX

all might’s real son @smallmight
What the fuck. Green. Buff. red shoes. How did miss this before. im gonna have a stroke
202 retweets | 98 favorites
12:09 PM - 18 October XX

Uravity ✔ @uravity
@HeroStyle I’m cautiously optimistic the guidelines for this year are different from past years -- there were a few barely over 18 heroes in last year’s edition, which was very concerning to me and my peers.
1,982 retweets | 817 favorites
12:11 PM - 18 October XX

HeroStyle ✔ @HeroStyle
@Uravity Yes! The concerns about barely-18 heroes in previous editions was raised and our new
editions will feature Heroes over 22. We understand why the concerns were brought up, and we recognized the unfortunate situation many young heroes fall into regarding sexuality, and the changes were made accordingly.

Creati | #11 ✔ @icreati
The problems with sexualising minors -- or just over 18 heroes -- comes down to audience. Of course 18 year olds can be attracted to other 18 year olds. They’re the same age, they’re on the same level as their peers. But the problem with our industry, especially for women, comes down to our appearance turns us into objects. This is especially (1/12)

Creati | #11 ✔ @icreati
Bringing back an old thread from last year about the HeroStyle Hottest Heroes poll. I’m glad they’ve made adjustments to the ages in the polls and have made real improvements to the system, especially concerning younger heroes. However, blatant sexualisation of women -- especially in the hero industry, is pervasive and (1/2)

Creati | #11 ✔ @icreati
(2/2) we need to demand more from our leaders and producers who control the image of “sexy heroes.” I know I could write an essay on double standards, but the truth is there is a difference in the way I dress and how I am perceived for it. After graduating I realized so much of what I thought I understood about maturity & women’s right to wear what they want isn’t as progressive as we like to think.

INGENIUM ✔ @t_ingenium
Excellent points all made by the brilliant mind of one of the top joint hero agencies, I wouldn’t expect any less! An interesting point was brought up by one of my colleagues the other day about the number of women heroes in the Hottest Hero type polls, and in most cases the top picks are all men. It’s certainly something to think about

Her hangover the next morning isn’t life threatening, but she’s had a ringing headache since she woke up. Deku texted her before she slipped out of bed and said they’d meet her at the train before she left.

At the station, Deku is smiling and cheerful as ever. Todoroki has a hat pulled down over his eyes, and even from a distance she can read the absolutely miserable aura radiating from his hunched figure.

“Good afternoon, Ochaco-san!” Deku waves, jostling Todoroki. His smile is brighter than the sun in the sky behind him.
Ochaco squints at him. “Good afternoon. Please lower the brightness.” Deku laughs. Todoroki grunts in agreement.

Deku fills the wait with questions about her agency, her parents, new sidekicks, the new hero costume regulations, and if she plans on taking a break in Tokyo again. Ochaco might not be as hungover as Todoroki, but even she has a hard time keeping up with his lightning round interrogation.

The familiar buzz at the station alerting passengers snaps her back to reality. Her train is inbound, and her trip to Tokyo is at its end.

Deku tries to hug her, but Ochaco giggles and ducks under his arms. “No, best friend hug is last!” she exclaims. “Todoroki, you first!”

Todoroki lifts his hat to peer down at her. Blearily, he blinks, and says solemnly, “It was good seeing you. You’re always welcome back, Yaoyorozu would love to have you.”

“Oh, Todoroki-kun…” On a string of impulse, she hops on her toes and kisses his cheek. “Take care of yourself, promise? And look out for Deku for me.” Deku makes a small noise of complaint. “I know you will.”

Todoroki nods, severe. Last night was good for him, she can tell...despite his debilitating hangover.

Ochaco returns her attention to Deku. Todoroki steps away, hovering, but far enough away to give them privacy. He’s considerate like that.

“No kiss for me?” Deku teases as Ochaco steps forward to hug him.

“Shut up.” she says. He grins, the corners of his eyes wrinkling.

Unbidden, her eyes sting when Deku opens his arms for her. She crushes him in a rib-cracking hug. Deku wheezes a little, patting her back. “I’m gonna miss you guys so much,” she says, unsurprised the teariness worked itself into her voice. “I never see you anymore, and talking to you over the phone is so…"

Deku transitions from patting her back to rubbing circles into her shoulders. Ochaco sniffles into his shoulder. “I’m only in Tokyo for a few more months.” Deku assures her, lightly. “I’m sure when I’m done I can try and squeeze in some more --”

“No, no!” Ochaco shakes her head, but the movement is hindered against Deku’s chest. “That’s not what I meant either. I don’t know. I just really miss you.”

Deku’s arms loosen, drawing away. Ochaco uses this opportunity to wipe her face with the hem of her shirt. When she looks up, Deku’s eyes are glittering. “I miss you too. But, hey,” he nudges her arm. “You’ve always got me, right? I’m not going anywhere. Sure, we’re both kinda busy now, but we’re gonna get there.”

Ochaco snorts. “That’s what we both said ten years ago.” Deku winces, but he doesn’t disagree. “Sorry.”

“No, it’s -- you’re right.” Deku pauses awkwardly, rubbing the back of his neck. “A lot’s changed in ten years, huh?”

“Yeah.” Wiping the remnants of her premature tears, she feels stable again. She’s standing on two
feet again. “Especially you.”

Deku raises an eyebrow. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Ooh, aah, I’m Number Two Hero Deku, if you fall, I’ll catch you, baby.” She lowers her voice and winks at Deku, who watches the scene with barely contained amusement. “Hey, Tokyo, is it hot here, or is that just me?”

Deku shoves her arm again, harder. “Shut up,” he laughs, but she catches the flush working its way up his neck and on his cheeks.

“Seriously.” Ochaco levels him with her sternest glare (the one she practiced to mimic Iida). “The whole Cool Action Hero act, all the casual flirting, what’s up with that?”

Deku’s entire face flushes. He puts his head in his hands and shakes his head. His face might be covered, but his ears are the color of ripe cherries.

“Deku,” she says, trying to hold in her laugh. “Really, what did you do?”

“I took an acting class.” Deku mumbles into his hands. “It’s a long story.”

Ochaco can’t help it. She laughs. She laughs until more tears threaten the corners of her eyes. “An acting class,” she says, after her giggles are under control. “You took an acting class?”

Deku splits the fingers over his eyes to look at her. “Y-yeah, well, m-my agent thought it would be a good idea! I wanted to get better at public speaking, and I n-needed to learn a way around my s-stammering in f-front of cameras, s-so --”

“Deku,” she says, fondly. “Please don’t ever change. Acting degree or not.”

“I didn’t get a degree.” Deku disagrees hotly. In his moment of distraction, she rushes forward and gathers him up in another hug.

“Come visit soon,” she says into Deku’s shirt. “Don’t be a stranger.”

“You too,” Deku mumbles into her hair. “Call me when you’re home.”

“I will.”

“Good.” Deku releases her during last call. Uraraka gathers her bag, stretches to press a light kiss to his cheek, and boards the train.

Deku waves as the train pulls out of the station. Behind him, Todoroki rests against the station beam. He lifts his hand to Uraraka at the window.

As the train pulls away she watches their figures grow smaller, shrink, and vanish into the Tokyo horizon.

[Photo 1: Pro Hero Deku in casual clothes winking with Uravity, also casual, at his side, winking and making a peace sign with both hands.

Photo 2: Deku, Uravity, and Entropy seated at a balcony table, mouths stuffed with noodles. The photo is blurry and low quality with dark lightning, outside.

Photo 3: Uravity and Deku with their cheeks pressed together, side by side, eyes crossed and
Jirou greets him wordlessly with a generous smack to the face with one of the agency’s tablets.

“What.” Shouto says, barely conscious enough to form the word. There’s absolutely no question inflected in the statement. He’s on his second cup of coffee and the last vestiges of his hangover have not yet relented. Upon arriving to the agency in the morning, he closed his office door, lowered the shades, and sat in a miserable slump at his chair.

Jirou shakes the tablet, lips pressed together, an insistent energy behind her eyes. Shouto sighs and accepts the tablet. He lifts his coffee and sips from the mug.

He chokes at the headline and image that greets him. It is only the good grace of skill and foresight that Jirou lifts the tablet out of reach before he spills his coffee over the tablet.

“What.” he repeats.

**MULTIPLE PRO HEROES ROMANCE SCANDAL?**

*Pro Hero Entropy* (pictured below) alongside Pro Heroes Deku, Uravity, Creati, and Earphone Jack on several dates within the last few months.

In the onslaught of discussion about *Pro Hero Entropy*’s retirement, new releases about his possible relations with three Pro Heroes has sparked more rumors about the hero’s romantic affairs. Despite the frequent headlines, little is known about the half cold-half hot hero’s personal life. Photos of the hero surfaced online over the weekend cataloguing his affairs with Creati (Yaoyorozu Momo), Earphone Jack (Jirou Kyouka), Deku (Midoriya Izuku), and most recently Uravity (Uraraka Ochaco).

“I’m going to...” Shouto stands, sits down, and lowers his head to his desk. “I’m going to take the day off.”

Although he can’t see her face, Jirou’s shoulders shake. She’s either laughing or nodding. Shouto decides, for the sake of his sanity, she’s nodding.
A useless day of hero work isn’t worth being at the office for. Shouto heads back to his apartment and texts an apology to Yaoyorozu. Immediately after hitting send, his phone rings. Shouto picks it up, pressing his thumb and forefinger to the bridge of his nose to relieve the small ache building here.

“Yaoyorozu, I’m sorry, but I really have to get home and take care of something.”

Yaoyorozu’s voice doesn’t reply. “Is this about our secret steamy love affair?”

“Uraraka,” Shouto adjusts his phone against his ear. “I apologize, I didn’t look at the name.”

Uraraka laughs. “It’s okay! I just got off the phone with Deku-kun, actually. I already talked to the PR agent at my agency, so I’ll be okay. How are you handling it?”

Shouto doesn’t tell her his plan to change his name, dye his hair, and rent a new piece of property at the base of a volcano. Instead, he says, honestly, “I don’t know.”

“Well, the gossip blogs are certainly getting a kick out of it. I didn’t realize you were such a heartbreaker, Todoroki-kun!” Even with the clear teasing in her voice, Shouto’s cheeks burn.

“It’s just gossip.” he replies, after a moment. The echoes of the last conversation he had with Uraraka admittedly kept him up for hours, tossing and turning on his mattress. The safety rug he was standing on was ripped out from under him.

“The media is really taking the piss out of you.” Coming from Uraraka, the statement sounds out of character. She interprets his silence as confusion, explaining, “Deku-kun told me about the fly reporter mess you got into back in July, and the cafe.”

“Ah.” Shouto hums, stepping into the elevator and smacking the floor number with his elbow. “Yes.”

“That’s terrible,” she says, sympathetically. “Well, I’m sure it will blow over soon. My agent is making a statement today, and like you said, it’s only gossip.”

“Yeah.” Shouto feels like he’s stumbling around in the dark, trying to grasp some meaning behind this conversation.

An uncomfortable silence falls. Shouto clears his throat. Best to ask directly; “Was there a reason you called me?” He puts as much caution in his voice as he can to mask any rudeness.

Uraraka sighs, “Deku-kun told me about the temporary contract at your agency. Do you know how he got out of his old one?” Shouto grunts. “He made a deal with his agent. He got him out of his other contract to take yours, but Deku had to agree to a whole bunch of publicity events. The interviews, photoshoots, commercials. Apparently his agent’s been trying to rope him into more advertising for years but Deku’s tried to stay out of the media.”

Shouto stops in front of the door to his apartment. He feels like he crossed a desert in the short walk from the train station to his apartment. Throat, mouth, tongue, dry. “Why would he do that.” Shouto doesn’t know if he says the question out loud, but he must say something because Uraraka replies --

“You know why.”

Shouto doesn’t know who hangs up, but when he looks down at his dark phone he realizes the call ended without his knowing. He stands in the hallway, clutching his phone, staring at the door to
his apartment, burdened with a new kind of knowledge he doesn’t know what to do with.

Trending

16 Surprising Facts You Probably Didn’t Know About #5 Pro Hero Entropy

This spotlight hero is somewhat of a mystery to most fans -- but that makes him even more interesting!
Posted on October 20, 20XX, at 1:48 p.m.

1. His Real Name Is Todoroki Shōto.

[Pictured: Pro Hero Entropy with his back turned, spraying ice with one hand and releasing fire in the other. He’s standing in the middle of the road, surrounded by debris and rocks.]

>His given name contains the kanji for burning (焦) and freezing (凍). You’ve gotta give props to his parents for their fitting name choice!

2. His Father Is The #1 Hero, Endeavor.

[Pictured: Endeavor seated at the LEADING HEROES GALA, beside the #2, #3, #4, and #5 heroes. Entropy is not looking at his father or the camera, and the #2 seat is empty. Pro Hero Deku (#2) is standing beside Entropy (#5), in conversation. Endeavor is carefully watching his son and the rival hero.]

>Imagine growing up with this family of top ranking heroes! While the world is oversaturated with pros, it’s easy to forget where the Fire & Ice Hero started from.

3. His First Hero Name Was “Shouto.”

[Pictured: Clear older photo, yearbook style, with Entropy in a student uniform and staring neutrally at the camera.]

>Before this incredible hero picked his iconic Pro Hero name, he used his given name “Shouto” throughout his high school career. His professional name is a reference to the Law of Entropy, which is the second law of Thermodynamics!

4. Before Going Pro, He Worked As A Sidekick For Four Years.

[Pictured: The half hot and half cold hero is off-center, standing beside a much taller and intimidating figure with fire engulfing his entire body. Endeavor is smiling, Entropy is not.]

>It’s hard to imagine how much dedication and tireless work went into climbing the Pro Hero ranks in only six years. He looks a lot happier at Creati’s Agency, too!

5. He Has Heterochromia.

[Pictured: Close up, Pro Hero Entropy’s mouth is cropped out of view, leaving two eyes with intent. One is steel grey, the other is bright turquoise. His brows are pinched, intense.]

>While his hair is easily one of the most recognizable aspects of his appearance, those eyes are unforgettable!

6. Zaru Soba Is His Favorite Food (Besides Ice Cream, Which Seems To Be A Staple In His Diet).
7. He Has Three Siblings.

>Endeavor doesn’t let his kids see a lot of the public eye, with Shouto being the exception. If the hair similarities didn’t give it away, there’s no doubt these two are related!

8. Pro Hero Creati Is His BFF!

>These two love their ice cream. They love eating it together even more.

9. He’s A Cat Lover (And Cats Love Him).

>Earphone Jack’s cat is the cutest, and it looks like our hero thinks so too!

10. He’s A Capricorn.

>Break out the cake and candles in January when this extraordinary hero turns 28!

11. He’s Good Friends With Pro Hero Ingenium And Uravity, And Many Of His U.A. Class Peers!

>Although U.A. is known to foster hero rivalries, we live for the support and friendly banter between these three! Uravity visited Entropy in Tokyo in person last week, a testament to their steadfast friendship. Ingenium is a constant on Twitter, voicing his positive thoughts about Entropy at all times of day (or night, given some posts are time stamped at two or three a.m.). Creati might be his BFF, but these two are his friends for LIFE.

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This one isn’t serious...or is it? On social media, his rare posts are like unicorns. He rarely speaks on tv. Still, the number of “Entropy running away from reporters/paparazzi” compilation videos on YouTube are pretty great.

13. This Pro Hero Is A Pro At Comic Relief.

[pictured: A blank faced Entropy surrounded by a table of various Pro Heroes, all laughing. Pro Hero Uravity is leaning on his shoulder, laughing. Entropy appears confused.]

>While this hero is often described as “cold” or “aloof” by reporters, the accounts from his friends and sidekicks all claim this guy can split a room in half with his deadpan quips. If only he’d take his talent to the silver screen. Entropy, why won’t you do any talk shows!?

14. Underneath That Ugly Plumber Jumpsuit (I’m Right And I’m Not Sorry For Saying It) He’s Absolutely Shredded.

[pictured: The Pro Hero flexes next to his friend, Creati. Both are wearing cropped shirts with the sleeves cut off. Creati is smirking, Entropy mirroring her. They’re both bent down and flexing in the same position.]
>Curse his costume designer, whoever they are, for hiding this from the world!!!

15. His First Hero Costume Didn’t Let Him Use His Left Side At All.

[pictured: Entropy in his First Edition costume, a white top and bottom with ice coating his left side from neck to ankle.]

>Even the most die-hard fans might have trouble remembering this one, but during this hero’s premier U.A. Sports Festival, he barely used his fire quirk (his battle with Deku being the exception) which raised speculation about the young hero’s control over that side of his power. Now, it’s hard to picture this formidable hero having problems controlling either side of his quirk. He’s unstoppable!


[pictured: The two Pro Heroes are seated at a cafe, Entropy with coffee, and Deku wearing his trademark hero smile. Deku has a hand propped up under his chin and Entropy is talking, lost in their own little world.]

>In one momentous Breakout interview, Entropy praised Deku as “the first real friend I ever had.” The two are still great rivals, friends, and this duo on the field is one of the strongest hero matchups. Known for their historic team up with the League of Villains, these two have shared the spotlight since their early career days. They may live in different cities, but that hasn’t stopped these two from their friendship. Deku currently resides in Tokyo as a new temporary partner under Creati’s Agency, alongside Entropy. These two are super close, and it’s believed Deku came to Tokyo to see out his friend’s departure from the Hero World.

121 Comments

In a way, Uraraka is right. The gossip blogs die down in swift succession, chasing the next sensational story.

The media gives Shouto a much needed vacation from the limelight. It’s why the next big story blindsides him completely, because it has absolutely nothing to do with him.

The office is quiet in the morning. Yaoyorozu and Jirou texted him and said they’d be late, so Shouto greets an empty office. The building is empty, except for the support team and the staff.

Despite being empty, he knows someone is in the hero department. The door to his office is ajar; someone either walked in, or someone is waiting inside.

The mystery occupant turns out to be Midoriya. Midoriya groans out a greeting from the couch.

“Are you hungover?” Shouto thinks that’s a fair question to ask. This grumpy figure on the couch is out of character for someone with Midoriya’s disposition.

“No!” Midoriya sounds offended at the question. “I want to die. Or I’m going to die. Both, I think.” He rolls his head into the ugly lime green pillow that Jirou got Shouto as a joke for his birthday last year. He rests his head there, emitting a louder groan than the one before.

Shouto raises an eyebrow. “Is...everything alright?”

Midoriya’s response is too muffled by the pillow for Shouto to understand. He rolls his head over again, freeing his mouth. “I’m going to become a hermit. I’m going to live in a temple on a
mountain nobody's heard of and I’m going to live there until I die.”

“You’re awfully morose this morning.”

“You don’t understand,” Midoriya says, sitting upright to face Shouto with a haunted expression. “I cannot show my face in public. Ever again.”

“Sure,” Shouto says, to humor him, and heads to the cafeteria to get coffee. Never it be said Shouto isn’t a decent friend, and he has sympathy in spades compared to Yaoyorozou. Jirou has no sympathy whatsoever; she usually laughs whenever Shouto comes to her with woes.

When he returns to his office, he spots two sidekicks chatting by the evidence board. He slips into his office without drawing their attention. Midoriya is curled up on the couch, hands over his head.

“I got tea,” Shouto offers. Midoriya grunts in acknowledgement. “Uh. Do you...want to talk about it?”

“I’m going to die,” Midoriya says into his palms, ignoring the question. “Tell my mom I love her. Also tell her not to sell my All Might merch either. Some of those are collectors items. If she holds onto them for twenty years she’ll make a fortune.”

“How thoughtful of you.” Shouto says, deadpan.

“Make sure it’s a closed casket at my funeral.” Midoriya continues. “Nobody is allowed to look at me.”

Shouto leaves Midoriya to his morbid muttering and focuses on his case files. While he’s reading over the grisly details of a criminal arrested for using her Suggestion Quirk to influence victim’s behaviors, his phone rings.

Midoriya lifts his head, dropping his hands. “Who is it?”

Shouto flips the screen over. “Uraraka.”

Midoriya yelps. “Don’t answer it!” he cries, but the warning comes too late. Shouto answers the call and lifts the receiver to his ear.

“How are you doing?” Uraraka chirps brightly.

“Midoriya, why don’t you say hello?”

“I’ll never forgive you,” Midoriya whispers, heat chasing his words. “You’re dead to me. I’m never going to --” Shouto pushes the phone towards his mouth. Midoriya’s voice raises to a normal
volume, but it jumps up an octave. “H-hey, Ochaco-san.” His voice breaks awkwardly on her name.

“Oh, Deku-kun! You won’t believe what I saw on my way to work this morning!” Uraraka’s sweet tone sounds different. Amused, maybe. Like she’s trying not to laugh. “It’s the funniest thing, would you believe it? I even bought a copy, just to show my coworkers. Do you know what --”

“Yep thanks Ochacosan good talking to you bye!” Midoriya sputters, smacking the hang up button before Shouto can stop him. Midoriya wrestles the phone from his hands and turns it off, despite Shouto’s noise of protest.

“You are a traitor,” Midoriya pockets the phone, facing Shouto with a stern finger. “And you cannot be trusted.”

“What’s going on?” Shouto demands, impatient. “You wouldn’t tell me anything. Can’t blame me for being curious.”

Midoriya shakes his head. “Uh-huh. If you want to regain my trust, you have to promise you’re not going to tell anybody where I am.”

Shouto considers. “Deal.” They shake on it. Midoriya returns to his hiding position on the couch.

The arrangement lasts until Shouto leaves for the bathroom. On his way back to the office, Jirou stops him at the water cooler and ropes him into a debate about crime rates. Shouto inches back to his door, hoping she’ll be too distracted by the sidekicks joining the discussion and let him slip away.

He almost makes it. Right before the door closes, something stops it in place. A black shoe. Jirou followed him.

“Jirou,” Shouto says, tone even, through the crack in the door. “Is something the matter?”

Jirou’s eyes hold a manic energy, much like Uraraka’s excited tone over the phone. Midoriya stands from the couch, making frantic hand gestures to Shouto while purposefully stepping out of the door’s line of sight.

“Do you have a second? I wanted to go over something in a case.”

“I’m quite busy at the moment,” Shouto shifts his features into something more apologetic. “Later?”

Jirou’s ear jack slips through the crack, jabbing him in the nose. Shouto is caught off guard by the harmless attack and leaves his guard wide open. Jirou forces the door open in his moment of hesitation.

“Aha!” She spots Midoriya, who’s trying his best to imitate the floor plant behind Shouto’s desk. “There you are!”

Midoriya makes an “eep” noise, scuttling away and ducking behind Shouto’s bookshelf.

Jirou stomps on Shouto foot. Not hard enough to do any serious damage, but hard enough for it to hurt. Quite a lot, actually. She’s been sparring with Yaoyorozu -- that’s the same move that’s cost him four sparring matches.

While Shouto clutches his foot with his left hand to soothe the dull throb of pain, Jirou chases
Midoriya around his office. Shouto doesn’t see any real danger; Jirou is cackling, and Midoriya hasn’t blown a hole through the roof, so whatever this is...it’s not life threatening. At least, he doesn’t think so. Midoriya’s scream would say otherwise.

At some point, Jirou wrestles Midoriya into a headlock between her thighs, laughing maniacally. Shouto leaves to get another cup of coffee. He returns, cup in hand, to Midoriya with his face pressed against the couch and Jirou innocently scrolling through Twitter on her phone.

“Eh?” Shouto makes a small noise of surprise at the dramatic shift.

Midoriya pathetically kicks a leg in Shouto’s general direction. It’s like the fight is out of him. His face is pressed so hard into the couch, Shouto doesn’t know if he’s breathing.

“Hey, Shouto,” Jirou greets him with a shark grin. “Take a look at this.”

Midoriya whines into the couch. Shouto, cautious, approaches her. She offers her phone to read.

Shouto blinks at the photo. It’s a magazine cover, but the photo and headline are a stark slap in the face.

**HEROSTYLE**

**HOTTEST HEROES OF THE YEAR -- NUMBER TWO IS NUMBER ONE: DEKU!!**

Beneath the headline is a picture of Midoriya in familiar green spandex, except the photo is cropped from the waist up. Midoriya’s costume isn’t the highlight of the picture at all; rather the coy wink and smirk staring directly into Shouto’s soul. There’s nothing innocent or shy in Midoriya’s face in this picture. He’s hungry, almost. Shouto’s stomach twists uncomfortably. This version of Midoriya, it’s…

“Sexy,” Jirou says, and Shouto nearly sets his hair on fire in a split second panic and relaxes when he realizes he didn’t voice the question out loud. Jirou is talking to Midoriya, not him. “Right?”

Midoriya releases another high pitched whine from the couch.

Jirou takes pity on Shouto’s shell shocked expression, interpreting it as jealousy or...something else. She pats his shoulder sympathetically. “Don’t feel bad, Shouto! You’re actually number seven. Congrats!”

“Thanks.” Shouto’s throat is dry. He remembers his coffee and takes a long sip. He’s going to need a lot more coffee for this.

Midoriya lifts his head from the cushion only to say, “I’m going to dig a hole in the ground and bury myself.”

“Don’t be dramatic.” Jirou teases. “And stop acting like it’s the end of the world! You’ve got a great opportunity here, imagine what this is going to do for your publicity!”

“It’s embarrassing,” Midoriya moans, running his hands through his hair. “I’m never going to be able to leave this office.”

Shouto clears his throat. He feels like he needs to escape his office. The air is pressing too much on his skin. He’s suffocating under his collar. He swallows, pushes the feeling down. Midoriya’s obvious discomfort takes priority, however. Shouto will have plenty of time to sort through his feelings later. Or he’ll ignore them and repress them like everything other Emotion he’s felt. “It’s
not a big deal, Midoriya. Jirou is right, it’s great for your publicity. I’m sure your agent is ecstatic.”

Midoriya slaps a hand to his forehead. “My agent! Right!” He laughs, nervous energy shaking his hands and voice. “That’s probably somebody who’d want to talk to me about this, huh?”

“...you’ve been ignoring your phone, I assume.”

“Haha,” Midoriya’s chuckle tapers off into another groan. “I’m gonna die.”

The door to Shouto’s office flies open, cutting off the rest of Midoriya’s complaint. Yaoyorozu stumbles in clutching a stack of paper, her face flushed with excitement. “Did you see it yet!?” she yells, unnecessarily.

Midoriya wails when she lifts up The Magazine. Like the photo on Jirou’s phone, Midoriya sits on the cover with that wink and smile. Something about the picture tugs on his navel. That’s something to reflect on -- later.

“I’m number six!” Yaoyorozu smirks. “But I know that’s only because I’m the one who trashed their ‘Sexy Hero Campaign’ last year. Don’t get too comfy, Deku-kun. Sooner or later I’ll take your spot.”

“I despise you all,” Midoriya mutters, voice low. “None of you are my friends.”

Blinking at Yaoyorozu, Shouto redirects the conversation. “Are we actually going to discuss a case, or are we going to...sit around and look at a magazine?”

“Magazine!” Jirou cheers. Shouto sighs. Yaoyorozu waves the magazine triumphantly over her head, while Jirou chants ‘Hottie Hero.’ Shouto accepts he’s not going to get any work done with these three in his office.

Jirou coos and shrieks with delight while she flips through the magazine. “I didn’t know you were a model, Deku-kun.” Yaoyorozu comments mildly, gesturing to the second page inside the magazine -- Pro Hero Deku, smirking and stretching his arms over his head, the bottom of his shirt riding up to show a hint of skin. Midoriya, squeezed in between the two women on the couch, has nowhere to shove his face into the cushion. The rapid succession of color changes across Midoriya’s face is fascinating. First all the blood drains from his face, and then it returns in an instant. He presses his hands against his face, but his flush reaches his ears and neck.

“When did you even have time to have these pictures taken?” Yaoyorozu continues, like she’s unaware of the humiliated aura radiating off Midoriya in waves.

“T-There was a photoshoot for a different issue,” Midoriya says to his hands. “I-I think they used the extras for this one.”

Jirou’s eyes nearly fly out of her skull. “There’s more?” she shrieks. Midoriya drops his hands, mortification flashing across his face. “Deku-kun, you’ve been holding out on us!”

Midoriya’s bright red cheeks are practically neon stoplights. “I-I just did it for my agent! He signed me into a bunch of publicity spots...I didn’t have a choice!”

Jirou flips open the next page in the magazine and whistles. Loudly. “Wow, Deku-kun. People are gonna be climbing all over you.”

Midoriya’s embarrassed whine only brightens her devilish grin. “P-please s-stop!” He cries go unheard. Shouto shrugs helplessly when Midoriya turns his ‘please help me I’m dying of shame’
expression on Shouto.

“Where did you even learn to model like that, Deku-kun?” Yaoyorozu interrupts Jirou’s incessant teasing. Midoriya stammers out something about an acting class, but The Magazine has him so rattled his answer trails off into muttering about the possibility of transferring Hagukare’s quirk to himself.

“What do you think, Todoroki-kun?” Jirou asks, holding up the magazine right in front of his face. Shouto goes a little cross-eyed looking at it. The paper is practically touching his nose. From what he can tell, Midoriya is shirtless, flexing, and wearing that damned wink and smile.

Shouto slaps Jirou’s arm away, freezing her with an stony glare. “It looks good.” he says, in the same tone someone would use when talking about the housing market.

“Oh yeah?” Jirou asks, innocence coloring her voice. “What about it looks good?” Three faces focus their attention to him, expectant. Midoriya’s face is slowly returning to a natural color.

Summoning all his strength into a neutral delivery, Shouto says, “Midoriya has a nice body. I’m not surprised they picked him for the cover. He deserves the title of, uh, Hottest Hero.”

Jirou sets off another round of cackling. Yaoyorozu wheezes, pounding her chest and coughing. Midoriya kicks him in the shin, the flush on his cheeks returning full-force. “You were supposed to be on my side!” Midoriya complains. Shouto shrugs, but a small smile threatens the corner of his mouth. He knows Midoriya sees his mouth twitch because Midoriya releases another distressed whine.

Jirou flips through the next few pages. She points out Kirishima, Bakugou, and a few other names he recognizes from their Yuuei days. Yaoyorozu’s photo pops up, and Jirou giggles at the small blush working its way onto Yaoyorozu’s face.

The black and white photo of Yaoyorozu differs from Midoriya’s in ever way. Yaoyorozu stands with her hands on her hips, chin lifted, determination oozing from every part of her expression. “You did a fucking --” Jirou slaps her thigh, tears breaking through her laughter. “-- Power Pose?”

“Women deserve the right to be called sexy and do whatever pose they want!” Yaoyorozu defends. She plays nervously with the curl by her ear. “The photographer almost didn’t let me, but I told him that the...docile poses and portrayal of women isn’t any different from a porno mag. If Deku did that pose, people would call him sexy --” Midoriya makes a noise like a rubber toy being stepped on. Yaoyorozu ignores him. “-- but when I do it, it’s too ‘assertive’ and ‘men don’t want someone who could overpower them’ and that’s bullshit. So that’s why I picked the hero pose.”

Shouto nods. Jirou claps. Midoriya nods too, but his head moves up and down so fast it looks like he’s turning into a bobble head.

“Well put.” Jirou pumps her fist in the air. “Lady power.” Yaoyorozu takes the praise with a brighter flush, bowing theatrically in her seat.

Jirou’s glee dies down by the time they hunt down Shouto’s photo. “Oh, this is so lame!” Jirou exclaims. “What did you even do at the photoshoot?”

Racking his memory for a moment, he withdraws the memory of the photoshoot. “Ah.” The photo isn’t particularly interesting, or “sexy” compared to the other heroes in the magazine. Shouto showed up for the photoshoot, applied a little frost to his face and held an open flame in his palm and let the photographer took a picture. It’s nothing new or original, but that’s what people come to
He squints at the photo. It’s not a bad photo, even if it does look a little out of place. “Todoroki-san,” Yaoyorozu stifles a laugh in her hand. “Did you even have your photo taken for the magazine?”

“I did.” Shouto says stiffly. “I showed up, the photographer asked me to take my shirt off, and I said no. He took a photo. I left.” At the two uproarious laughs he receives, he frowns. “What’s so funny?”

Jirou is laughing too hard to form a coherent response. Yaoyorozu’s sniggers die down enough for her to speak. “Nothing at all,” she says, absolutely serious. “Don’t worry about it.”

Midoriya chuckles. The flush is gone from his neck and ears, but his cheeks remain a permanent stain of tomato red. “It’s fine, Shouto. The photographers are pretty pushy. My photographer basically wanted me to strip.”

Shouto’s carefully manicured indifferent face breaks; he laughs. Midoriya laughs, joining in on the amusement despite his discomfort.

“Congratulations on your win, Deku-kun.” Jirou gets one last jab before she leaves to do actual work. “We expect great things from you, Midoriya-shounen!” Yaoyoruzu echoes her laugh as the two leave. He knows Yaoyoruzu has a meeting with their agency sponsors in half an hour, which Shouto’s supposed to attend...

Midoriya flops face first onto the couch, now that the other two occupants freed up the space. “My greatest shame,” he sighs. “At least the gossip about your love life will be buried under this.”

“I don’t know,” Shouto replies mildly. “Half of Tokyo is convinced I’m running a harem.”

Midoriya huffs, laughter spilling out of him. “Who knew you could be capable of such a scandalous affair, huh?”

“I’m actually having an affair with eleven women,” Shouto says, straight faced. “This is all a carefully devised ruse to hide my true nature.”

Midoriya laughs. The sound tugs on his stomach, much like the feeling Shouto felt when he looked at the magazine. Shouto can dissect that later.

Without Jirou and Yaoyorozu, the room fades into a comfortable silence. Shouto finishes filling out case files and incident reports with the occasional interjection from Midoriya. After lunch, Midoriya decides to brave the world outside the safety of the office, hiding his face with a hat pulled down to cover his face.

“That’s not going to hide you for long,” Shouto informs him, amusement fluttering like a second heart beat in his chest. “I’m afraid I’m fairly recognizable.”

Midoriya shushes him, scouting his watchful eyes over the room of occupied staff and sidekicks. “That’s fine,” he says. “As long as they don’t recognize me.”

As Shouto predicted, the deception holds until they reach the lobby. He nearly pulls Midoriya back to the elevator, but Midoriya moves too fast. Midoriya steps forward, unaware of the danger before him. Shouto has no choice but to follow, or leave Midoriya to the wolves alone.

“Reporters.” Shouto says. He spots the crowd first. But with the flash of cameras and raised voices
from the hoard of cutthroat media junkies, they’ve been spotted too. Midoriya curses. “Run?”

“Run,” Midoriya agrees.

[Photo 1: Cropped from the waist up, Pro Hero Deku in hero costume. A flirty wink and grin, one hand raised behind his neck, model pose.]

Liked by uravity, icreati, iida.t, tshouto, rredriot, and 9,192 others.

HEROSTYLE: It’s finally here! This year’s #HottestHero is DEKU. Make sure you check out our magazine or online edition to see the other Top 50 Hottest Heroes! Print version available for order, exclusive extras, posters, and a signed deluxe edition.

View all 832 comments

>uravity - WOW… ;)

>icreati - GO DEKU!!!

>rredriot - I’ll take 2nd and graceful defeat…
View all 48 replies
>>ab91j - @rredriot how is dynamite taking his ranking
>>>>rredriot - he blew up the first magazine I bought
>>>>>ab91j - LOL

>iida.t - Amazing! Well earned, my friend

3 HOURS AGO

Leaving his phone in his office is a mistake. He comes back from patrol, running his hands through his hair to shake out the excess gravel, and finds Jirou sitting at his desk and feverishly typing something on his phone.

Shouto clears his throat. Jirou yelps, startled, and pales when she spots Shouto.

“You’re back early,” she says, horrified. She closes whatever tab she has open on his phone. Suspicious, Shouto stalks over to his desk.

“What are you doing.” He asks, flatly.

“N-nothing! Just doing a software update for the agency’s tech!” She laughs nervously, throws the phone to Shouto, and scampers out of his office.

Shouto unlocks the phone. As far as he can tell, nothing’s changed. His background isn’t different (default blue and grey gradient), and his text messages are unaltered. Jirou didn’t send any silly messages or change the names in his contact book this time.

Hackles raised, he closes the phone and sets it on his desk gingerly like it’s ready to explode. Jirou is prone to mischief, but she wouldn’t do anything to his phone to hinder his work or endanger him on the job. It’s probably harmless.

When he joins Yaoyorozu for lunch the next day, he asks. Yaoyorozu frowns, genuine confusion flickering across her soft face, so he drops it.
Midoriya is oddly absent from the agency. Upon asking, Yaoyorozu waves the question off. “He’s booked for publicity events for the whole week.” Her expression brightens. “He has to come in for a follow up interview after winning the HeroStyle poll, and he invited me along!”

“Oh?”

“It was really nice of him. I know the HeroStyle PR person hates me after I went off on Twitter about the poll, and it gives me a chance to campaign with them directly. Deku-kun’s put them in a tough spot because he said he’d only attend if I came along.” She wags her finger, teasing. “He’s dangerous, that one. You better keep your eye on him.”

Shouto grunts in agreement. *I already do,* he thinks, catching the words before they slip out between his teeth. He’s caught himself doing that, more often; almost saying something, then stopping himself. Something’s shifted between him and Midoriya, and he thinks it has something to do with the magazine. His interactions with Midoriya have been awkward of late. Shouto finds himself distracted at the smallest movement from Midoriya, like every cell in his body is attuned and hyper aware of Midoriya and everything he does.

It’s very uncomfortable. The thought chases him. All the things Uraraka said that day rattle around in his brain and chase any semblance of focus from his mind.

This isn’t the right opportunity to reveal something like that to Yaoyorozu. He dismisses the thought, folding it up and locking it away for another time.

[Video: Deku Reads Hilarious Thirst Tweets.

Thumbnail: Pro Hero Deku in a plain white sleeve shirt, red faced, reading a slip of paper with a hand clapped over his mouth. The background is pastel blue, and the video is cut from the mid-waist up.]

Posted 18 hours ago by BuzzFeed Celeb ✓ | Subscribe
3M views

“Please stop saying I’m your father...I don’t have any children.”
HeroStyle’s Hottest Hero takes to Twitter and reads some compliments!
Check out more awesome videos at Buzzfeed Video!

Comments 4.9k

KarouSan298 - 15 hours ago
deku: What’s a thirst tweet
deku, 1 second into reading the first one: i dont like this can I go home now
View 9 replies

entropy isn’t retiring - 16 hours ago
“i want deku to crush me between those thighs...squeeze me daddy” same
View 11 replies

MLP DYNAMITE - 14 hours ago
Im fucking crying at creati’s tweet
View 46 replies
>Gal All - Wait what did it say
Momo's office is no stranger to chaos. Her sidekicks are prone to inciting small explosions (the microwave is permanently banned from use) and obstructing work. It’s not efficient, but they manage.

It’s been a while since somebody set off the fire alarm. She sighs, stands from her chair, and makes her way to the door. “Somebody turn that off!” she shouts into the bullpen. The sidekicks running around with fire extinguishers halt. “And put out the fire!”

“Fire’s out,” Todoroki says, appearing at her side out of nowhere. “Can we talk in your office?”

He doesn’t give her a chance to say otherwise, spinning her around and pushing her back through the door.

Todoroki closes it behind him, releasing a shuddering breath. With his back turned, she can’t see
his face, but she can see the gentle wisps of smoke rising from his charred shirt.

“What happened?” Todoroki hasn’t lost control of his quirk since he graduated. “Todoroki-kun?”

“I’m fine,” Todoroki turns around, picking at his smoking shirt with disinterest. “I lost control. Sorry.”

“It’s fine,” Momo answers automatically. “Are you okay?”

Todoroki opens his mouth, closes it, and opens it again. He looks a lot like a fish. Struggling to find the words, he says, “…I saw what Jirou did to my Twitter account.”

The tension in Momo’s shoulders dissipates. “Oh thank heavens,” she says, falling into her chair with a relieved sigh. “I thought it was something serious.”

Although the fire is out on his shoulder, she sees steam rising from his arm. “It is serious! It’s bad enough it was posted, but then that video…”

Ah, he saw it then. Deku told her about it before it was released as a heads up, since he’s technically representing a fifth of her agency for the time being. Momo gave him the go ahead, and heard nothing else until the video was out. Her PR manager is having a field day. “Just say it was a joke, and move on.”

Todoroki’s shoulders tighten, tucking them close to his ears. “What if it isn’t a joke.” he says quietly. So quietly she almost misses it.

“Oh,” Momo says. Todoroki’s face hardens, eyes guarded. “Oh, Todoroki-san…”

“I know it’s silly.” He plays with his hand; rubbing his thumb and forefinger together. She recognizes the motion, it’s the small nervous action he does when he’s lost in thought. “I don’t even completely understand it myself, but I can’t get this thought out of my head.”

From experience, Momo knows not to pry too much into matters like this. “What thought?”

“Uraraka said something to me before she left.” Todoroki lowers his voice like he’s afraid someone else might hear. “She said -- she said Midoriya was hurting, that I was hurting him, somehow. I can’t help but feel like there’s something I’m missing, something right in front of my face…”

Momo takes in the anguish in his face. The carefully exposed pain in his eyes.

She knows the answer.

She also knows she can’t tell him.

“Ochaco-san…” She chooses her words delicately, purposefully. “Ochaco-san is right…but she’s also wrong.” Todoroki’s head snaps up like she’s slapped him. “You’re not hurting Deku. He’s hurting himself, I think. You’re hurting yourself too.”

He lowers his head, the picture of misery. “What do I do?” He asks, helplessness taking over his voice.

“I don’t know,” she says, honest. She lays her hand on his shoulder, forcing his gaze back to hers. “But I think the only way you’re going to get through this is if you talk to Deku-kun.” Todoroki nods slowly, like she’s imparted great wisdom in those few words.
“It’s hard,” Todoroki admits quietly. “I don’t know what to say to him. We haven’t spent this much time together in almost ten years, and suddenly it’s -- different.”

“It’s not going to be easy.” Momo’s heart presses against her ribs. She’s not a cruel friend. When she sees people she cares about in genuine distress it twists her stomach. “I know you’ve both changed a lot in ten years, and to go from barely seeing each other to seeing one another every day...that’s hard to adapt to.”

“I can’t even figure out why I’m feeling like this.” Todoroki runs his hand through his hair, shaking it out of place. “I can’t figure it out. I feel like there’s something so obvious that I’m missing.”

“You’ll figure it out, I’m sure.” At least, that’s the hope she clings to. The hope that keeps her mouth shut, the hope that pieced together every piece of the puzzle and keeps her from saying too much. “In the meantime, I’ll talk to Kyouka about messing with your phone. I know it made you upset.”

“It’s fine.” She can’t tell if he’s lying or not. The vulnerability in his eyes fades away, and she watches the iron wall slowly raise.

“I’ll talk to Midoriya.” Shouto says, like he’s assuring himself as much as her. “Thank you, Yaoyorozu.”

Momo smiles, easy, squeezing his arm. “Don’t worry too much about all this. I know you, and I know you’re close to a breakthrough.”

His smile is disarming. Unexpected. And as always, beautiful.

LIST YOUR TOP FIVE ENTRODEKU MOMENTS

todoshotos: im starting this thread off right
1. the hug after deku won 1st place at the ua sports festival in their 3rd year
2. “Midoriya was the first real friend i ever made” (loud wailing)
3. interviewer: have you ever tried dating? Going out to dinner with someone? Deku, the most useless gay unable to shut their mouth about their crush for even 4 seconds: i went out to dinner with shouto last night we had katsudon and it was very good i recommend this place just outside the financial district i think it might’ve gotten damaged in that acid spray incident but if you have a chance their katsudon is really good and it’s a shame shouto doesnt like katsudon because it’s my favorite interviewer: oh my Gd
4. “Any women caught your eye recently” ft. entropy’s uncomfortable solid 15 second gay silence while looking directly at deku during that herocon event
5. Deku reading entropy’s thirst tweet and being unable to form words for like a full minute

jb0oner: challenge accepted.
#1 the rising heroes gala last year and deku left his seat beside endeavor to sit next to entropy for. Literally no reason

#2 the snapchat story on creati’s account where deku is asleep and entropy is just?? Smiling???? With the softest most in love expression ive ever seen on a human beings face???? I honestly thought everyone was acting like fangirls yknow but that video converted me. This should be number one actually but the chair swap is just so great especially because endeavor looked PISSED and deku reportedly threw an egg roll at him

#3 “what do you think of your rival, endeavor, the number one hero” (awkward silence followed
by deku changing the subject to talk about entropy for. absolutely no reason)

#4 “all the ladies want to know when the number 2 hero is planning on settling down!”
“hahahahahahahahahaha YEAH are they now” (i could listen to dekus awkward laugh for hours)
“now let me talk about my good friend entropy did you see that thing on the --”

#5 the big pro hero conference dinner and people got photos of entropy basically sitting in people’s laps because he got drunk and dekus face when he tried to sit on him is. Priceless.

gaydeku: you are all WEAK. tremble beneath my superior knowledge

1 - the coffee date in tokyo. ’nuff said
2 - running away from reporters (x,x,x) just look at these pictures. please
3 - this very specific photo of deku and entropy on a train and entropy is drunk hugging him and then this video on twitter where entropy is telling deku he likes his hair (also while drunk).
4 - this teenhero magazine article where deku is so flustered by the interviewer he literally exposes his own crush on entropy which is both hilarious and embarrassing to read (The second hand embarrassment is strong with this one)
5 - the instagram story that came out an hour ago on deku’s account where he talks about where he sees himself in the future and says “someday i might marry a woman or a man but i’ll always be married to my job first” and just. casually comes out to everyone, also, besides the fact that i’m still screaming about this, i’d like to note he brings up entropy again, WITHOUT ANY REASON. I swear I’m going to actually hyperventilate.

todosotos: OH MY GD?????????????? ?????????????????????????
????????????????????????????????????????????????????????????

lesbianiconcreati: [Picture attached: Twitter screenshot; slkjwkefjksj.png]

banananas @gayreychan
@herodeku so….i heard you like guys and gals….perhaps you can finally convince my friend…..is hero entropy hot???? (he says the pictures online are photoshopped and there’s no way he’s that pretty irl)
1,292 retweets | 866 favorites
1:49 PM - 3 November XX

DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
Replying to @gayreychan He is very hot…and also very cold ;) #SeeWhatIDidThere
2,955 retweets | 3,022 favorites
2:44 PM - 3 November XX
Liked by heroentropy, Creati | #11, Uravity, and 3,019 others ]

the prophecy is true

todosotos: KSDDKSKSKSSFKWKSK FKWSKF????SSD?FD?SF?SFS??SF?S??WEF LWLSFLO4LKL;KL2LKR;23’SDLFDLK;WLFWF;KKFWKWFJW

gaydeku: HELLO ???????????????????????????

Posted 2 hours ago via gaydeku source todosotos
3,928 notes

Tags: #IM……., #OK., #im honestly beyond words, #the great entrodeku masterpost, #bi deku confirmed, #ENTRODEKU CONFIRMED???, #?????????????????????????, #WHATIS HAPPENING
Sleep does not come easy. There’s no limit to the nightmare material bucket in Shouto’s brain, but tonight is especially troubling. Since the night Uraraka cornered him -- “What’s going on with you and Deku?” -- sleep has slipped and dodged out of his grasp. He sleeps on some nights, but only the discomforted, restless kind of sleep.

His conversation with Yaoyorozu helped, somewhat, but the uneasiness in his stomach stalks him like an unwelcome shadow.

Hours of turning onto his side, stomach, and back, are fruitless. He rises from his bed, slips on his shoes, and grabs his phone. He unhooks the key from the rack at his door and escapes the oppressive air in the apartment.

He doesn’t have any destination in mind as he rides the elevator down to the first floor. He didn’t bring a jacket (not that he would get cold). He has no money. He doesn’t usually leave his apartment this late, but he’s unsurprised to find the lobby empty.

It feels like a good night for a walk.

There’s somebody leaning on the window at the door, momentarily distracting Shouto from his troubled thoughts. It’s nice weather, if only a little chilly after the sun faded. He can’t imagine anyone else up at this inconsiderate hour, but maybe he’s not the only one with troubled dreams.

Shouto pushes the door from the lobby, slowly. The figure at the window doesn’t stir, so Shouto widens it enough to squeeze through. He doesn’t disturb the figure standing there, but when Shouto looks up at the stranger’s face under the low light his heart drops like a stone.

“Midoriya,” he says, the word squeezed out of him like an open wound.

Midoriya’s face is slack, his neck tilted at an awkward angle. Shouto repeats his name, louder, but he doesn’t stir. Shouto’s skin feels both too cold and too hot at the same time. Is he hurt? Did he stumble here after a fight? Shouto cautiously reaches his hand out to Midoriya’s shoulder. He shakes the unconscious form of Midoriya.

Midoriya’s eyes twitch, but he makes no other sign of movement. He pitches forward unexpectedly, and Shouto nearly drops him. He wraps Midoriya’s arm across his own shoulder, tugging him into the lobby. It’s an awkward shuffle, especially through the doorway, and Midoriya’s deadweight proves difficult to move at will.

Shouto half drags, half pushes Midoriya into the elevator. While he stands in the lift, waiting for his floor, he surreptitiously checks Midoriya over for any injuries or obvious signs he’s otherwise harmed. The only notable observation he makes is the deep purpling circles under Midoriya’s eyes.

Dragging Midoriya across the floor is not efficient. Four steps out of the elevator, Shouto accepts defeat. He lifts Midoriya under his legs and slides his other hand under Midoriya’s back. He grunts; Midoriya is a lot heavier than he anticipated, but he has to get back to his apartment somehow.

His exhaustion isn’t helping matters. Hours pass in the short walk from the elevator to his door; it feels like a lifetime. All the while, Shouto’s mind is frozen in a state of half-panic and half-calm. He doesn’t know what’s wrong with Midoriya, but he can’t do anything about it until he’s back in his apartment. That sobering thought is what focuses him, encourages him to take another step. He staggers to his door, nearly dropping Midoriya as he fumbles for his keys.

Midoriya doesn’t wake when Shouto drops him without ceremony onto the couch. A direct parallel
to the last time Midoriya sat on his couch, obviously injured, but awake and cracking jokes all the same. This silent Midoriya frightens Shouto, more than anything else.

The green suit is still on. For a moment, he considers removing it -- what if he missed an injury he couldn’t see? What if there’s something obvious he’s missing? In the end he leaves it on. Midoriya isn’t bleeding, and his suit is clean. There’s no cause for alarm.

Trying to wake Midoriya is the next sensible thing to do. “Midoriya.” He leans in, close enough to brush his lips against the shell of Midoriya’s ear. Midoriya’s curls flutter under his breath. “Midoriya. Are you awake?” Midoriya’s eye twitches again.

_Poisoned_, Shouto’s mind supplies. _Or under the influence of a quirk. He could be dying._

_Or he’s just sleeping_, the reasonable part of his brain provides. Reason wins out; Midoriya’s breathing isn’t labored, which rules out poison. If it is a quirk, there’s nothing he can do about it until the morning.

Shouto can’t go back to his bed. He can’t go back to sleep, especially after finding Midoriya.

He takes a chair from the kitchen and drops it beside the couch where Midoriya rests. In the soft light from Shouto’s kitchen and the city lights outside, the scars on Midoriya’s face soften. He looks so much younger, so much more vulnerable. The observation shakes him to his core. Shouto falls into the chair, his legs too weak to sustain his weight.

Robotically, he takes Midoriya’s hand where it dropped to the floor. He’s lying spread-eagled on his back, the other arm stretched out onto the next cushion. Shouto takes the hand and wraps it between his own, rubbing the abused skin of Midoriya’s scarred hand.

There he stays, elbows on his knees, head bowed, and Midoriya’s hand clutched between his own like a lifeline. Like the last piece of rope keeping him from floating off and vanishing among the stars. He keeps a silent vigil over the slow rise and fall of Midoriya’s chest, counting his own breathing to match. Midoriya’s breathing is the only solid, stable proof he’s alive. He couldn’t move from this spot, even if he tried.

“Shouto.”

Shouto’s eyes snap open. Sometime during the night he drifted off. His cheek is pressed against fabric. He probably fell forward into the couch when the balance on his elbows shifted.

Colors blur and spin as he lifts his head. He shakes his head to dispel the blurriness in his vision, blinking the sleep from his eyes.

Midoriya is awake. His lips are pressed together, his bottom lip tucked in. “What time is it?” Shouto asks.

His hand twitches. He looks down. He’s still holding Midoriya’s hand, against all odds. Midoriya’s face betrays nothing. Shouto releases him.

“Early.” Midoriya raises his freed hand and scratches the back of his neck, sheepish. He ducks his head. Shouto wonders if it’s from embarrassment. His eyes flicker away from Shouto’s. _Why is he acting so closed off?_ The curl in Shouto’s stomach twists.

Shouto frowns. “Are you alright?”

Midoriya snorts, quiet. “Yeah, why wouldn’t I be?”
All the exhaustion, fear, and panic coiled in the pit of his stomach from the night before snaps. “I don’t know,” Shouto answers, his throat stinging. His words come out choppy, sharp, razor edged. “Considering I found you passed out at the door to my apartment building. But why wouldn’t you be alright.”

Midoriya’s mouth opens a little, his lips forming the start of a word -- and then he stops. Exhaling through his teeth, he says, almost a whisper, “You weren’t supposed to find me.”

No excuses then. No answers either. “Well, I did.” Shouto snaps. “So either tell me what’s going on, or get the hell out.”

Midoriya meets his eyes. He sees hurt there; or maybe that’s the hurt in Shouto’s face reflecting back at him. His mouth opens, closes, and settles into a determined line.

That’s it then. Shouto feels the jagged edges of hurt twisting, repositioning, making their way into the knot in his stomach.

A shuddering breath catches his attention. Midoriya blurts out -- “I was afraid. For you.”

Afraid. The word tastes unfamiliar in his mouth. Afraid. The declaration catches him off guard, but Midoriya refuses to relent, pressing forward. “A week before I came to Tokyo, I received a note under the door at my office. It was a warning, or a threat, maybe. It said it would come after someone I cared about.”

Shouto summons the will to speak; “Did it say it was about me?” Worry sifts among the sea of unnamable emotions in the pit of his stomach. “Or was it -- Is your mom alright?”

Midoriya shakes his head, without breaking eye contact. “No. It said…” He clenches his hand closed, lifting his arm and looks down at the fist. “It doesn’t matter. But I knew the threat was for you.”

He inhales, shaky. “Six days later I tracked down the sender. He’s sitting in a jail cell somewhere in Kyoto. But that’s not important.”

Shouto senses a but, somewhere.

“I left for Tokyo the next day. We had dinner that night, together. We discussed the...you know what. And yet…” Midoriya lifts his head again, his eyes open and searching. Whatever he’s looking for in Shouto’s face must convince him to continue. “I had this gut feeling, somewhere, that if I hadn’t been fast enough, if I hadn’t found the right person…” His voice falters, dissipating like smoke.

“I still don’t understand why you were outside my door, tonight.” His head feels light, but heavy at the same time. Too many thoughts. Too many questions. Too many things contained inside his brain. “You caught the person responsible. And I’m not defenseless, I can handle myself.”

“I know, I know!” Midoriya’s fist releases, stretching the muscles and fingers. “But I had this feeling, and it kept me up all night. So I started watching you.”

Shouto’s stomach uncurls, a little, replaced by a strange flip-flopping sensation. “…Watching me.” Shouto repeats.

“I’d just stick around and make sure you got home okay. And stick around, a little while.”

“Is that why you’ve been so exhausted?” He doesn’t need a response from Midoriya to know the
answer. Nausea curdles his stomach, sour. “Is that why you took the contract at Yaoyorozu’s agency?”

Midoriya flinches. “That -- N-no, there was a lot of other reasons for that. Okay, maybe a little. I needed to know you were safe. I promise, I didn’t just stay in Tokyo because I felt -- guilty, or like you needed protecting. I-I don’t know. I stayed because I...I had to. And I wanted to.”

“I’m safe.” Shouto says, a little redundantly. “Midoriya, this is…” Crazy. Irrational. Stupid. He doesn’t say any of that. Midoriya is looking at him, a desperate energy barely concealed behind his eyes. Almost like he’s pleading. Like he’s begging Shouto to wordlessly understand something; to read between the lines and find the answer there without having to say it out loud.

Shouto isn’t like Midoriya. He’s a straightforward person. He takes most things at face value. He doesn’t see the point in reading into every word. He doesn’t dig for the hidden messages.

But the question in the back of his mind, unprompted, rises to the forefront of his mind: *is it time?* Is it time to talk about it?

The unspoken truce. The quiet acceptance of change, wordless agreements, the strange limbo of emotions tethered between him and Midoriya. The things that Shouto locked away and buried.

In a lot of ways, it was easier to handle all of these things before they graduated. Everything was simple. He and Midoriya followed the rules. Now there’s broken fences everywhere; lines they drew in the sand and crossed without warning.

It was easier when they were apart, ten years broken only by phone calls and the occasional collaboration with work. Texting was easier. Phone calls were easier. He knew what to say, he knew what responses he’d receive.

It’s hard to know what to say when there’s no way to know where the other person stands.

He feels it now, like he felt that night he discovered Midoriya’s injury: that nudge, that feeling of standing at the edge of a cliff and preparing to jump.

Shouto swallows. He doesn’t know if he’s ready to take that leap, or what he’s leaps towards. He doesn’t know where he’ll land. He doesn’t even know if Midoriya is there, or if Midoriya exists on a different metaphorical cliff edge. He might be leaps towards something that doesn’t even exist.

“I know it’s weird,” Midoriya says. He plays with his gnarled fingers as he talks, like he’s not quite aware he’s doing it. The gesture makes *something* deep in Shouto’s chest tremble. “I’m sorry. I know I should have said something.”

“You should have.” At least they’re in agreement about something. Shouto makes the decision a split second before he says it. “It’s okay. I think I understand.”

The desperation behind his eyes flares, but Midoriya’s face sparkles with surprise. “You...you do?”

“You’ve been losing sleep over this, haven’t you? Staying up later and watching over my apartment.” Midoriya shifts, guilty. The next question leaves Shouto’s mouth before his brain catches up, before he gets a chance to ask himself *what the hell he’s doing.* “What if you stayed here?”

He could slap himself. Backpedaling at Midoriya’s stunned expression, he says, “I-I mean, if you.
Wanted to, that is. So you’re not worrying and falling asleep in the bushes.”

Midoriya blinks a few times, furrowing his brow. Shouto looks to the window, plotting his escape through it. The fall would definitely kill him. Midoriya’s silence, growing more uncomfortable by the second, makes him want to do something -- the window option is looking better by the second.

“Okay.” Midoriya says.

Shouto freezes, mid-way through a morbid train of thought about what would happen if he actually jumped out the window.

“A-ah, that’s -- good.” He forces his jaw shut before anything thoughtless spills out. “Um.”

In the way only Midoriya could pull off, he smiles. Shouto’s stomach twists at the sight, uncomfortable, but not hurt like before. “This is gonna be awkward, isn’t it?”

“A little.” Shouto admits. “You really...when I found you, I didn’t know what happened.” The admission comes softer. “I was really scared.”

Midoriya pats his thigh, a show of comfort. “Sorry for scaring you.”

“It’s okay.”

“It’s not, but thanks for trying to make me feel better.” How Midoriya is capable of smiling this early in the morning (and after a disastrous conversation like this) is a mystery. He leans on Shouto’s arm, who startles slightly at the contact. “I’m sorry for not talking to you about it sooner. I won’t do it again.”

Shouto feels the words It’s okay at the back of his throat. He swallows them. He accepts the apology with a wordless nod.

Breakfast is the next hurdle to tackle. Midoriya insists on paying, intent on making it up to Shouto in whatever way possible. Shouto humors him. Only because he knows if he refuses, Midoriya will drag the guilt out longer.

“You can decide when you want to move in.” Shouto tells Midoriya, in between bites of food. “I’m not sure when you booked your hotel until, so you can make the decision.”

Midoriya hums. “I’ll figure it out later.” He looks down at his food, then back to Shouto. “Are we okay?”

The tension is relieved, Shouto feels that. But the unspoken, uncertain shifts between them are stacked higher than ever. Shouto didn’t make the jump, but it feels like a few of the stones under his feet keeping him on the ledge gave way.

He understands now. The cliff face, the mountain ledge -- he glanced for a moment down at the bottom and the answer reflected back at him with flashing lights and giant neon letters. It feels so obvious now. That uncomfortable tug in his stomach and the twisting, unsettling feeling in his chest were just symptoms.

He figured it out.

He doesn’t completely know what it means for himself, yet.

It means something has changed, imperceptibly, but changed all the same. It means he’s on a
countdown clock until the ground beneath him gives way.

Nothing’s changed, but Shouto feels it just as sure as he feels a storm’s approach. Nothing’s changed yet, but change is coming.

“We’re okay.” Shouto answers, smiling into his tea.

[Video: A TRIBUTE TO HERO ENTROPY

Thumbnail: Black and white, high contrast photo of Pro Hero Entropy wearing a scowl. He’s walking towards the camera holder with his arm outstretched.]

Posted 23 hours ago by ThatsIida | Subscribe
191k views

A heartfelt tribute to one of my favorite heroes. I’m gonna miss you so much…So young, left us too soon. #RIPEntropy

Comments 538

Feeddme - 20 hours ago
#RipEntropy :'(
View 3 replies
>Banney H - he’s not dead

ProDeku19 - 19 hours ago
Care to explain why this is just 3 minutes and 12 seconds of screaming with in the arms of the angels in the background
View 10 replies
>ThatsIida - i dont know what you’re talking about, i worked very hard on this video and it’s my very proud and emotional art in honor of his sudden departure
>>ErChan - ahahahaha

Entroki - 15 hours ago
Lmfao
View 2 replies

Midoriya keeps strange habits. One occasion Shouto finds Midoriya eating peanuts from a bag in the kitchen at two in morning. Other times he discovers Midoriya napping in unbelievable positions, or sleeping upright in the middle of the living room.

All of this is very fascinating to Shouto, who never had a roommate before this arrangement with Midoriya. Besides the brief period he lived in the dorms at Yuuei, he never gave much thought into living with another person. Living with Midoriya feels like moving into his apartment all over again. Every room feels slightly off, and not in a bad way. In the way that something is different, and he needs time to adjust.

The bizarre nightly outings are the least of Midoriya’s strange behavior. He refuses to leave his room in anything but casual clothes or his hero uniform, even though Shouto stumbles around in the morning in nothing but his pajamas and robe. Shouto half wonders if Midoriya is self conscious. The other half wonders if he’s uncomfortable. He doesn’t ask, and Midoriya gives no explanation.
Despite living together, they don’t spend a lot of time in the apartment for down time. The holidays bring tourism and a spike in theft and violence. Shouto is exhausted at the end of each day. He barely makes it to his bed, where he collapses and doesn’t move until the sun peeks through the blinds of his window.

Their schedules often overlap: an intentional manipulation by Yaoyorozu, he’s sure. They leave the apartment together in the morning, and stagger home together late.

“Do you want me to pick up eggs?” Midoriya asks, sticking his head in Shouto’s fridge. “You barely have any food in here. What do you do, starve?”

“Takeout.” Shouto answers. “And lots of instant ramen.”

Midoriya jerks his head out from the door. “You’re kidding.”

“Why would I be?”

Midoriya groans. “You’re one of those!”

Amused, Shouto presses his weight against the door of the fridge. Midoriya lets go of the door without protest. “You’re wasting electricity.”

Sputtering, Midoriya flails his arms and rounds on Shouto. “Y-you’re so -- I can’t believe you! I can’t even tell if you’re joking!”

Shouto, with his back turned so to hide his face from Midoriya, smiles. Midoriya is truly remarkable -- his presence brings out a quality to Shouto’s apartment he was never able to create on his own.

With Midoriya’s firm declaration about requiring food, they head out. Shouto covers his hair in a hat and sunglasses to lower their chances of being spotted by fans (or worse, paparazzi). Midoriya puts on a similar pair of shades and a jacket. Although Midoriya is more popular, he’s harder to recognize on the streets without his costume -- the same can’t be said for Shouto.

Their shopping trip runs into a slight hiccup near the end of the trip. “I’ll pay.” Midoriya insists. “You’re letting me stay at your apartment for free.”

“You’re a guest. It’s fine.” Shouto tugs the credit card from Midoriya’s loose fingers. “I can pay for it.”

Midoriya shoves him, cursing, when Shouto raises his credit card over Midoriya’s head, just out of reach. Shouto covers his laugh with a cough, and cheerfully hands his own card to the cashier. The cashier appears disinterested at the odd public display and hands Shouto the receipt without a word.

Outside, Midoriya refuses to let Shouto carry the bags back to the apartment. He wraps the handles around his arms like they’re weightless, adopting a quick pace back to Shouto’s building. Shouto stumbles to keep up with him.

“I’m going to teach you how to cook,” Midoriya announces. The food is sitting in bags on Shouto’s counter, while Midoriya attempts to hunt down utensils. Shouto watches from the stool at the counter, occasionally pointing out the hiding place for a pan. “So you’re not starving yourself on garbage food.”

Shouto hums, flipping on the tv to try and catch sight of any familiar names in the news.
The apartment fills with the warm sound of Midoriya’s laughter, the smell of food, and the quiet buzz of the TV as it plays the trending hero spotlights of the day.

He can’t help but feel a little greedy hoarding so much of Midoriya’s time away from the rest of the world. It’s not very herolike to sustain selfish thoughts, but Shouto has them all the same.

[Photo 1: A table of food surrounded by a scattering of Pro Heroes and sidekicks. Pro Heroes Entropy, Deku, Creati, Uravity, and Ingenium stand in a circle in the front, smiling. Ingenium has an arm wrapped around Entropy and Deku’s shoulders, while Deku has his arm around Uravity.

Photo 2: Entropy with his face turned away from the camera, while Deku, Creati, and Earphone Jack smile and point at him. Dynamite and Red Riot are fuzzy figures in the background, but their hair stands out easily among the sidekicks.

Photo 3: A full photo with all the guests lined up, Entropy in the middle. Creati’s Agency logo is barely visible behind their heads.]

Liked by herodeku, uravity, iida.t, tshouto, and 6,998 others.
icreati: #thankyouentropy
View all 482 comments

>uravity - now that’s how you throw a retirement party!
>iida.t - So happy seeing you. I enjoyed the party very much. Thank you for everything
>herodeku - :)”
>whelco.k - IM SO SAD BUT YOU ALL LOOK SO HAPPY SO IM HAPPY TOO
>>heil_a - mood :(  

16 HOURS AGO

The morning after, Momo isn’t at all surprised to find Deku inside Todoroki’s office. He’s surrounded by boxes, out of uniform, and muttering incoherently. The air conditioner in the bullpen overheated the night before, leaving the office in a swampy atmosphere. Deku is wearing a white shirt, sweat darkening the area beneath his neck and on his back. Momo clears her throat to get his attention.

“Ah, Momo-san!” Deku exclaims, whirling around to greet her. His eyebrows rocket up out of sight into his hair. “Good morning!”

“...Good morning.” Momo warily eyes the precarious tower of boxes by the doorway. “What are you doing?”

“Shouto asked me to help clean up. Most of it is just case files, so they’ll be staying here in your records room.” He picks up the floor plant behind Todoroki’s desk, settling it on his shoulder. “There’s really not a lot left.”

“I see.” Deku’s smile dims at her frown. “Where is Todoroki-san?”

Deku glances behind him, seemingly surprised. “Oh. He was just here...Oh!” He nearly drops the plant in his excitement. “He mentioned getting something from your office. You might catch him
there.”

Momo nods, thanks him, and heads for her door. While she isn’t surprised to find Deku at the office so early, it is strange Todoroki asked him to help out with packing. Todoroki refused her offer to help the week earlier.

Of course, unless Deku insisted on helping, in which case...Todoroki had no choice but to accept.

Opening the door to her office, the second half of the riddle sits in the chair by her desk.

“Todoroki-san,” she calls his name, as not to spook him. Todoroki turns slightly at his name. “Can I help you with anything?”

“Yaoyorozu,” Todoroki inclines his head in greeting. “Yes, actually. Do you have a moment?”

Momo closes the door behind her. She walks over to the seat beside him, instead of the one behind her desk. Todoroki’s face is void of emotion. A small trickle of anxiety drips down her spine. When she sits down, Todoroki offers gently, “Tea?”

Momo smiles at the gesture. “Of course.” Todoroki pours it for her, careful. Momo watches the steam unfurl from the cup and fade into the air.

“Did something happen?” Momo asks, after giving Todoroki a chance to speak for himself. Todoroki shakes his head. “Is this...about what I said to you? Did you figure it out?” She catches the hesitation, the barest tremble in his hand. “Do you...know what it is?”

Todoroki sets his tea down on the table. After a moment, he says, “I’m in love with Midoriya.”

Momo stares at him. Todoroki stares back. His eyebrows pinch together, embarrassment shadowing his expression for a moment, before evening out. “You don’t look very surprised.”

“I’m not.” Momo lowers the tea cup to her lap. “But I am a little surprised you figured it out so soon.”

Todoroki glances down at his tea cup, like he regrets putting it down. His hands awkwardly clench at his sides. “When did you...realize.” He says the word like it’s soured. A bitter word.

Momo hesitates, watching his expression carefully. “I had a...feeling. In high school.” Todoroki scowls. “I didn’t know for certain until Deku-kun came to Tokyo. Then I knew…”

Todoroki huffs. “I can’t believe how obvious it was.”

“Not obvious,” Momo corrects. “I just knew what to look for.” His head tilts to the side, considering. Todoroki isn’t oblivious either. He must know about her own feelings and Kyouka, it’s obvious to anyone in the room with them. Or, obvious enough to the people that know them the best.

Obvious like Todoroki and Deku.

Tentatively, she probes, “Are you going to do anything about it?”

Fire bursts from the side of Todoroki’s head. His expression doesn’t change as he raises his other hand to smother it. “I don’t know.” He seems like he’s ignoring the sudden outburst from his quirk. Momo wonders if that’s happening a lot, or if his embarrassment from momentarily losing control is harder to find.
A small burst of inspiration strikes her. “When did you realize?” she asks, intentionally mirroring his question from earlier.

The parallel is not lost on Todoroki either, by the twitch of his jaw. “A few weeks ago. I found Midoriya sitting outside my apartment, and…” He tells her about the note scare, Deku’s stubborn protective streak that runs as far as the Earth is wide, and Deku moving into his apartment.

“He moved in with you?” Momo’s voice raises at the end of the question. Todoroki winces, muttering defensively under his breath with what sounds like “I thought it was a good idea at the time.”

“That is so…” She flails for a moment, grasping for the right word. “You’re so ridiculous.”

Shifting uncomfortably, Todoroki frowns. “How so?”

“Ridiculous,” she repeats, with emphasis. “Absolutely ridiculous. I don’t know how you even…” She doesn’t need to finish the sentence. “Anyway. I guess it doesn’t matter right now.” Swiftly changing course, she adds, “You’re almost finished packing?”

Todoroki’s relief swarms his face, quickly replacing his discomfort. “Yes, everything should be ready by this afternoon.”

“Good.” She stands, offering her arm to him. “Walk with me?” He takes it. Leading him out the door of her office, she guides Todoroki to the window on the other end of the office. The bullpen is set up in the middle of the room with Momo’s office on one side, and the office that once belonged to Todoroki beside it. The window takes up the other side of the wall. One of the reasons Momo chose this building was the view, for purely shallow reasons. She liked looking out over the city and being able to see the small world she was responsible for. The one she was dedicated to saving.

“I guess it’s official then. You’re retired.” She’s long given up the effort of convincing him otherwise. “Any idea where you’re heading next?”

Todoroki looks out over the city. In the window, his reflection smiles. “I think I’ll go visit my mother.”

“Back to Musutafu, then. That’s good. I know you’ve missed her.” While Tokyo isn’t far from Musutafu, hero work is a demanding occupation. In high school, Todoroki would spend his weekends with his mother. The last six years he’s barely seen her once in a month. Momo met Todoroki’s mother once, years ago -- Yukiko, the woman with his silver hair and grey eyes, who smiled so warmly and gently she knew at once who Deku’s smile belonged to.

Worry balances on the edge of her tongue. “If you head back there, you might run into Endeavor.”

Todoroki shrugs with one shoulder. “I’m not worried about him.”

“Well,” Momo smirks. “If you run into him, let me know. I’m very good at throwing things.” Todoroki chuckles, pressing his lips together to hide his smile.

“Shouto!” Deku bounces over with a box tucked under his arm. “Your office is cleaned out, and the box of your stuff is by the elevator.”

The warm smile returns to his face. His mother’s smile, the gentle one. “Thank you, Midoriya. I’ll be down in a minute.” Deku makes a salute, waves to Momo, and bounds away. Todoroki returns his concentration to the window. Momo follows his gaze.
To the window, Todoroki says, “Thank you, Momo.” Momo startles at the sudden change in address. She’s told him for years to call her by her first name, with little success. “For these years here, for being my friend. Working with you was some of the happiest years of my life. And thank you most of all for supporting me, even though I’m leaving.”

Momo bites her lip, blinking back the tears forming there. “Thank you,” she insists. “Shouto-kun.”

When he pulls her in for a hug, the warmness emanating from him has nothing at all to do with his left side.

“You’ll visit, right?” She knows the answer, but the aching part of her wants to hear it out loud.

“Of course,” Shouto says. “I’ll let you know before I make plans to leave. You and Jirou can take me out to dinner or something.”

“Clubbing.” Momo smiles at his displeased frown. “No backing out now. We’re going to take you to the best parts of Tokyo.”

“I hate clubbing,” Shouto’s frown deepens. “You always make me wear the most uncomfortable clothes.”

“Make sure you bring Deku-kun.” The familiar pattern of teasing slips out as natural as breathing. “I’m sure he won’t mind if we dress him up instead.” At Shouto’s alarmed expression, she laughs.

Her laugh chases him all the way to the elevator. She watches him leave with his back turned, walking farther ahead and chasing whatever lays in front of him. His chapter with her ends; a new one begins.

Chapter End Notes

leave a comment if you love me...or at least feel some inkling of approval towards me. comments fuel my idiot soul. thank you to everyone who left comments already, i will reply to every single one i receive because i love them and they make me very happy...................

- CRYPTID SHOUTO!!!! (link to art on tumblr) thank you blibr i love u

translations for mobile users:
私の友達 - my friend
did you know there's like 7 ways to say "my friend" and it all depends on your age. this version is specific to men talking about their friend. in other ways of saying it, you might sound too young or too "manly/girly" for using a different one. why is japanese so fcckign complicated..
+ the herowatch "thank you, hero" tweet for todoroki had an error (i cant read japanese At All and i got it from a learning forum) so thanks to ppl in the comments!! it is now fixed!!!
(sorry i totally forgot to add the translation note....i cant remember what else needed to be translated)
some actual chapter notes:
- this is A Known Fact but i really don't like most of the fanon hero names for todoroki & bakugou (its even in the tags on this fic lskflkswlw). entropy is such a cool hero name and maybe im alone in that department but ill take my seat on the throne and accept my sole occupancy in my kingdom.
- on bakugou's hero name: i've seen a LOT of people use things like "ground zero" or "detonate" and even "TNT" (this isnt a criticism of people who do use them i just dont like them/care for them) in fics but not a single person chose one that (i thought) was very obvious: dynamite. it's made of nitroglycerin (unlike TNT which is actually made of trinitrotoluene) which is what is released in bakugou's sweat that explodes. it's a very unstable substance. it is highly reactive. dynamite releases more energy when it explodes than TNT. it'd be a fun play on dyna-might (like "all might" even though bakugou would probably explode if somebody pointed out the similarity) do you understand what im saying here??? do any of you understand????? healthyclintonpreaching.gif
- the wordcount keeps climbing and i am crying a lot (so much more editing...)
- i know i made a comment about midoriya being scared of bakugou and comparing it to todoroki and endeavor but i want to be clear that todoroki isn't scared of endeavor. he fucking slapped his dads hand away and said "you're in my way" so i would say he definitely despises endeavor with every ounce of his being and endeavor is an abusive asshole but todoroki is not scared of him. at all. he sees endeavor as the source of his mothers pain and his own and rightfully doesn't want to interact with him more than necessary. its also why he won't answer the calls from his endeavor
- gay culture is having a complicated relationship with your dad (in todoroki's case his dad is just terrible)
- midoriya: i need to get better at talking to the press and learn how to not act like a Foorle
midoriya, the next day: im going to take an acting class
- also midoriya: if i Act like i'm in love with my crush he won't notice at all because i'm just ACTING :)
- no, midoriya.....honey..........no........
- next chapter: midoriya is not taking this seriously at all, todoroki is Not Amused, and some villains show up or something. endeavor also shows up, unfortunately. iida appears and i love him. not sure when the next chapter will be up but most likely sometime monday/tuesday...see you then
**action**

**Chapter Summary**

Iida offers good advice, Midoriya falls prey to the great and unbearable fate of Tragic Miscommunication, and villains show up because absolutely nothing in Todoroki's life goes right when he wants it to.

**Chapter Notes**

still no beta in this club!!!! at least this time i didnt get drunk before i started editing. drinking is for AFTER posting. #drinkresponsibly

- chapters 1 and 2 were over 97 pages...i had to make a completely separate doc for Act 2 (chp3&4) because the scrolling and loading time got to be really annoying. somebody take my keyboard away i dont know how to stop
- speaking of which i ended up breaking chapter 3 into 2 parts: part 1, action, and part 2, reaction. this decision was made because the chapter is so long and i started decomposing when i saw the word count so i made the executive decision to split it. oh writing g-ds, please have mercy
- i went back and made some changes to the dates in chapter 1. it's nothing changed plot wise but i realized 4 days after posting i made the original tweets in the first part & the cafe stuff occur LITERALLY ON midoriya's birthday....so i moved it back a few days and made sure to mention his birthday this time. im so sorry midoriya i love u im just a dumbass
- also if you go back and read chapter two theres now ART!!!!!!!!! go check it out :^0
- 16 facts about pro hero entropy ft. some poor buzzfeed writer sweating in their office as they realize they dont have enough information about him to actually reach 16: uh...fcukcing uh....(pulling up his wikipedia page) this looks about right...i fuckicng hate my job
- hey lads..........the train is taking a slight detour......up a roller coaster ramp....
- ........i'm not kidding. there's a reason this part is called "action" because therers so much shit happening. strap in tight because this coaster goes upside down
- im still crying because chapter 2 was over 20k words alone...what the Fuck.
- IM CRYING EVEN MORE BECAUSE THIS CHAPTER IS 22k WAHT THE FUCKb
- the two scenes that inspired this entire fic happen in this part. it took over 40,000 words to get there. im gnna kermit sewer slide
- i am flexing my muscles so much i love iida and to make up for not mentioning him as much in the first two parts he gets a whole big section dedicated to him and todoroki talking. its very self indulgent and none of you can stop me
- endeavor sucks big fat stinky toes
- enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more notes
“I’m serious. You could’ve been really hurt. You saved that woman’s life, but…”

..."

“Like you would’ve done anything different.”

...

“Well, I probably would’ve punched my way out, for one. You’re not a Pro Hero anymore, Shouto. Try to leave the heroics to me.”

...

HERO ENTROPY RETURNS TO HERO WORK

January 13th, 20X1

CHIBA -- Hero Entropy turned heads last weekend with his sudden appearance at the Wakaba Ward Coastal Incident. The former Number Five Pro Hero officially retired at the end of last year, making his involvement an unprecedented event.

At the site of the incident, Pro Hero Entropy received mild injuries from the villain attack and was treated at a nearby hospital.

The villains involved worked independently and have no connections to the former League of Villains, according to the Chief of Police. No civilians were injured, and no reported casualties relating to this event.

“We are thankful for the aid of the dedicated heroes. We must continue to be vigilant in our communities and it is crucial for our members to report any suspicious activity or any sign of alarm.” The Chief of Police assured a crowd at a press conference early Monday morning. “The world becomes a safer place when we look after one another.”

Pro Heroes Deku, Froppy, and Chargebolt were also reported at the scene, sustaining only minor injuries.

Continued on Page 4.
Brushing the hair from his eyes, Shouto waits outside the door to his mother’s apartment. He knows someone is inside. He saw the shadow of a figure in the window, and light footsteps padding back and forth across the room. Knowing his mother, she heard his knock and is rushing to clean every inch of the room before he enters.

He tightens his grip on the small bouquet of orange and white flowers in his hand. Shouto rarely brings flowers for her, and that comes down to his own indecisiveness. Once, he brought a cactus. Even though his mother accepted the gift with a smile and a thank you, Jirou laughed at him for over an hour when he told her.

Earlier, he texted Momo in a panic asking for advice. She helped him choose over a video call, Jirou’s laughter breaking in and out of the background.

Shouto considers knocking again. Before he makes a decision, the lock on the door slides out and opens. “Shouto,” his mother greets him with a warm smile. Summoned by the sight of her smile, his own lips turn up at the edges to return the gesture. “It’s good to see you.”

“Mother,” Shouto tips his head in greeting. He holds out the flowers for her to take. “You look well.”

His mother laughs softly, stepping aside to invite him in. Shouto wipes his shoes on the mat at the door and leaves them sitting beside the row of his mother’s shoes. While his mother hunts down a vase for the flowers, Shouto cautiously explores the first floor of the apartment.

It’s small; his apartment in Tokyo is a luxury loft in comparison. On Shouto’s salary he could’ve bought her something bigger, but his mother insisted on something small. He wonders if she wanted a small apartment because she would be living alone, and a bigger apartment would feel empty. Or maybe she felt guilty Shouto was paying for something so expensive, although he assured her the cost was inconsequential to the rest of Shouto’s savings.

Her bright smile at the door reassures him the apartment was the right choice.

Over twenty years in a mental health ward would drive most people to hopelessness. His mother is not most people. She radiates a certain kind of blinding optimism and conviction that pulls anyone nearby into orbit. Shouto knows it’s a quality gifted to a rare few. In another lifetime, his mother would’ve made an incredible hero.

Shouto knows his mother will always bear scars. Hers are the hidden kind, while the scar on his own face is easily recognized. As a child, he remembers his mother crying. The pain in her eyes and voice and the broken quality of her smile.

Now, any signs of the trauma or damage in his mother’s eyes are replaced by hope and exhilaration. Shouto sees every ounce of joy laid bare in her smile. She is happy. While the scar on his own face may never heal, it does not ache. He desperately hopes the same for his mother’s invisible scars.

His mother unwraps the flowers and places them in a red pitcher. The bright pop of color in her otherwise monotonous apartment are a welcome sight for his eyes. Her apartment reminds him of his own in many ways; sparsely decorated, emanating a cold unattachment to the occupants inside. Despite the cold atmosphere of the apartment, his mother sheds warmth in every direction. The cold cannot overcome her.

While she washes her hands, she comments, “I haven’t seen you in a while.” Shouto absentmindedly rubs the inside of his palm with his thumb.
“I’m sorry, mother,” he says. He’s noticed he does that a lot more, recently -- fiddling with his hands. It seems like a habit he picked up from Midoriya. “I’ve been busy with work. I should have made more of an effort to come down and see you, though.”

His mother shakes her head; not a dismissal, as it is filled with fondness. “I know. I only say that because I missed you. It’s not because you did anything wrong.” She pauses, wiping her hands in a towel, looking out the window by the sink. “Should a mother not worry for her son?”

He knows the answer, but the question isn’t for him. Shouto smiles, nodding his head even though he knows his mother won’t see.

Shouto insists on helping his mother prepare a lunch. While he isn’t a decorated chef, he knows how to use a rice cooker. After that, he looks helplessly to the tower of onions and carrots. He’s saved from chopping vegetables when his mother hands him chicken to trim and cut. The chicken pieces come out unfairly sized: too big or too small. His mother smiles and thanks him for his help despite his poor attempts.

Shouto, defeated by the practice of culinary arts, resigns himself to non-food related tasks and sets the table. The familiar smell of curry fills the apartment as he prepares the table with bowls and spoons. Drawing on the memory of his last visit, he digs out the necessary tools from drawers and cabinets.

With the table ready, Shouto hovers by the counter. His mother catches his jittery inattention. “If it’s not trouble, do you mind bringing that box at the stairs up to my room?”

“It’s no trouble.” Shouto answers, relief filling his chest. He hates the scratching, clawing feeling of restlessness stirring in his stomach. He finds the box without difficulty. It’s heavy, too. He can’t imagine his mother carrying a box this size up the stairs by herself.

He’s never visited upstairs before. The apartment is new, after all. His mother finally left the hospital in September, and his last visit was too short. There wasn’t an opportunity to see the entire apartment before he was called back to work.

He knows which room is his mother’s immediately; the door is cracked open, revealing a crisp linen bed and a white chest covered in photos. He recognizes his own younger face smiling back at him, and the faces of his siblings. Older photos line the walls, grey eyes and silver hair with the same warm smile as his mother’s. His mother’s siblings, he assumes, or her parents.

There are no photos of Endeavor. No traces of his place in her life, no wedding photos, no family photos. Shouto isn’t surprised Endeavor shares none of the spaces in the pictures. He would’ve been more surprised if there were any of him. The only photos Todoroki Yukiko wants in her home are ones of people she loves and her children.

Gently, he sets the box on his mother’s nightstand. It feels strange looking into his mother’s room alone. Almost like he’s trespassing, even though his mother asked him to go in. The air in the room is stale and clean. As time passes, he imagines it will take on the smell and warmth of his mother’s liveliness. Someday, he imagines, it will feel like home.

Food sits on the table when he returns downstairs. His mother smiles, thanks him for moving the box, and pours him a bowl of curry stew and rice. They sit down and eat together. The table isn’t quiet for long before his mother lays out an array of new questions.

“You’ve retired now, yes?” She sets down her spoon.
Shouto nods. “Yes.” His mother knows his reasons already. Back in July, shortly after the rumors broke, he visited her in the hospital to tell her in person. His mother didn’t seem all too surprised at his decision. She didn’t seem unhappy with his decision either. Confused, yes, but supportive. It was her words after all that freed him from self imposed imprisonment of his power. You can become a hero. He imagines his decision to leave hero work contradicts everything his mother understood about his passion for being a hero. Someday, he’ll tell her.

His quirk might not be the ability to read minds, but he can tell his mother is proud of him. He also senses there’s something she wants to say, but is holding back.

Her face softens. “And are you happy?”

Shouto thinks of his apartment, the loneliness that crept through the cracks of the walls at night and chased him while he slept. He thinks of the loneliness he’s lost, now that his apartment is no longer so empty.

He thinks of all the excessive free time he’s granted now that he’s technically out of a job. He thinks of his lunches with Momo and Jirou, because even though he no longer works alongside them they will always make time for him in their lives.

He thinks of Midoriya and his quiet singing that echoes throughout the apartment while he cooks. He thinks of the gentleness in Midoriya’s eyes as Shouto presses light butterfly bandages in the bathroom after Midoriya returns home from a rough fight. He thinks of Tokyo, a big city filled with light and color and sound capable of swallowing a person whole; and yet the city welcomed him and raised him among the skyscrapers and called him Hero. He thinks of his empty office at Creati Agency, the emptiness in his chest at night after hearing a tragedy, thinking I could have done more.

On nights like those, he hears the voices of Midoriya, of Momo, of everyone who wishes him well and thinks I made the right choice, I have more to do, and I’m going to succeed.

“Yes,” he says, the truth spilling out of him. “I have some regrets, but I’m happy. I see a future where I’ll be happy.”

The truth comes down to this: being a Pro Hero in Tokyo made him happy, or at least the closest thing to it. He likes saving people, he burns with that passion as much as any other true hero. But there was always a gaping hole in his chest when he looked out at the carnage after a fight or the casualty reports on the news, all while thinking it still isn’t enough.

There’s no guarantees his new future will fill that hole either, but that’s his choice to make.

Insistent on showing his appreciation for his mother’s cooking in some way, Shouto takes their bowls and spoons and cleans them in the sink. He looks out the window, a mirror of his mother’s action earlier while she washed her hands. The view leads out over the side of the balcony and into the green yard in the middle of the complex.

“Shouto,” his mother calls when he finishes. “Why don’t you come outside? I want to show you the garden.” The pride is evident in her voice, the same pride Shouto recognized when she talked about her garden over the phone. The garden was one of the first things his mother shared with him -- the first thing she told him she wanted when she left the hospital.

Shouto trails behind her, closing the screen door behind him. The balcony attached to her apartment is larger than he expected. He wonders if this was one of the many reasons his mother chose the apartment. She takes his hands and leads him to the tomato vines, brushing her hands
over the leaves. “You’ve got a lot on your mind,” his mother observes. Shouto wonders how she
would know, and as if reading the question from his mind, she adds, “You’ve been very quiet.”

“I’m adjusting,” Shouto answers. “There’s still a lot of things I need to do.”

She laughs softly. “Isn’t there always?” He isn’t sure what kind of response to give, and his mother
saves him from finding one by handing him a pair of gloves. “Here. I could use some help with the
weeds. The bucket is by the aubergines.”

Shouto doesn’t see any weeds in her impeccable garden. He accepts the gloves and kneels beside
his mother. Delicately, she twists the leaves over to check their health and signs of pests or dryness.
A fly lands beside the trowel on Shouto’s left. He resists the urge to slap it away. The memory of
the reporter and the cafe slides to the front of his mind.

“Something is different about you,” his mother muses aloud, while Shouto waves the fly out of
sight. “You seem...distracted. Did something happen on your way here?”

“No,” Shouto says, frowning. He called Momo about the flowers, and Midoriya texted him on the
train. Weird day, his text read. Call you later. Nothing exceptional. Nothing out of the ordinary.

His mother slides a glove off her hand. He startles a bit at her touch, but relaxes into it easy; her
cool soft hands on both sides of his face, stroking and rubbing his cheek. Gentle. Loving. A
mother’s touch.

Her eyes assess his face. Her thumb rests below the edge of his scar, applying the barest hint of
pressure. “There’s someone, isn’t there.” She doesn’t say it like a question.

She must feel the heat rise under her hand. Closing his eyes, he leans into her palm, letting himself
be held. “It’s a little complicated,” he says, opening them when his mother emits a thoughtful
sound.

“Love is complicated,” she offers, frowning when he stiffens at the word. “Ah. It’s that kind of
complicated.”

Shouto doesn’t know what that kind of complicated refers to, but he nods. His mother pats his
cheek. “I’m sure you’ll figure it out. You’re still so young. You have plenty of time.” Time she
never had. The everpresent bitterness in the back of his mind flares for a moment, recoiling as she
withdraws her hand.

“Does this person...does this person make you happy?” She searches his face again, taking in every
inch for an answer.

This time, he does not hesitate. “He does.” His mother’s genuine smile chases any trace of
resentment from his mind. Soft joy shivers in his chest, awakening his own smile.

“That is good,” she says, patting his leg with her gloved hand. “Will you bring him sometime? I
want to meet the man who makes you smile like that.”

The heat in his cheeks returns. Trying to keep the whine from his voice he says, “You’ve already
met. He came with me to visit the hospital while we were still in high school.”

“Oh,” his mother’s expression lightens. “The plain looking one with the smile.” Shouto bites back,
He’s far from plain, choosing to nod instead.

“I see him on tv sometimes,” she continues. “He’s a good hero, isn’t he?”
“The best,” Shouto says, earnest.

His mother laughs. “I should have known. You smiled so much, that day he came. Well, bring him again, if you can. I imagine the Number Two Hero doesn’t have a lot of time for social visits.”

“He’ll make time for me.” Shouto replies automatically, flushing at his mother’s surprised laughter.

At the door before he leaves, his mother pulls him in for a hug. “Please visit again soon.” she says, withdrawing and cupping his face in her hands. “Fuyumi misses you as well, and I like the company.”

“I will,” he promises, fending back the familiar sting behind his eyes. He’s missed his mother. “I’ll see you soon.”

“I know it’s early.” his mother takes his hands, wrapping her thin fingers around his wrist where his pulse rests. “But happy birthday, Shouto.”

Shouto smiles.

Following the winding streets back to the train station takes longer than he planned. It’s twilight by the time he approaches the stop. He leans beside the railing, hands in his pockets and breathing out warm clouds of air. Watching them shimmer and vanish, he lifts his eyes to the horizon and the spots of lights from the streetlamps.

The train back to his hotel is quiet. Musutafu’s city lights wink and flicker in the background of the window ahead of him. His only companions in the train car are students, and he nods to acknowledge the familiar blue uniforms. One of the students, brave and trembling, shuffles to stand beside him under the ceiling handles.

“I-Is it true?” She blurts out the question without a proper greeting. “Y-you’re r-really retiring?” Despite the boldness of her question, her voice and hands shake. It’s the idol effect, he muses, with a voice in the back of his mind that sounds like Midoriya.

Shouto smiles; the warmth settled in his lungs from the visit with his mother isn’t so easily disturbed by the blunt words of a child. “Retired,” he corrects. “Yes, I am.”

“I-if you don’t mind me asking, why?” she asks.

Why? That question follows him in his shadow. Reporters beg for the answer, hunting him down in stores, hounding him outside the apartment.

Why are you leaving us?

“I wanted to.” The words are simple. He’s unafraid to say them to the reporters, or to anyone who approaches him on the street. It’s the words the media will never print in paper. They don’t understand what he means when he says them, and that frightens them. So simple, yet so easily misunderstood.

“You are a student?” Shouto asks the girl, who reddens at the direct attention.

“Y-yes,” she says, and her voice wavers slightly. “I-I have an electron manipulation quirk. I-I’m training to be a hero.” Like you were.

“Why?” he asks, smiling at the realization flickering across her face.
“B—because I wanted to.” She places a hand to her chin, wide-eyed. Under her breath, she mutters, “I think I understand now.” The small action tugs at his chest. Her hair isn’t very curly and there’s nothing about her appearance that strikes him immediately, the anxious energy and determination in her eyes reminds him of another muttering, anxious hero. “T—thank you, Entr—T—todoroki-san.”

Shouto inclines his head to her. “There’s nothing to thank me for.” Frantic movement catches his eye above the girl’s head. The huddle of students is exiting the train. One of her friends, Shouto assumes, is frantically waving his arms to get her attention. “Your friends are waiting for you.”

She looks behind her and makes a small noise of surprise. “O—oh! I didn’t realize.” She hesitates for a moment, before bowing. Shouto holds his sigh. “T—thank you for your hard work and your t—time!” At the end of her sentence, she spins around and dashes after her friend.

“Wait,” Shouto calls out as she steps off the train. “What is your name?”

A broad grin splits across her face. “Nakamura Yuzuki! P—please watch me at the festival!” Her odd request doesn’t bother him in the slightest. He lifts his hand and waves, watching the blur of her figure and the students behind her fade from sight as the train moves on.

The next stop deposits him a couple blocks from the hotel. He walks slowly down the street, ducking his head from curious gazes. It’s a futile effort, he knows, as he took no precautions to hide his hair and he stands out like a red and white flashing sign in the middle of street.

Perhaps he should’ve worn a hat.

As he rounds the corner of an alley, he spots a massive shadow looming behind him. He smells it then; the familiar scent of ash and smoke.

He let his guard down, making himself an easy target. There’s no one to blame except himself. Foolish.

“Shouto,” Endeavor’s voice booms behind him. The fire along his form casts dancing shadows out of the corner of his eye. Not dancing -- there is sharpness and cruelty around the edges. More like fighting. “You’ve been ignoring my calls.” No greeting, right to business.

Shouto turns around, although he’d much rather walk away. He knows if he says nothing, Endeavor will only follow him. Without a doubt his photo is plastered somewhere on the hero forums dedicated to stalking heroes as they go about their daily lives. He doesn’t have to ask how Endeavor tracked him down; his father is cruel, but he’s not an idiot.

Shouto made no effort to disguise himself, and that made it all the easier to hunt him down. Even if he tried to blend in, Endeavor would not be so easily discouraged. He would chase Shouto down wherever and whenever he wished.

Chin up, eyes squared, he looks his father in the eye. “My phone broke.”

Endeavor drops his gaze to the phone clutched in Shouto’s hand at his side. “And that is?”

“A new one.” Shouto fists the memory of his mother from earlier, tucking it and clenching it into the deepest space at the bottom of his ribs. He knows his mother is far away and out of Endeavor’s reach, but he wants none of her smile tainted by his presence. “Is there something you want from me?”

“Shouto,” Endeavor scolds lightly, like he’s chastising a child for staying up too late or sneaking sweets. “It’s time we had a talk. You can’t think I would allow you to make a decision as...ill-
considered as this. You are not retiring. Come,” he gestures to the other side of the block to a black limo. “We can discuss this at my office. I have the forms to re-apply for your ranking, and an arrangement for a new position at my agency.” Endeavor smiles. Unlike his fire, his smile bears no warmth. This is the kind of cruel irony written only by a deity with a twisted sense of humor that would make a man made of fire capable of smiling with such cold grace.

Endeavor’s arm wraps around his shoulder, guiding him to the limo -- or tries to. The arm makes it halfway before Shouto summons a spire of ice from his foot that stops a hair’s width beneath Endeavor’s chin.

“Shouto.” Hard steel, eyes narrowed and scowl settling into place. There. That is the disapproving look he recognizes. “Stop this. It is unbecoming for a man of your age and skill to act so childishly. Get in the car.”

“I’m not going anywhere with you.” Shouto fixes him with a dispassionate glare. Endeavor’s hand retreats.

“You are,” Endeavor says, like he’s looked at the stars and seen it written there. Like he has the ability to take hold of Shouto’s desires with his bare hands and twist them under his own command. “Now, let’s go.”

Shouto scrutinizes the lines on Endeavor’s face. The last six years aged him poorly; there are more wrinkles in his brow, and around his lips. He spots a peppering of grey among the dark hair on his head. He’s rarely crossed paths with Endeavor in that time, except among official hero galas or meetings. Shouto never sat beside him, and he made no effort to seek out his old man at those events.

Standing his ground, he musters every ounce of firmness into his next words: “I am not. I am not going back to hero work. I’m retired. It’s late; I’m heading back to my hotel.”

Endeavor doesn’t move, but his voice shakes with barely restrained anger. “You are not,” he commands. “You think -- you think this is a choice you get to make? No,” Endeavor lowers his voice, mindful of the crowds at the food stalls. “This is not allowed. You’re going to sign those papers, and I expect you in my office tomorrow morning for training.”

Shouto knows this conversation will go in circles until one of them loses their voice or Endeavor bodily maneuvers him into the limo. He eyes the small crowds of civilians a distance away. Perhaps not, since it would draw attention. Endeavor would not create a disturbance with so many people around. It would guarantee the headline in the morning paper.

Talking in circles it is, then.

“I am not.” Shouto repeats, unyielding. “Goodnight, Endeavor.”

He makes three steps before Endeavor lands a hand on his other shoulder. Wryly, he notes Endeavor (likely, intentionally) grasped his left side. If only so Shouto wouldn’t turn his hand into a block of ice.

“This is not your decision to make,” Endeavor hisses. “You have a duty. You are a hero. You are my legacy, Shouto. You are not allowed to throw that away!”

Shouto slaps his hand away, twisting out of reach. “I believe, as a man of my age and skill…” Endeavor’s face performs a complicated series of furious twitching. “…I am allowed to make decisions for myself.”
“Don’t you see what you are doing?” Growling, Endeavor leans in. Shouto refuses to lower his gaze. Defiance thrums through every cell in his body. Endeavor cannot intimidate him into making a decision. Not that Shouto needs to make one; the decision is already made. “You’re letting him win. All Might’s successor,” Endeavor’s scowl deepens, bitter. “Cannot take the position I prepared for you. You will rejoin the hero ranks, and you will rise above him. You will defeat him at his own game. I will not let you destroy the legacy I have worked so hard to build. I have given everything to you. I have raised you to become the greatest hero. You will fulfill the purpose I destined for you.”

“Destined for me.” Shouto turns the words over in his mouth. “What gives you any right to decide my destiny?”

“I created you for this purpose,” Endeavor sneers. “You believe you can repay me by spitting it back in my face? You will do as I tell you, because I am your fa--”

“I’m retired.” Shouto nearly laughs at the flash of surprise that sprints across Endeavor’s face at the interruption. “There is nothing you can say or do that will change that. Go back to your car, and don’t bother me again.”

Endeavor straightens to full height. There is no trace of forced politeness in his expression. This is the face of the fearless Number One Hero. “You’re playing right into his game,” he says it like a foul curse. “Don’t you see what he’s done? That boy’s manipulating you. He forced you off the rankings to remove his competition. He’s going to tear my position from me, he’s going to ruin everything I’ve been working towards. You’re just another player to him. He’s using you.”

Mildly, Shouto replies, “Midoriya didn’t manipulate me into anything. I made this choice of my own volition. I have no desire to rejoin the hero rankings, or become the next top hero. If Deku takes your position as the Number One Hero…” Peering up through his lashes, he continues dryly, “...it will be because he deserves it.”

“That boy isn’t to be trusted.” Endeavor insists. “He’s twisted your mind, and he’s ruining your future. I saw those magazines.” Shouto’s amusement sinks and twists into heavy discomfort. “The Hero Deku,” Endeavor spits his name, sour. “Will not make a fool of me. I will not allow such a display foul the association of my name. He is your rival. He has no right to tarnish --”

Summoned by bad luck, the cruel hand of the deity spinning the Misery Wheel of Fate responsible for all of Shouto’s woes, or perhaps lack of foresight, Shouto’s phone rings in his hand. The heavy stone in his stomach sinks further.

Incoming call from Midoriya Izuku flashes across the caller ID.

The name on the screen does not go unnoticed by Endeavor. He bristles, snarling, “Your -- you think he is your friend? His only use for you is getting you out of his way. Don’t let your emotions blind you anymore than they already have. He’s beneath you, Shouto. If you don’t --”

Shouto ignores him, which he’s very good at doing. He’s had years to master the art of ignoring Endeavor’s empty threats. He hits Accept with his thumb and holds the phone up to his ear, a wild idea half-formed in his mind before he’s finished his greeting. “Yes, Midoriya?”

“H-hey! Sorry, you weren’t answering my texts and I got worried. How’d the visit with your mother go? Everything alright?”

Shouto glances at Endeavor. Endeavor visibly seething, glares, looking very much like he wants to smack the phone from Shouto’s hand and drag him into the limo.

“...More or less.” Shouto says, warily eyeing Endeavor’s growing wreath of flames around his
chest. “Did you need something? Something happen at the apartment?”

“Always right to the point.” Midoriya teases lightly. “No; I’m fine, the apartment is fine. But I might’ve broken a plate or two. Sorry.”

“If you break anything in my apartment, you’re paying for it.” This kind of teasing isn’t out of character, but it is carefully crafted to draw Endeavor’s attention. “That isn’t what I meant when I said you could redecorate.”

It works. Endeavor makes a noise like a kettle boiling over on a stove. His face is reddening at an alarming rate. Shouto probably overdid it. The fire around Endeavor’s chest and arms raises another meter.

“You’re quiet. Is something wrong? You know you can talk to me if --”

“I’ll call you back.” Shouto cuts Midoriya off, wincing. Maintaining eye contact with Endeavor, he lies, “Something came up. Sorry.” He drops the call.

The moment it disconnects, Endeavor plants himself in Shouto’s face. “You’re a fool,” he snaps. “If you think he actually cares for you.”

Lesser man have trembled at the sight of Endeavor’s wrathful scowl. Shouto shakes his head. “You’re wrong.”

“I won’t allow such disrespect from you. I will destroy that worthless, spineless creation --”

“You’re the fool.” Shouto retorts. “You say I’m blinded by my emotions? The only blind one here is you. You are blinded by your own selfish ambition and cruel obsession with defeating a man who has never treated you with anything but respect, all of which you hardly deserved an ounce of. And your aspirations to do so are your own.” Breathing heavy, Shouto tightens his fist, nails biting into his palms. “You ruined the lives of countless people, including the lives of your wife and children, for the sake of a bitter rivalry held by your own delusions.”

Shouto levels him with a cool glare, unwavering steel. “I refuse to be a pawn in your self-serving schemes anymore. I will never work under the hero rankings again. You and I both know who will become the next Number One Hero.” His last declaration sinks in like a punch. “When the legacy of the Todoroki name dies in the world of pro heroes, it will die with you.”

The first and last of Endeavor’s great legacy of Todoroki Pro Heroes begins and ends with Endeavor. There will be no legacy. The only Todoroki to grace the position of Number One Hero will be Endeavor, and none after him. Shouto has made sure of that.

Endeavor’s eyes burn with cold fire. Brutal understanding blazes behind his eyes. “I should disown you, you ungrateful child. You will have no right to my name. No right to anything I own. No inheritance. Do you understand me?”

“Good.” Shouto turns his back on Endeavor, hands in his pockets, and walks down the alley towards the hotel. With a sense of finality, he adds before he’s out of earshot, “I never wanted any of it.”

The remainder of his walk to the hotel goes uninterrupted. Perhaps the message finally passed through the old man’s stubbornly thick skull. Maybe Endeavor decided to give up for the night and return with new persuasion tactics in the morning. It won’t matter: Shouto will not return to heroics or the hero ranks. His career as a Pro Hero is finished. Endeavor will slowly wither and fade into the background, replaced by newer, brighter, better heroes.
As sure as he knows the sun will rise in the morning, he knows Endeavor’s time as the top Pro Hero is coming to an end. He knows, sure and steady as the beat of his own heart, that Deku will claim that place.

While he walks, he slowly unfurls the memory of his mother and the garden from earlier in the day, clutching it like the only source of light in a dark room.

Interrupting his heavier thoughts, his phone rings in his palm. Without looking at the caller, he picks up, pressing it to his ear with desperation itching in his chest. “Midoriya?”

Midoriya pulls no punches. “You ran into Endeavor.” Shouto makes a noncommittal noise. “I saw the photos on Twitter. A fan spotted you talking to him.” On the other end of the phone, Midoriya sighs. “Did you want to talk about it?”

“Later,” Shouto mumbles, stepping into the lobby and quickening his pace to reach the elevator. “What about you? I got your text. Something bad happen at work?”

Midoriya’s silence exceeds a beat longer than usual. “Not at work,” he answers, vaguely. “I...had another press event. It was...very weird.”

“ Weird how?”

A groan on the other end of the phone. “I assume you haven’t checked your phone all day. There was this...kind of like the HeroCon event we both went to a few years ago, there was this panel...thing.” His next few words are muffled like he’s talking into his hands. “It’s so embarrassing! All those acting classes, all that press training...my agent threatened to skin me over the phone. Uraraka sent me a voicemail of her yelling for like ten minutes. I am so, so sorry.”

“Midoriya,” Shouto starts, biting the inside of his cheek. “It can’t be that bad. What did you say?”

“...I might have accidentally mentioned I was staying at your apartment.”

Shouto’s brain processes that sentence in a few different ways. First, casual indifference, followed by slowly dawning horror, and ending on deep mortification. He pulls the phone away from his ear and glances at his notification tab at the top of his phone. He spots a dozen texts from Momo and Jirou. A few from Uraraka and Iida as well.

“...Oh.” Shouto’s face burns. He’s not actually on fire, thankfully, although the mirrors in the elevator reveal his full face flush. He clears his throat. “A-ah. And, uh, how exactly did that come up?”

“I-I didn’t give details, obviously!” Midoriya laughs nervously. “B-but I made a comment about you killing all the plants in your house and that I was taking care of them while you travelled and, well...”

“I can see how that would make people jump to conclusions.” Shouto replies carefully. The elevator door pings, alerting him of his arrival on his floor. He steps out, fishing out the keycard from his wallet and pressing his phone against his shoulder while Midoriya talks.

Midoriya’s voice raises a pitch. “...Then a few paparazzi stalking your apartment caught me entering your building, so...”

That complicates matters. “I think it’s best if your agent handles the media and responses,” Shouto decides. “I’m sorry I couldn’t have helped more. I turned my phone off for the whole afternoon.”
“It’s fine!” There’s something off about Midoriya’s tone, but Shouto doesn’t press the issue. The door to his hotel room swings open, revealing the same clean single bed he checked in earlier. “Let’s, uh, leave it to my agent to handle. H-how is your mother doing?”

“She’s well. She seems very happy. Her apartment is nice, quiet neighborhood. I think it’s a good change for her. There’s a balcony, too -- she started a garden. It’s nice.”

“That’s good. I’m happy to hear that.” Midoriya says, voice soft. Shouto can picture him, smiling into the phone and sitting on the counter in Shouto’s apartment, and Shouto would lean over and press a kiss right on the corner of his mouth and --

Wait.

“Shouto?” Midoriya asks, likely growing concerned at Shouto’s prolonged silence. Shouto resolves his quiet mental breakdown with a swallow, pushing it down with a promise to return to it later when he can freak out quietly at this very big and terrible new realization in the solitude of the bathroom.

“Uh.” Charming. “Sorry. I, uh...” he searches every corner of his room for a believably convenient excuse. “...I was, uh. I stubbed my toe on the bed.”

“Oh,” Midoriya says, clearly not buying the obvious lie. Shouto panics. He needs to control himself. Blurtting out over the phone his ridiculous thoughts like when I hear your voice it sounds like you’re smiling and I want to kiss you so badly it aches sometimes, what did you make for dinner is surely a very terrible idea.

“My old man is an asshole,” he says instead, which is as close to the truth he can get without revealing the true cause of his distress.

Midoriya’s laugh breaks through the speaker. “Oh, that bad?”

“I think he’s convinced you have a mind control quirk.” Leaning back on the bed, he stares at the water stained ceiling and pushes away the ache in his chest at the sound of the laugh. “He also went on about how I’m destined to be the next top hero, I’m not fulfilling my destiny, the usual monologue.”

“Some people never change, I suppose,” Midoriya offers. “Did it...are you upset about it?”

“No.” Shouto huffs. “I’m too old for his mind games to bother me. He’s insisting I rejoin his agency to set me straight, or something.” Midoriya snorts. “Oh, and he said he wants to disown me.”

Midoriya hums. “Do you think he will?”

“I’m not sure. But I’m thinking of taking it into my own hands and removing him myself. Tomorrow, maybe.”

“No!” Midoriya’s voice rises into a whine. “You’re gonna spend your birthday getting your father written out of your koseki? That’s a terrible birthday present.”

“I don’t know. It’s rather fitting.”

“Absolutely not!” Midoriya cries. “You have to come back to Tokyo for your birthday. I’ll drag you back from Musutafu myself.”
“You’re on active duty tomorrow morning.”

“How do you know that?” Midoriya’s reply leans on the side of peevish.

“Momo still sends me all the schedules in the agency email chain.” Suspiciously, he adds, “You didn’t arrange a party or anything, did you? I told you I didn’t want anything too big.”

Midoriya’s silence is a damning confirmation. “Midoriya…”

“Shouto,” Midoriya stumbles a bit on his name, echoing Shouto’s grouchy tone. “Think of it as -- retirement party part two! Or a class reunion! Not everyone could make it for the first one, so this is the right opportunity for them to visit.” Shouto grunts. “Then we can head to City Hall.”

Shouto’s heart does that strange and irritating flip-flop again. “We?” he repeats, unsure if he misheard.

“I-I mean, I thought you might need my s-support!” Midoriya’s alarm is almost comical. “It’s fine, I don’t have any important events this week. Actually, well, I do, but they can be done anywhere, technically. They’re like social media boosts and stuff like that. There’s no reason why I would need to be anywhere specific to do them. As long as I have access to the Internet and a bit of down time to make the posts, I can do it basically anywhere. But that’s not really as important, since you’re making an incredibly bold move with your family. If you’re heading to the Citizen Affairs to remove Endeavor’s name from your koseki, you’ll need a witness present. It makes more sense if you stop back home first anyway, because you’ll need to bring your birth certificate, as well as proof of residence. W-while I can’t imagine they’d need anything besides your hero license to identify you, you’re basically one of the most recognizable figures in…”

Shouto doesn’t mind Midoriya’s rambling. It’s that comfort, familiar, routine, something he understands. It’s a sign that no matter how much he changes, no matter how different they become, Midoriya won’t change into someone he doesn’t recognize. In that way, Midoriya is his stability -- the length of rope tied around his waist that will always lead him back when he feels he’s ready to return. His eyes slowly slip further closed, startling awake when Midoriya’s far away voice calls his voice repeatedly.

“Wh-huh, yeah, I’m here,” Shouto assures Midoriya’s frantic cry of alarm.

“Were you falling asleep?” Midoriya asks. The accusation in his voice is quickly replaced by bewilderment. “Oh no! I’m so sorry, I lost track of time. I-It’s so late! I’ll talk to you tomorrow. Uh, what time are you checking out?”

“Eleven.” Shouto answers, on automatic. “Why?”

“Um,” Midoriya’s hesitation is all the more suspicious. “Don’t worry about it?”

“That is more worrying.” He feels his lips stretch; a unbidden smile. “I suppose I’ll find out tomorrow. Goodnight, Midoriya.”

“Good–” Midoriya yawns midway through the word. “--Oof. Sorry. Goodnight.”

“Goodnight,” Shouto repeats, almost spitting out a follow up statement before realizing his error. A brief uncomfortable silence, then:

“Goodnight.” Midoriya repeats firmly. Shouto hangs up, pressing his face into the tropical-scented comforter and groaning.
As promised, he rises from the bed and heads to the bathroom. He closes the lid and sits on the toilet, head in his hands, and groans again. This cannot continue. If he’s having -- (he hates to say the word, but) -- sudden romantic impulses at the sound of Midoriya’s voice, how is he supposed to conduct himself when they speak in person? How will he act when the person his impulses flare from is within reaching distance to fulfill his intrusive desires? His life is a disaster. Everything is a disaster. He needs to get himself under control. He can’t afford to ruin one of his first true friendships -- his oldest friendship.

The discovery of his feelings for Midoriya made everything worse. The edge of the cliff face looms ever present in the back of his mind. Before he realized how deeply his attraction to Midoriya ran, it was easily ignored. Fleeting thoughts or a lingering gaze could be squared away, banished and forgotten. He has no such luxury now.

Midoriya living in his apartment empowered those feelings and raised them to unbearable levels. Everytime he spotted Midoriya, soft and sleep heavy and transforming his face into a smile, Shouto looked away. Afraid he would stare for too long, or fall victim to his compulsive wish to wrap his arms around Midoriya’s face and hold him there.

How do people bear this feeling? How does it not drive people to madness?

His phone appears in his hand before he gives it much thought. He opens a conversation window he’s ignored for a while. Fingers trembling, he types out what he hopes is a sufficiently apologetic and desperate request, and turns his phone off.

Leaning his head back, he spots water stains on the ceiling of the bathroom too. When his exhaustion catches up to him, he exits the bathroom and flops onto the bed, still in his day clothes. His mind feels like it’s spinning on an amusement park ride. Despite the activity in his brain, the hollow tiredness in his limbs wins out, dragging him into the clutches of dreamless sleep.

[Video: TEENHERO PANEL FULL DEKU 9/10/X1 & PHOTOS /// ENTRODEKU IS REAL. Thumbnail: Pro Hero Deku, dressed in uniform, holding a microphone and speaking out into an audience. One hand is extended, like he’s offering something to the crowd.]

Posted 16 hours ago MayUKENG Haro | Subscribe
29k views

English subtitles are on by default, still working on the French/Spanish subtitles.

12:53 is the start of the question from a fan asking about what he’s enjoying about Tokyo and what he does when he’s not doing hero work *clinks glass* take a sip babes!

Comments 529

Menang928 - 8 hours ago
For anyone who wants to c+p the subtitles with the entrodeku apartment reveal (i made a few changes because the auto generated ones weren’t super good and I’m learning japanese so these are a lot more accurate than the videos. i tried)

Fan: You’ve been here for a few months now, how are you liking tokyo? I’m hoping to (her next sentence had a generator error & idk what she says) for you. what’s your favorite thing to do when you’re not out doing hero work?
Deku: I love Tokyo! I’ve had a really great experience here. As for down time, not as much anymore. Creati keeps me busy, I can’t imagine what it’s like working with [her] full time.
Fan: what do you do at your hotel, then? Training[exercise]?
Deku: A little, but I get my workout on the job.
Fan: my friend wanted to ask one last question. she’s sick and she couldn’t make it here today, but have you ever had a pet? Or thought about pets (don’t know what she says here either but i think shes asking about if he wants to get one).
Deku: A pet...I always wanted a dog growing up, but my building wouldn’t allow it. I don’t know if I could be trusted to care [for] another living thing right now. I’m doing my best not to kill the plants in Shouto’s ... Entropy’s apartment.
Fan: You are house observing for entropy? (i think she means house sitting)
Deku: That’s something (??????? I cant understand his mumbling. Somebody else who knows japanese better than me will have to explain) something like that. I shouldn’t have said that. Let’s ignore (...) what I just said. None of you upload this anywhere. Can you make that a promise?
That’s not good (then he says something like “oh no” or “whoops”) Okay, okay, okay! let’s (...) let’s move on. Next question!

(it’s worth noting he specifically called Entropy by his first name - which is a big deal! - and corrects himself, and his answers got harder to translate because he was talking so fast me and the generator couldn’t keep up)

View 19 replies
>NIIO - thank you so much for translating, the video subtitles were O.K but this is a much clearer version. Much appreciated!!
>>>Soosa Yuu - the generator made a tone of mistakes but my fav was BONSAALIIIIIIIIIIIII
>>>That’s Not Very Hero - BONSAALIIIIIIIIIIII
>>>> e_kgh - BONSAALIIIIII
>>>>>i-have-a-quirk - i am converted. This video has shown me the truth. I see it all so clearly now....... #EntroDekuConfirmed
>>>>>QueenAyen - He was so flustered by the end OMG

Piccowo - 12 hours ago
#entrodekuconfirmed ;’)
View 11 replies
>Todododorki - *x files theme*
>>Saitou Mu - my sister and i have been trying to find a logical explanation for this ever since the video came out. We havent found one. Why is deku living at his apartment? Why does he always call entropy by his first name? Why is he so flustered?
>>bno00m - we know why……………..lol >:3c
>>>Saitou Mu - Hhaha

LetMeBeYours - 10 hours ago
Deku is so cute. Rt if you agree
View 9 replies
>KayChan - rt
>>M_m0me3 - Rt

Hiro Hiro - 7 hours ago
deku being awkward around fans always makes my day. he might be the #2hero but he always treats his fans so nice….what a good guy i love him
View 4 replies

---

Shouto refuses to make the same mistakes from yesterday’s lesson. Shoving on a pair of dark sunglasses and the All Might cap, he exits his room. The hat isn’t a bad disguise: wearing fan gear for other heroes tends to distract most people from looking at the person beneath it. Midoriya often
uses merch from other Pro Heroes to disguise himself at HeroCon events or when he ventures out into public. It doesn’t explain the appearance of this specific item in his luggage, but Shouto highly suspects Midoriya had something to do with it.

His checkout is at eleven. By the time he takes the elevator down, the lobby is buzzing with tourists and there’s a small line at the counter. While the receptionist fills out the last form for him, he picks up his bag, shifting the luggage handle to carry it over his shoulder.

“Todoroki-kun!” Shouto startles, nearly face planting into the counter when a heavy hand claps him enthusiastically on the back. His guard flies up instinctively and drops at the familiar voice. “My friend!” Iida proclaims. “It is very good to see you. How are you this morning?”

“I am...good.” Recovering from his surprise, Shouto answers. “It’s been a while, Iida. How are you?”

Iida beams. He hasn’t changed much since high school -- perhaps taller, broader, and his glasses are wider and thicker. Out of all the Pro Heroes Shouto kept in contact with, Iida is one of the few he ran into frequently on the job -- but Iida’s agency is not in Musutafu. He has no reason to be here in this hotel.

Ignoring Shouto’s obvious wariness, Iida trudges on, undeterred. “I am doing very well!” Iida snatches Shouto’s luggage off his shoulder while Shouto is distracted with signing the leave forms. “I must insist, your bag seems quite heavy.” Shouto makes a clearly frustrated noise. Iida ignores him, guiding Shouto with a hand at his back cheerily towards the door. “It is your birthday, after all! Come, we have much to discuss!”

“I’m supposed to catch a train back to Tokyo,” Shouto says, apologetic. Iida’s enthusiasm doesn’t waver. “I’m sorry, Iida. It’s good to see you, but we’ll have to catch up another time.”

“Nonsense!” A few of the other hotel residents startle at his voice. Shouto pulls his All Might cap further down his face. “Plans have been arranged for you already.”

“Plans.” Shouto repeats, flatly.

“Yes!” Iida chops his hands through the air for effect. He seems unhindered by Shouto’s bag hanging off his shoulder. “We are already behind schedule, so we must make haste. Follow me, please!”

He takes off with Shouto’s bag: the bag that holds all of his travel belongings, including his wallet, which means he can’t buy a ticket for the train. Cursing under his breath, Shouto chases after him.

Iida isn’t hard to spot. He’s a good head taller than most of the people meandering around the hotel entrance. It helps that he’s waving his arms theatrically; a blur of motion in the corner of Shouto’s eye.

“I am sure you have lots of questions,” Iida says, as Shouto approaches. “Which I will dutifully answer when I can.” He steps forward towards the curb, opening up the trunk of a gleaming silver car that Shouto took no notice of before. He has a car, apparently. A very nice car. Shouto isn’t someone who knows a lot about cars, but even he can see the car is high-end. It probably cost a fortune.

Eyeing the ING brand logo on the license plate, Shouto guesses it probably cost a fortune to anyone who isn’t Pro Hero Ingenium.

All of this reeks of Midoriya’s scheming. The question last night asking when he’d check out, the
not-so-surprise-party, Iida’s sudden appearance...

Iida informs him, helpfully, “You will find snacks and refreshments by your seat if you are hungry. I brought a pillow, as well, in case you needed to ---”

“Iida,” Shouto interrupts. “What is going on.”

Iida snaps the trunk closed, side-stepping the question easily. “We must leave now if we’re to beat the midday rush.”

Shouto sighs. He opens up his phone and scrolls through his contacts, searching for answers. A message pop ups at the top of his screen, and upon opening it, all the pieces slot into place.

From Midoriya Izuku:

Hey! iida should be meeting you in the lobby soon. don’t worry about catching the train, Iida is bringing a ride.

He is also under strict orders not to reveal anything so DON’T ASK HIM.

Also, happy birthday! I’ll call you later when ur on the road ;-0

To Midoriya Izuku:

im going to turn your room into my new gym. you are going to sleep on a yoga mat

Midoriya’s reply comes instantly.

From Midoriya Izuku:

Fine by me

Now I can get stay fit and catch up on sleep

:-)

Damn him.

“Todoroki-kun!” Iida calls again, this time at the driver side door. “We’re on a bit of a tight schedule, I’m afraid.”

“Coming,” Todoroki says, slipping the phone into his pocket. He slides into the passenger seat. Iida steps in on the other side and sits down, buckling up and starting the engine.

They sit for a moment. Iida says, carefully, “Todoroki-kun, your seatbelt.”

Shouto stares at the offending item. As spitefully as he can, he buckles in. Satisfied, Iida signals with his blinker as he pulls away from the curb. Shouto closes his eyes and leans back in the cool leather seat. The drive from Musutafu to Tokyo is long, and Shouto knows this drive is going to be exceptionally long.

Around the time they escape the worst of the downtown traffic, Iida cuts off his own work rambling and one-sided discussion about the state of heroic affairs. He glances over at Shouto, barely taking his eyes off the road. “Is there something the matter?”

“No,” Shouto grunts. “Besides the discovery you and Midoriya are traitors.”

“I hardly think our actions ---”

“Midoriya I can understand. But you, Iida.” Shouto stares at his profile. “I expected better from you.”
Iida taps the wheel. The last time Shouto drove with Iida at the wheel was shortly after Iida got his license. Back then, he was very assertive about driving and safety so there’s no chance he would risk taking his hands off the wheel. Wild gestures are reduced to small finger motions. “I swore an oath of secrecy to Midoriya-kun…” At that, Shouto huffs. “...but I can tell you it will be held at Creati’s Agency. It is arranged as a ten year anniversary celebration for Class 3-A. The date so happens to be a small coincidence.”

“Coincidence,” Shouto runs a hand through his hair, frowning as it falls back over his eyes. He needs a haircut. “Like anything Midoriya does is by coincidence.”

Iida does take his eyes off the road this time. Iida’s always been a very expressive person. Over exaggerated, like all the emotions inside of him are bursting out of his skin at every possible moment. It makes him very easy to read, and Shouto reads his hesitation like someone would read a glowing sign in the middle of a dark alley. “Forgive me, if this question is out of line, but is everything alright between you and Midoriya-kun?”

Shouto forces a look of indifference. “I’m not sure what you mean. We’re not fighting. I’m not really upset with him for the party, but I find his methods…”

“Unorthodox, yes.” Iida agrees, gaze sliding back to the road. “Although I sense there is more to it. Will the two of you be having words, later?”

“We’ll be having words.” Shouto’s tone sours. “A lot of words.”

Iida’s attention remains on the road, but the expression on his profile softens. “It is good you are putting forth the effort to communicate! I am sure if you speak with Midoriya-kun, you will resolve your differences.” Shouto doesn’t know what to say to that, so he lightly hums in agreement. “Good communication is vital, after all, when maintaining a stable relationship with your significant other!”

Shouto’s hair catches fire on his left side. Iida shouts in alarm, although the car doesn’t swerve. Their speed reduces significantly, dropping behind the cars in the lanes alongside them. Shouto pats out his smoldering hair with his right hand. Iida gradually increases their speed, catching up with the regular traffic.

In the most neutral tone he can muster given his (embarrassingly) strong reaction, Shouto says, “Midoriya and I aren’t in a relationship.”

“Oh!” The car engine thrums under his seat. Iida is leaning on the gas with more vigor than Shouto expected out of him, considering his nature about safe driving. “My apologies for jumping to conclusions. Ochaco-san informed me you and Midoriya-kun were involved, and I wrongly assumed --”

“She told you what?” Shouto really needs a coffee. A really big coffee.

Iida’s exuberant energy falters. “Ochaco-san...told me Midoriya-kun stayed all these months in Tokyo for you. He’s living in your apartment, is he not?” Shouto bites the inside of his cheek. He thinks back to the conversation with his mother, It’s complicated, and her cryptic reply. This conversation with Iida echoes that unsettling feeling of stepping onto uneven ground. Unbalanced. Like Iida and his mother knew something he didn’t.

Iida hums thoughtfully. “Well, Ochaco-san and I firmly held the belief the two of you were in a relationship. We thought you were hiding it for some reason. However, if you weren’t actually romantically involved, it does explain quite a lot.”
“And…” He cringes inwardly. Shouto isn’t sure he wants to know the answer, because it’s more likely to cause a second outburst. Hopefully he doesn’t freeze half of Iida’s car. “...why did the two of you think we were dating?”

Iida answers with a question of his own; “Why is Midoriya living with you?” In another life, Iida would’ve made a great lawyer. Shouto knows there’s a reason he made a good Class President, and an even better leader -- he knows how to ask the right kinds of questions. It’s why he wins every debate, and why the press fears him.

Shouto knows the press will never fear him the way they fear Iida. Iida is too sharp witted for them to handle.

This does not bode well for Shouto either.

“We have an arrangement,” Shouto answers, after a stretch of uncomfortable silence passes between them. “Midoriya and I, that is. He’s staying at my apartment, because I asked him to.” That’s an overly simplified explanation. Bracing himself, he continues, “We are not involved romantically --” He hates how his stomach twists at the word. “-- or otherwise.”

“But you wish to be.” Iida lifts his eyes level with the mirror, glancing over for a heartbeat, before looking away. “Unless, I presumed incorrectly once again.”

Face burning, Shouto turns to the window. In a low voice almost swallowed up by the hum of the engine, he murmurs, “You’re not wrong.”

Iida hmpfs. Shouto startles at the sound. “That does complicate matters, I suppose.”

Shouto’s mind feels like it’s splitting in two. On one side, he’s trying not to internally combust at Iida’s bold statement and an audio loop of the words “But you wish to be” echoing throughout every corner of his mind. The rational half of his brain is desperately wrestling for control and trying to keep his fire or ice creating any permanent damage to Iida’s car. Clearing his throat, he prompts Iida, “Complicates them how?”

“Your situation with Midoriya.” Iida summarizes it so simply, like that’s all there is to it. “Have you, at all, indicated your interest in pursuing a relationship of a romantic nature with Midoriya?”

“No,” Shouto says curtly. “I don’t plan to, either.” He turns back to the window so he doesn’t have to look at the expression on Iida’s face, and Iida can’t see his either.

“Do you know why Ochaco-san and I believed the two of you to be in a relationship?” Shouto’s hand twitches. “You asked the question, and I will answer it should you still wish to know.”

Turning away from the window, he looks back at Iida. There’s no judgement in his face. No aggressive concern, either; a direct contrast from Uraraka’s interrogation. “Sure,” he says, because he’s never been one to back down from the truth. The truth is ugly, uncomfortable: one more burden of knowledge surely can’t keep him up at night anymore than the other thoughts rattling around in his brain.

“While I can’t recall her exact wording,” Iida lifts one hand from the wheel, adjusting his glasses and quickly returning it to the wheel. “Ochaco-san said she recognized the look of someone with affection for Midoriya-kun.” Allowing Shouto a moment to digest the answer, Iida continues, “I believe having experienced such fondness for Midoriya in the past, she was able to identify yours as well.”

Iida clears his throat. “And I, too, perceived your affections for Midoriya given my, own, ah,
history of affection towards him.” Shouto blinks slowly, processing.

“Oh,” he says, understanding.

“While Ochaco-san and I have discussed our feelings in the past, we’ve maintained they are no longer present. I can assure you neither of us have any intention of creating a rivalry with you. We care very much for Midoriya-kun,” Iida narrows his eyes. “Hence our involvement, as we believed his relationship with you was making him unhappy. I must apologize for assuming unfairly of you, and I deeply regret not asking directly.”

Shouto bites the inside of his cheek. “It’s fine, Iida. Really.”

Iida merges off the highway. Occupied with navigating, Iida returns his focus to driving. Shouto returns his gaze to the window. He doesn’t wish to pry, as Iida didn’t ask for details about his -- affections -- for Midoriya, so Shouto stewed in his own quiet consideration.

“It is best you speak to Ochaco-san,” Iida suggests, as they pull into the parking garage behind Shouto’s apartment. “If you are willing.”

Shouto massages the inside of his palm with his thumb; a nervous tic he now realizes he picked up from Midoriya. “I will. Soon.”

Iida nods, and turns off the engine. “I am glad we had this discussion. It is good for friends to address things like this. Ah,” he flips his wrist to check the watch on the inside. “We’re right on time! Excellent.”

“On time for what?” Shouto assumes he won’t get a real answer.

“You must change for the party! It would be impolite to dress so casually.”

Shouto withholds his sigh, following Iida out of the garage and towards his building. There’s thankfully no paparazzi or fans outside his apartment today -- although it’s likely he’ll run into some at Momo’s building.

Wordlessly, Iida follows him to the elevator. Shouto invites him into his apartment with a nod, while Iida slips off his shoes at the door.

“I’ll go change,” Shouto says, gesturing to the couch. “You can watch tv, get some water, whatever. Kitchen’s yours.”

Iida thanks him and sits down on the couch, back stiff. Shouto swings by the counter to get his own glass of water, pausing at the slip of folded paper sitting innocently in the middle. He picks it up, unfolds it, and reads the message inside.

Midoriya’s familiar messy scrawl tugs on the space below his navel. A familiar pull he’s grown accustomed to when it comes to things relating to Midoriya.

Shouto --

_I hope your drive with Iida was good!_

_Sorry I didn’t have time to call I ran into some complications at work. Don’t worry, I’m fine_

_Try not to act so grumpy. This party isn’t just for you_

_I made sure nobody brought gifts, so you can relax_
See you soon

Make sure you wear something nice :)

-- Midoriya

Shouto tucks the note into his pocket, even though he knows there’s no way Iida can read it from where he is. His face warms, controlled by the press of his right hand to his left, willing the flush to retreat. Control yourself, he begs. Please, just for tonight.

He flees upstairs to shower. He dials the knob all the way to the right to clear his head. The heat on his left withdraws and he steps out, shivering, before his body temperature self-regulates.

Make sure you wear something nice, he thinks. Right.

Iida is still sitting on the couch when he returns. He’s typing away on his phone with a frightening intensity. The TV is off, and Iida startles at Shouto’s polite cough.

“Good! We’re still on schedule.” His eyes flicker over Shouto’s choice of wardrobe. He nods, approving. “Is there anything you wish to take with you before we leave?”

“No,” Shouto says, lifting his keys where he left them on the counter. “Let’s get this over with.” Iida launches into a speech about making good impressions and self motivation. On the elevator down, Shouto says, “Thank you, Iida.”

Iida’s whole expression brightens. “You are very welcome! Driving was absolutely no hassle at all. If you ever need a --”

“I didn’t mean the ride.” Shouto lifts his gaze from the floor numbers to Iida. “You’re a good friend, Iida.”

Shouto watches Iida complete a frantic series of arm waves. “Thank you, Todoroki-kun,” he says, sounding incredibly touched. “You, as well, are an admirable friend.”

Iida relies on Shouto’s navigation from the apartment to Creati’s Agency. Shouto tells him he can park in the front, even though Iida frets about building code and emergency protocol. “Nobody’s going to ticket your car,” Shouto promises. “Momo knows the security staff here. They’ll leave your car alone.”

“It doesn’t seem proper to leave it in such a --” Shouto walks towards the building. He knows he and Iida could argue about the parking placement until Iida exhausts himself. As expected, Iida doesn’t notice his departure until Shouto is already in the lobby. Iida doesn’t seem too offended at Shouto’s abrupt departure, but he frowns and lectures Shouto on proper conversation etiquette.

They’re not alone in the lobby. He spots his fellow 3-A graduates mingling by the elevator, waving or nodding as Shouto passes.

“HEY, CLASS PREZ!” Ashido shouts over the crowd, bouncing on her toes. The Pro Heroes hovering around her wince at the sound. “YOU GOT BIRTHDAY BOY?”

Shouto frowns at the title. Iida chases her down, likely to lecture her about volume control. “You may go on ahead, Todoroki-kun!” Iida offers, as he stalks off towards Ashido. “Ochaco-san texted me and informed me they are ready for you upstairs!”

Sighing, he makes for the elevator. The former students lingering in the lobby take no notice of
him, occupied with chatting or catching up with their other classmates. The elevator ride to the eleventh floor seems longer than usual. He wonders if that’s because he hasn’t entered Creati’s building since the last day of his contract. Although it’s only been a few weeks since he emptied his office.

Uraraka is waiting outside the elevator when he steps out. “Todoroki-kun!” She exclaims. “Happy birthday!”

“Please don’t,” Shouto says tiredly. Uraraka ignores him, grabbing his wrist and leading him towards the staff lockers. She buzzes with energy, even though the excitement in her face fades and settles into something more stern.

“I got your text,” she starts, biting her lip. “And Iida-kun mentioned you guys talked in the car on the way here. He said -- he said it was important.”

“Yes,” Shouto says. “I wanted to talk to you about the last time you were in Tokyo. The night you asked me about what was going on between Midoriya and I.” Uraraka nods slowly. “Iida told me you thought we were dating.”

She doesn’t frown, but her brows pull together. “And?”

“We aren’t...” Shouto says, carefully. “...in that kind of relationship. That night I wasn’t fully aware of my --” Forcing the next word out of his mouth takes much more effort than the rest of the sentence. “-- feelings for Midoriya. I didn’t realize until after, and then your questions made much more sense.”

“Oh,” Uraraka says, her face flashing from sympathetic to mortified. “Oh no! I interrogated you on your feelings for Deku-kun and I just assumed you realized. Then Deku-kun wouldn’t tell me why he was living at your apartment, and I just assumed you two were dating and didn’t want to make a big deal about it. Oh,” Her hands fly to her mouth, realizing the weight of Shouto’s confession. “...I’m so sorry.”

Shouto’s laugh surprises both of them. “I appreciate you looking out for Midoriya,” he says, summoning the easy smile he’s practiced by mimicking Midoriya. “It’s not a big deal, I didn’t lose too much sleep over it.”

Uraraka springs forward and hugs him. “I feel so bad, though! You must’ve been so confused, I’m so sorry.” Shouto pats her shoulder, like his mother does when she’s comforting him.

“Iida also mentioned how you figured it out,” Shouto says, when Uraraka finally stops squeezing him in half. “And how...he figured it out.”

Uraraka clears her throat. “Yeah, that’s...yeah. Well, I’m glad we’re all on the same page now.” Her expression twists, sly, filled with mischief. “Now you have somebody to talk to when you’re pining over Deku-kun.”

“I am not --”

Shouto’s snappish reply is interrupted by a cry at the other end of the hallway. “There you are!” Momo plows forward, sweeping him and Uraraka into a hug. The hug doubles as a carrying method; as she lifts them and walks them towards the cafeteria.

“Please put me down.” Shouto sighs.

“Absolutely not!” Momo beams. “No running off this time!”
“Can you put me down, at least?” Uraraka pleads. Momo shakes her head, laughing. Shouto thinks she’s just showing off.

Momo deposits them at the door. “Almost everyone is inside,” she explains. “We’ve been waiting for you. Oh,” Catching Shouto’s arm before he walks in, pulling him back while Uraraka walks ahead. “And happy birthday, Shouto-kun.”

“Thank you,” Shouto replies, because that’s the nice thing to do. Momo laughs again at his expression.

“Deku-kun said you’re under clear orders not to be a grouch, tonight.” She lowers her voice. “Also, don’t give him a hard time when you see him, okay?”

“What does that --” She shoves him through the door before he’s finished asking the question.

The cafeteria is transformed; streamers, balloons, dangling strips of gold and silver all hanging from the ceiling or around chairs. He recognizes most of the faces among the crowd, some unfamiliar. He recognizes a few from Class 3-B, and some former students in the Support and Gen Ed courses. His old class takes up most of the room, with a few faces missing.

Iida appears at his side. “I’ve been searching for you. Ochaco-san said she wanted to speak with you, but I didn’t expect you’d be so long.”

“We cleared a few things up,” Shouto says. “I think we’re good now.”

Iida nods, gesturing towards the table of food. “Would you care for something to eat?”

“No, I’m good.” He hasn’t spotted a dash of dark curls or a bright smile yet. Among the faces in the crowd, the one he wants to see isn’t among them. “Have you seen Midoriya?”

“Midoriya-kun is sitting with Jirou-san, I believe.” Her name draws faint alarm alongside Midoriya’s. Those two are a bad combination when left alone. Jirou is probably teasing the life out of him.

“Thanks.” Shouto says, already pushing his way through the aisle.

“I’ll leave you to it, then. Oh, and happy birthday -- !” Shouto dodges out of earshot for the end of the exclamation.

He doesn’t find Jirou. Or Midoriya, for that matter.

There’s no sign of Jirou or Midoriya by the food, or on the other side of the cafeteria where the portable DJ is set up. He drifts along the food table, occasionally peering between the cracks to see if Jirou or Midoriya are hiding under them. Kaminari winks and grins at him by the juice bowl.

“You want some?”

“No, thank you,” Shouto says.

He finally spots Midoriya by the second hallway, the one leading to the bathrooms. Midoriya’s back is turned, and Shouto waits to call his name until he’s right behind him.

“Midoriya,” he says, the relief in his voice rising and vanishing when Midoriya spins around.

Midoriya winces at his expression. Shouto isn’t really surprised, but his earlier irritation at Midoriya resurfaces full force.
“What in -- *what* happened to your arm?” A memory flashes across his mind, Midoriya’s oddly scrawled note on the counter. *I ran into some complications at work. Don’t worry, I’m fine.*

“I-I’m fine, don’t worry about it!” Midoriya assures him with a smile and a nervous laugh. “Don’t look at me like that. This is a happy day, it’s your birthday!”

“You and I have very different definitions of the word *fine*.” Shouto reaches his hand out to touch the cast; he has no control over the action. “What happened?” he grits out.

“I got caught by surprise, b-but it’s just a small fracture! A small one. And a few broken fingers.” Shouto’s eye twitches. He fends back the rising ever present urge to strangle Midoriya or kiss him senseless. Clearing his throat, Shouto breaks his gaze from Midoriya’s face to look at the food table.

“We’re not done talking about this.” Shouto promises darkly. Twisting around, he announces, “I’m hungry. Let’s get food.” Midoriya blinks at the swift transition, but he doesn’t complain when Shouto steers him towards the food tables.

“I’ll hold your plate,” Shouto offers, while Midoriya struggles to pick one from the pile. “Here.” He leans over to grab a second plate, which turns out to be a mistake. Midoriya freezes at the close proximity. Shouto is vividly reminded of a memory from the cafe, *If I turned my head we would kiss.* Suitably flustered, he retreats with the second plate in hand, turning his head to hide his face.

Midoriya gestures with his working hand at the dishes he wants on his plate. His calorie intake is, as usual, mind boggling. “How do you eat all of this?” Shouto wonders aloud.

Midoriya pats his own chest. “I’ve got a vigorous exercise routine.” Staring for a beat too long at the place Midoriya patted, Shouto forces his gaze back to the noodles. His face feels like it’s on fire. Why must Midoriya always wear tight shirts? Does he not know how to shop for clothing? Mechanically, he spoons more noodles onto his own plate. It’s a steadily growing pile that already exceeds a reasonable amount. He’s never going to eat all of these noodles.

“Shouto?” Midoriya asks. The concern in his voice registers Shouto’s attention. “Is something wrong?”

“No,” Shouto says, struggling to keep his tone even. “Why?”

“Your hair is smoking.” So it is.

Shouto replies with a choked, “I’ll take care of it,” and Midoriya thankfully drops it.

Juggling Midoriya’s plate and his own, they claim a table on the opposite side of the DJ booth. Uraraka joins them with three glasses; one water and two that look like the juice he saw in the bowl by Kaminari. Shouto doesn’t think he’s ever been more relieved to see her in his entire life. She dissolves the weird tension between Midoriya and him in an instant.

“I see you finally found Deku-kun. Jirou told me he’s been hiding in the corner all night to hide his arm.” Midoriya grimaces at the comment. Shouto gestures to the chair beside him, and she takes it gratefully. “Enjoying yourselves so far?”

“*Enjoyment* is too strong of a word.” Shouto says. “Perhaps *bearable* is more suitable.” Uraraka laughs, sliding one of the juice glasses to him. She pushes the water towards Midoriya.

“Come on,” Midoriya whines.
“Kaminari-kun spiked the juice, and you’re on painkillers.” She nudges her glass against Shouto’s. “Cheers, birthday boy.”

A third plate of food settles next to Midoriya. Shouto lifts his head to spot Iida, who greets Uraraka with his usual enthusiasm. Midoriya shifts; Iida hasn’t noticed his injury yet.

Iida doesn’t take long to spot the cast. “Midoriya-kun!” he raises his voice, startling a few people at the table over. “What happened to your arm?”

Midoriya slides down in his chair, like he’s trying to disappear under the table. “It’s just a fracture,” he mumbles. “I-It’s not a big deal.”

Iida nearly smacks the person behind him when he raises his arm to perform the signature arm chops while he lectures Midoriya. Midoriya sinks further and further down his chair.

“Lay off him, Iida-kun,” Uraraka’s reprimand is undercut by her own giggle. “He already got a lecture from Momo-san. I’m sure Todoroki-kun gave him one too.”

“I am expressing my concern for his apparent lack of concern for his own well-being --”

“I am an adult,” Midoriya grumbles, and Shouto has to strain to hear him over the other chatter in the room. “I am older than all of you.”

“Age has no bearing on the --” Uraraka and Iida speak at the same time, with Uraraka’s correction winning out. “Yeah, like a month older than Iida-kun.”

Midoriya sticks his tongue out at her. Uraraka erupts into peals of laughter, Shouto chuckling softly beside her. Iida finally relaxes into his chair.

“Did you enjoy your trip to Musutafu?” Uraraka asks, while Iida frets over Midoriya’s utensil issue. Midoriya looks exasperated at the treatment, but Shouto has absolutely no sympathy.

“Yes, my mother was very happy to see me.” Barring his unfortunate interaction with Endeavor, but that’s not something to bring up now. “I’m going to try and see her more often, now that I’ve got free time.”

“That’s great!” Uraraka beams, all teeth. “Any movement on the new career choice?”

“Not yet. Waiting for a response, but I would be surprised if I got an answer before the end of this year.”

“That’s a long wait.”

Shouto offers her a small smile. Talking to her now is much easier now that they have an understanding. “It’ll be worth it.”

Midoriya and Iida’s disagreement reaches their side of the table. “Iida-kun, please, I can hold my own fork --”

Uraraka stands, offering her arm for Shouto. “Iida-kun brought another bottle of whiskey, I saw it by the drinks. Want to go find it?”

“Please,” Shouto accepts her arm, leaving Midoriya and Iida’s bickering in the background.
foreground. Pro Heroes Chargebolt, Earphone Jack, Alien Queen, and Cellophane are posing in the background and holding plates of food.

Photo 2: Red Riot catching a surprised Pro Hero Creati eating cake mid-bite.

Photo 3: Creati smashing the remainder of her cake into Red Riot’s face.

Photo 4: Red Riot with his arm across Pro Hero Ingenium, while Pro Heroes Uravity and Deku raise a peace sign. Todoroki Shouto, former Pro Hero Entropy, is squeezed between Uravity and Deku while wearing a birthday hat. He looks annoyed at the hat, with one hand reaching over as if to pull it off.

Liked by herodeku, iida.t, radiojack, queenofaliens, iamdynamite, therealsteel, and 1,829 others

rredriot: Thank you @icreati for hosting another AWESOME 3A reunion. Also happy birthday to this guy @tshouto even though hes going to hate I mentioned it :-)

View all 49 comments

>mido_ia - #2&3: photos taken just before and after a tragedy

>tanakaa - happy birthday entropy!!!!!!!

>therealsteel - Hope to come next time. Looks like fun
View all 4 replies

>>rredriot - Totally! Hope to see you there

>reddiamond29 - no dynamite?
View all 2 replies

>>rredriot - Dynamite was on patrol&couldnt make it this time!

>iida.t - Thank you. Please remember to send me copies for our reunion album

1 HOUR AGO

Iida, being the designated driver, delivers Shouto and Midoriya back to Shouto’s apartment. Uraraka fights to reclaim Shouto’s left arm, refusing to release her grip. She had a bit more to drink than Shouto. That was deliberate, even though Shouto would’ve much rather drowned his woes in fancy Japanese whisky. He can’t trust himself around Midoriya sober. There are limits to his self restraint, and he has no desire to test them after a few drinks.

“I will make sure she is returned safely to her hotel room, do not worry!” Iida assures them. “It was very good seeing you both. I am sure we will cross paths again soon. Enjoy the rest of your evening!”

“Buh-bye,” Uraraka giggles and slumps into Iida. Iida maneuvers her back into the car.

Midoriya slides his arm into Shouto’s. Shouto tries not to stiffen at the contact because he knows Midoriya will certainly notice. “I’m a bit tired,” Midoriya explains. “It’s been a long day.”

Shouto gives him a curt nod, guiding Midoriya to the elevator. Midoriya leans more into Shouto’s side while they stand in the lift. Shouto lets him, relaxing into the faint warmth emanating from his side.

Midoriya trips over the entrance, shaking off Shouto’s concerned look. He shuffles over to the couch and collapses onto it, splaying his legs and functional arm out like a delirious starfish. He closes his eyes, sighing. Content.
“You have a bed,” Shouto reminds him.


The couch is really too small for two adult men. Shouto awkwardly braces himself against the arm of the couch, trying to limit the points of contact between him and Midoriya to an appropriate amount.

“Did you enjoy it?” Midoriya asks, eyes still closed. Shouto almost thought he fell asleep. “The party.”


Midoriya raises his good arm and taps Shouto’s arm. “You and Ochaco-san are getting along.”

Shouto murmurs, “We’ve found something to agree on.”

“That’s good.” Midoriya sighs. “You guys were weird, last time.” He pokes the space between Shouto’s arm and his ribs. His hand drops there, too tired to continue. “And even Iida-kun seemed to spend a lot more time with you. Had a good talk in the car?”

“You could say that.” A question he has prepared on the tip of his tongue flies free. “Why do you call me Shouto?”

Midoriya’s entire body stiffens. He carefully withdrawing his hand from where he left it resting on Shouto’s arm. Slowly, he rises off the couch to meet Shouto at eye level.

“D-Did you not want me to?” Besides the slight stutter at the beginning of the word, Midoriya’s expression is neutral. Shouto spots the tips of his ears reddening -- there. Midoriya’s careful composure slips, vulnerable only to him and the quiet of his apartment.

“That’s not what I said.” Shouto says. “I asked why -- why you kept calling me by that name after the day at the cafe.”

Midoriya’s entire body stiffens. He carefully withdraws his hand from where he left it resting on Shouto’s arm. Slowly, he rises off the couch to meet Shouto at eye level.

“D-Did you not want me to?” Besides the slight stutter at the beginning of the word, Midoriya’s expression is neutral. Shouto spots the tips of his ears reddening -- there. Midoriya’s careful composure slips, vulnerable only to him and the quiet of his apartment.

“That’s not what I said.” Shouto says. “I asked why -- why you kept calling me by that name after the day at the cafe.”

Midoriya blinks. The flush on his ears is working its way onto his cheeks. His working hand clenches, white knuckles showing. “R-right. The cafe. T-that’s where it started.”

“If I remember correctly, yes.” Shouto’s face feels alarmingly warm. He hopes his hair doesn’t catch fire again. “Even after the distraction was over, you kept going.”

He watches the wave of emotions flicker across Midoriya’s face, too fast to name and too foreign to place. “I…” Midoriya swallows. Shouto hates that his eyes trace the movement, greedy, before he forces his gaze back to Midoriya’s face. “I-I wanted to. I know I didn’t ask, but it’s like once I
started, it became a habit. You never said anything, b-but if it made you uncomfortable, I’ll stop.”

Shouto parses through his answer, testing their defenses, turning them over in his mind and trying to find something else. He wonders if this fruitless search for more answers is wishful thinking. Maybe he’s projecting. Maybe Midoriya means what he says at face value; although Midoriya says so many things that come with hidden messages it’s hard to tell where the illusions end and where the reality begins.

“Do you want me to stop?” The question startles him a bit. Midoriya says the question like he’s searching for something else, too. Like his question is a double edged sword, and Shouto’s response decides which side he’ll use to cut him down.

Shouto decides to take a step forward. No leaping, at least not yet. He doesn’t think either of them are ready for that. Or maybe Shouto is the coward in this scenario. He takes the tiniest inch towards the ever-present edge and says, “No. Shouto is fine.”

Midoriya says, “Okay,” and lapses into silence. The rigid hand clenched at his side relaxes.

Patting Midoriya’s (very firm--nope, forget it) thigh, Shouto stands from the couch. He offers his hand to Midoriya, even though he knows Midoriya is capable of standing on his own, even with a broken arm. Midoriya takes it, like he always does.

“Do you want to call me Izuku?” Midoriya asks. His face twists, uncomfortable, before he amends, “I-I mean, it’s only fair! You d-don’t have to. I-It’s up to you.” He rubs a scarred hand over his face, peering out between his fingers.

“Midoriya,” Shouto pauses, closing his mouth and running his tongue along the inside of his teeth as he considers. “It’s fine. I’ll...think about it.” The best answer he can give. It’s not a no, but it’s not a yes, either. He wants to say yes. He keeps himself up some nights rolling that name across his tongue and tasting every ounce of it.

Tonight was good...in that it peeled back a few of the unnamable layers between him and Midoriya. He doesn’t want to put too much pressure on the exposed skin there. He’s afraid of what will happen if he pulls too fast; if the entire thing will unravel at once or tear from the force of it.

Shouto’s also not sure how well his self-control will hold up if he uses that name.

“Goodnight,” Midoriya waves him off as he heads towards his room. He argued he didn’t need help up the stairs, but Shouto watched him stumble on the first step and ended the discussion there. “You’re making your own breakfast tomorrow.”

In a moment of weakness, Shouto reluctantly draws his hand away from Midoriya’s back. He turns to walk towards his own room, catching at quiet “Hey,” and a featherlight touch against his wrist. He twists his neck back around to look at Midoriya, who closed the distance between them while Shouto wasn’t paying attention.

The softness in Midoriya’s expression makes his skin feel like it’s boiling. His heart tumbles down and lands somewhere in his stomach. Every part of his body freezes, and the skin where Midoriya brushes his wrist feels both too hot and too cold at the same time.

Smiling gently, Midoriya says, “Happy birthday, Shouto.” His touch retreats, returning to his own room and closing the door behind him without a sound.

Shouto pushes down the sudden swell of disappointment that sinks in his stomach. His dreams are troubled, filled with thunderous sound and colors that hurt his eyes. He feels like he missed
something, somewhere, even though he knows the answer.

ENTRODEKU FANS PSA

gaydeku: hey everyone! So everyone pretty much knows im basically one of the biggest todorinya/entrodeku stans out there but it was brought to my attention a ton of fans have taken to spamming deku and entropy’s social media with questions about their relationship.

- Stop demanding answers about their relationship. As fans, we are not entitled to know every detail about their lives. We should appreciate them sharing these moments with us, as they can just as easily stop sharing them if it gets out of hand. dont harass them.

- Deku and Todoroki (Entropy) are REAL people! (as a side note, writing fanfiction about real life people is just...weird.)

- Please stop asking questions about deku’s personal life at cons. It’s different when interviewers/magazines ask these questions and publish his responses because he has control over what is displayed and it’s a professional setting. It’s also really disrespectful. Just don’t do it, thanks

- [VERY IMPORTANT] >>> Their relationship is technically ALL SPECULATION. I know me and @todoshotos are responsible for the 15k meta post about the “entrodeku conspiracy” and I do very firmly believe there is more to their relationship than they’ve revealed publicly, but i’m not going to treat it as something Real. i make plenty of jokes in the tags abt it being real but i want to clarify those are all jokes. At this point in time there is no proof that 100% confirms theyre dating

- Todoroki (entropy) has never publicly said anything abt his sexuality. I know it’s funny to joke, but don’t slap him with questions on twitter every 2 seconds asking if he’s gay. It’s mostly The Straights™ i see doing that but lgbt fans please consider your own comfort levels about announcing your sexuality to strangers on the internet and call it out when you see it

- Deku is bisexual (x.x) and while he’s been comfortably out for a while it is absolutely NOT okay to ask him weird and inappropriate questions about his sex life/dating history. Some of you are really weirdly overly invested in all of this and really i BEG you to go outside and talk to a real human person

tl;dr: please treat these two incredible heroes (and all other heroes) with respect and don’t act like freaks. please

lesbianiconcreati: ^^^

dynaamite: the same goes with fanart im sure heroes are used to people making fanart about them in costume but when i see some of the stuff yall make i gotta ask...why…

todoshotos: >> IMPORTANT <<

ear-phonejack: i stan all my fellow intellectuals in this thread

gayredriots: !!!!!!!

yaoi-fan4-lyfe: Its just fiction Lol

gaydeku: Fujos Shall Perish Immediately Under The Strength Of My Gay Fists
The Pro Hero alert on his work phone goes off around ten. Shouto slept in unintentionally. He’s not a morning person by any means, but the familiar urgent tone has him out of bed and running towards the ringer in the span of a second.

He sees Midoriya’s hero name flash on the screen. His sleep-addled brain hesitates a second longer than usual at the name. Number Two Hero Deku doesn’t call for backup unless it’s urgent.

“Hey,” Midoriya greets him breathlessly, barely a moment after he accepted the call. “So, I’m in a bit of a situation. Some backup would be --” Loud shouts interrupt Midoriya’s end of the receiver. “-- really great.”

Shouto glares at the peeling drywall by his closet. “Midoriya,” Irritation claws at his throat. It’s too early for this. “I’m retired.”

“Yes!” Midoriya agrees cheerfully. “Think of this as, um, a grand finale to your career!” There’s a distant echo, and the sound of an explosion. “I’m sorry, but I’m a little tied down at the moment, and there’s too many civilians. I need you here.”

“Even if I wanted to, I’m not a licensed hero anymore. I can’t.” Shouto swallows. Anxiety pools in the pit of his stomach at the thought. Ever since he earned his provisional in his first year, he’s never had to worry about not being able to help at an incident. He has the power to do it, but legally -- he can’t interfere. This is the first time he’s come into conflict with that decision. He doubts it will be the last time.

“Your hero license won’t expire until the end of January, actually. I checked.” Shouto blinks. Chiding, Midoriya teases, “I wouldn’t put you in a position like that. You know I really wouldn’t call unless it was an emergency --” Midoriya cuts himself off to shout something, but it’s muffled by another explosion on the other end.

Defeated, Shouto sighs. “Fine. Text me the details, I’m on my way.”

“No time. Head to Creati’s Agency, I got you a ride. See you.” Midoriya drops the call, and Shouto stares at the dark screen for a moment before springing into action.

He opens his closet and drags out the case with his suit inside. Unfolding it, he lays it out on the bed. Shouto looks down at his hero uniform. Ugly sanitation worker suit, Jirou called it. Blue jumpsuit, vest, belt, boots. It looks the same as it did when he folded it up and locked it in the case.

He hasn’t brought out his Pro Hero Costume since the last day of his contract at Momo’s agency. Slipping it over his shoulders and zipping it up, it feels...strange. The costume hasn’t changed, but it doesn’t feel the same.

Right now isn’t the time for self reflection. He barely remembers to grab his keys before he dashes out of the door.

Midoriya’s “ride” is waiting for him in the emergency landing zone outside the agency building.
Kaminari flags him down with a wave, grinning from ear to ear.

“Hope you aren’t afraid of heights,” he says, as a greeting. “Pilot’s all set. They’re gonna drop us over the battle site.”

Shouto holds his questions until they’re in the helicopter and off the ground. “Midoriya didn’t have time to give me details,” he begins. “Can you fill me in?”

Kaminari nods, over-exaggerated. The headset on his ear shifts like it protests the motion. “Yeah, that’s probably a good idea.”

Kaminari launches into a run-down of the action zone: a villain with a Toxic Touch quirk felled an entire building a few blocks from the shore, in the downtown area. The Pro Hero at the scene, Froppy, pursued the villain towards the coast, as the villain claimed several hostages. A second villain appeared with a quirk that allowed them to generate heavy winds, and with the water nearby, typhoons. Froppy requested backup for a heavy hitter and alerted the city to sound their warning alarms. Deku, the biggest heavy hitter around, responded to the call and took off towards the coast. The third villain attack was recorded at a nearby power station with an unknown quirk. After attacking the power station and taking most of the city’s power off the grid, the last villain joined the fight. Deku called for more backup and asked for Chargebolt and Entropy.

Froppy’s transmitter stopped responding sometime between the call for backup and Shouto’s arrival at the agency.

“Deku is going to focus on the typhoon guy and the hostages. I’m assuming the unknown quirk has something to do with electricity,” Kaminari guesses. “Since Deku asked me to come in. Good thing I was in Tokyo this weekend for your party, I guess.”

That leaves the Toxic Touch villain to Shouto. Midoriya is better equipped for close range combat, so fighting someone with the ability to melt his skin isn’t a good match. Shouto should be able to neutralize whoever the villain is with ice. If he can’t, he’ll figure something else out.

Assuming Midoriya is able to hold out long enough for their arrival, that is.

He pushes that thought down out of sight. Deku is the Number Two Pro Hero. He’s fine.

From the window, Shouto spots Asui’s bright green uniform floating in the water a distance from the shore. Abandoning his seat and ignoring Kaminari’s squawk of alarm, he jumps out the side of the helicopter and dives in after her.

The water is startling, but the cold doesn’t bother him for long. He creates a small level of ice to stand on and skates across the surface of the water towards her body. Propelling himself forward with the ice behind him, he jumps in a second time to get closer.

She’s on her back, floating, and unconscious like he expected. Shouto carefully drags her body towards the small island of floating ice in the water. Asui stirs as he lifts her.

“Midoriya-chan is on the beach,” she croaks. “He’s fighting three on one, but I don’t know how long he can keep that up. I got picked up by the typhoon -- ribbit.”

“I’m sure he’s fine,” Shouto says, banishing the thought that creeps up behind him asking what about Midoriya’s arm. “You should stay here. The rescue teams are on their way, they’ll pick you up.”

“Be careful,” Asui warns him. Shouto nods and makes for the shore.
Finding Midoriya isn’t difficult. The beach looks like a bomb went off -- sand and rocks tossed in odd mounds and valleys. Midoriya is dodging the wind blasts and Kaminari is locked in a glowing duel with the third villain. The power grid, Shouto remembers. The villain must have drawn the energy from there and came to intercept the heroes and aid their accomplices to safety.

Kaminari doesn’t look like he needs help. Midoriya is occupied with the Typhoon villain. Leaving the villain with Toxic Touch…

Shouto narrowly dodges the hand that swipes across his head. In an instant, he shoots an enormous spire of ice, trapping the villain’s leg.

The villain curses, dropping a hand to the ice entrapping her. Her hands are what activates her quirk, then. The ice around her leg sizzles and melts, but with a twist of his heel he sends a surge of ice to the exact place he froze before.

He traps her other leg, and dodging under her swinging arm, taps her waist and freezes her into an angry ice sculpture. Leaving her hands exposed, she can’t touch the ice with her quirk and melt it. She can’t maneuver her wrists at an angle to tap the ice imprisoning her.

*That was almost too easy,* he thinks, but the relief lowers his guard. He hears Midoriya bellow a warning, and a moment later there’s a bright burst of pain at his back and then nothing.

---

HeroWatch @HeroWatch  
Three villains were apprehended at Wakaba, no civilians injured and all hostages are in stable condition. More details to come.
304 retweets | 928 favorites  
11:49 AM - 12 January X1

HeroWatch @HeroWatch  
Pro Heroes Froppy, Chargebolt, and Deku were recovered by rescue teams at the Wakaba Ward site. Former Pro Hero Entropy was involved as additional backup and received at a nearby hospital for treatment. #StaySafeHeroes  
298 retweets | 763 favorites  
12:02 PM - 12 January X1

dapt hunk @dftjleo  
@heroentropy @icreati isn’t entropy retired??????????  
11 retweets | 80 favorites  
12:05 PM - 12 January X1

I NEED A HERO @hold_m3  
Entropy is BACK babey!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!  
93 retweets | 104 favorites  
12:11 PM - 12 January X1

dynamite is #1 @yii0vi  
I doubt entropy would return to hero work after literally announcing he retired. They probably needed help and asked him since he was around. It aint that deep  
133 retweets | 293 favorites  
12:26 PM - 12 January X1

Yashi (no 1 deku stan) @DYashie  
did y’all SEE that fucking amazing punch deku used today it was fuckin SWEET
@PHJNews clarify: Deku took the backup request our agency received this morning from Froppy. After assessing the situation at the scene he rightfully called for +backup. Chargebolt and Entropy responded to the call. Entropy is retired, and he will not be returning to pro hero work at our agency or any pro hero agency in the future. Right now, he’s focused on recovery and he’s in stable condition at the hospital. Thank you for your kind thoughts and messages.

One of the first responder ambulance teams offers Midoriya a ride to the hospital on their way back. Tsuyu takes in the crumbling composure on his face and offers to join him.

Midoriya plays with his hands while they wait in the back of the ambulance. The cast on his arm is completely shredded, which means he’s going to need a new one. She doesn’t know when he received the injury, but it doesn’t seem to bother him now.

Kaminari promised to stay on the scene and finish talking with the police and the press. Tsuyu gave them her statement already, but she knows there’s a pile of paperwork sitting on her desk to file by the end of the day about the incident. She knows Midoriya has his own paperwork to suffer through, but it looks like the paperwork is the last thing on his mind. He barely spoke during the on site press briefing. He limited his responses to one word answers. The police didn’t press him too hard, and she doubts they’d hold a grudge against a hero with Midoriya’s renown.

“I’m sure he’s fine, Midoriya-chan,” Tsuyu reassures him. Midoriya doesn’t give any indication he hears her speak at all. She pats his leg to get his attention, and he jumps a foot off his chair. “You must not worry too much about Todoroki-chan.”

“I know,” Midoriya flexes his stiff fingers. There’s bruising on his knuckles from where he punched the villain with the typhoon quirk. “I-I know he’s fine. He’s fine.” He says it like he’s convincing himself into making it true.

Tsuyu waits in the lobby while Midoriya talks to the hospital staff. He promised Tsuyu he would get his arm recast after he found Todoroki. Ochaco texts her while she waits. She asks if Midoriya’s arm is okay, if Tsuyu is okay, and if she’s found Todoroki. Ochaco’s excessive texts are out of the ordinary. She rarely sends more than a few messages at a time.

“Tsuyu-chan!” Midoriya’s voice is easy to pick out among the crowd of rescue staff and nurses. He raises his hand to grab her attention, gesturing for her to follow.

Tsuyu sends her the hospital address, and tells her she’ll handle Midoriya’s well being in the meantime.

Midoriya commits to a quick pace. Tsuyu keeps up as not to lose him among the winding hallways and many rooms. At the last corner, Midoriya practically sprints down the ward and slides to a stop in front of the last door. Todoroki’s room, she assumes.

Todoroki’s injury was hardly life threatening, which explains his room placement. The energy shock he received stunned him at most. The medics on site were more concerned about the blood on his temple, indicating he smacked his head on something when he fell. The staff probably moved him from the Emergency Room to make room for the injured civilians and traumatized
hostages.

Midoriya’s hand trembles when he grabs the side of Todoroki’s bed. Todoroki is awake, blinking slowly at the ceiling. He doesn’t seem to notice her or Midoriya. Tsuyu guesses he has a concussion.

“Hey,” Midoriya says, softly. “Shouto, you with me?”

Todoroki turns his head, recognition brightening his face. “Midoriya,” he says slowly, like every part of his concentration is required to say just his name. “Are you alright?” His focus is solely on Midoriya, eyes wide and expectant. He looks at Midoriya like he’s seeing his face for the first time. Like he wants to absorb every detail in Midoriya’s face and memorize it.

Midoriya stares at him blankly. Then he laughs, and Tsuyu watches him thread Shouto’s fingers between his own (the hand not currently in a cast). “I feel like I should be the one asking that question, don’t you think?”

“Midoriya,” Todoroki repeats. The openness in his expression is a startling contrast from his usual cool demeanor. He doesn’t take his eyes off Midoriya. “I’m…” He frowns. “Dizzy.”

“I bet you are,” Midoriya’s smile widens. “The staff here said you had a pretty nasty concussion. Try to aim where you fall next time.” He’s joking, Tsuyu knows. From what she overheard in Kaminari’s report, Todoroki was struck in the back by a bolt of energy and flew a good distance before hitting the ground.

She also heard Midoriya blasted a new crater in the side of Wakaba Ward’s beach. She doubts that was a coincidence.

Todoroki nods solemnly, like that’s good advice. Tsuyu flickers her eyes between the two of them. “I am glad to see you are okay, Todoroki-chan,” she says. Todoroki turns and widens his eyes with surprise when he sees Tsuyu standing at the foot of his bed. That’s one awful concussion, Tsuyu thinks. Or…

“When can I leave?” Todoroki tugs the torn edge of fabric on Midoriya’s wrist. “I want to go home.”

“I’ll talk to the nurse,” Midoriya pats his arm, consoling. He peels Todoroki’s fingers off his hand one by one. “You rest up, okay?”

Tsuyu takes her cue to guide Midoriya out the door and observe him. If only to guarantee he makes good on his promise to get his arm recast. “See you later, Todoroki-chan.”

“Bye.” Todoroki lifts his arm to wave.

Outside the door, Midoriya chuckles. “The nurse told me he was pretty out of it,” he mutters, but is tone is light. Relieved. “But I wasn’t expecting just how out of it he would be.”

Tsuyu smiles. If Midoriya’s concern is abated then she can afford it. “He’s going to have a terrible headache, I’m sure, ribbit. Now, let’s get that arm of yours looked at.”

[Video: WAKABA WARD VILLAIN INCIDENT 12/1/X1.]

Thumbnail image: Pro Hero Chargebolt and Deku with microphones under their mouths, dirtied and costumes roughened. Chargebolt is smiling, while Deku’s signature smile is absent. His mouth
is pressed together in a thin line.]

Posted 8 hours ago by TSUbasal Subscribe
17k views

Recorded from Hero Nightly’s end of day incident report, with added media clips

Comments 157

TatsuTaste - 3 hours ago
Deku wasn’t smiling. At all.
View 10 replies
>n0nanon - i heard entropy was injured and i imagine he was p worried

DWYIGHT - 4 hours ago
Chargebolt: that was a pretty cool punch huh deku?
Deku: [staring off at the ocean for 12 seconds of complete air silence] ...yeah
Idk why but that part was just so funny
View 3 replies

fadedCombat - 2 hours ago
those clips of the fight tho...i would be absolutely STUNNEd if deku doesnt take #1 this year. there is literally no reason why he wouldnt. he took down two at once with a single punch. this guy is going to rewrite the history books about heroes
View 7 replies

Helium91 - 1 hour ago
deku fought the entire thing with his arm in a cast im just... #herogoals
View 15 replies
>Kyai Saki - NO THAT IS NOT GOALS. HE NEEDS TO STOP BREAKING HIS BONES I s2g
>>Neko_neko - what an icon

By Midoriya’s fifth apology, Shouto is ready to crawl out of bed and smother him with his own pillow.

“I-I’m so --” That’s number six. Shouto picks up the pen on his nightstand and throws it at him. Midoriya ducks it with a yelp. “H-hey! Don’t throw things at me. Use your words, not your -- arm to throw things.”

Shouto obliges him with a mutinous glare. “If you apologize one more time, I’ll turn your room into an ice skating rink.”

Shouto was released the night before with strict orders not to sleep more than a few hours at a time. Midoriya signed his release papers and promised to keep watch. Shouto would have never agreed had he known Midoriya would dedicate the time to sulking.

Midoriya shuffles forward, pitifully. He draws out his bottom lip, pouting. “I feel so bad, though…”

Shrugging, Shouto says, “It’s part of being a hero. Getting hurt comes with the job description.”

“But you’re retired! You’re not supposed to be getting hurt anymore.” Midoriya runs his hands through his hair, tugging at the ends like he wants to tear it out. Shouto absolutely does not find the mess he creates out of his curls adorable in anyway whatsoever.
The only bright side to this arrangement is that if Midoriya is watching Shouto, he can’t go out and get into fights with his mangled arm. He saw the mess Midoriya made of it at the scene, and he knew Midoriya could be unfortunately stubborn when it came to his own health. His relief was breathtaking when he learned Asui and Uraraka forced Midoriya to get his arm recast.

“Why pink?” Shouto asks, interrupting Midoriya’s guilty tirade.

Midoriya lifts his arm and stares at the color in surprise. “Oh. Ochaco-san picked the color, I think. I wasn’t really paying attention.”

“It suits you.” Shouto hates his brain-to-mouth filter sometimes. It’s not very good at it’s job.

Midoriya tilts his head, confused, but not offended. “U-uh. Thanks? I-I think?”

“You look good in a lot of colors, but pink is nice.” Might as well dig the hole deeper. Shouto clears his throat. Midoriya flushes the same hue as the cast.

“Good job handling the beach situation.” Work topics are good, safe territory. Although his wording could use some serious rephrasing: Good work not getting the shit beat out of you like I did. Cringing, he continues, “Calling for backup was the right call to make. How did you know about the energy quirk?”

“I heard there was an attack at the power station,” Midoriya runs his fingers along the edge of his cast where his arm disappears into pink plaster. “I figured he probably had an energy absorption quirk, or something similar enough to it. I knew I’d need somebody able to conduct high voltages, and Kaminari happened to be in Tokyo because of the party the night before…”

“Ah.” It’s times like these that Shouto truly appreciates the marvel that is Midoriya’s brain. He makes conclusions faster and connects dots that Shouto can’t see until Midoriya points them out. It’s no wonder, he spends so much time studying quirks as a ‘hobby’ it’s probably natural to him at this point.

“When I called you…” Midoriya shakes his head. “…Part of me didn’t want you to come. But part of me was…hoping, I guess. One last Deku and Entropy team up. Fighting villains, having each other’s backs, like old times. I shouldn’t have called you, I’m sure I could’ve found somebody else. Iida was in Tokyo, he could’ve handled it.”

“No, I don’t think Iida could’ve handled it. Her quirk melted anything she touched.” Shouto shakes his head, dismissive. “I was able to stop her because I could freeze her. You made the right call. It doesn’t matter that I got hurt. I knew the risks, and you should always trust your instincts.” Pulling a smile is easy, despite the headache and ache in the back of his throat. “You’re almost always right.”

Midoriya snorts. “Almost, huh? Thanks for the high praise.”

“You’re not infallible. You break too many bones for me to trust all your instincts.” The laugh he receives in return is worth every moment of warm tingling in his chest. “Just don’t make a habit of calling me for missions. I’ve got until the end of the month, and then I legally cannot be at your beck and call.”

This teasing is good. Familiar, easy to fall back into.

An unwelcome voice prods the back of his mind, in a tone that reminds him of Uraraka: Is this flirting? Are you flirting with him? Is he flirting back?
Shouto ignores it.

Midoriya, still laughing, wipes his eyes and crosses a solemn hand over his heart. “I promise, that was the last one. No more daring missions for Entropy and Deku.”

Shouto hums, lightly. “Now that I’m no longer watching your back, you’ve got to be more careful. I don’t want to visit you in the hospital every week.”

“That’s pretty rich coming from you.” Midoriya gestures to the slowly healing bruise across Shouto’s forehead.

“And you’re one to talk.” Shouto raises an eyebrow at Midoriya’s cast.

Midoriya follows his gaze and laughs, like he forgot about its existence. Scratching the back of his neck, he chuckles, “Yeah, we’re both kind of a mess, huh?”

“No, I’m perfectly fine. I don’t break my bones for fun.”

Midoriya shoves him. The room spins a little at the movement. “You promise to stay out of trouble, and I’ll promise I’ll try not to break any more bones. Deal?”

“I suppose that’s the best I can hope for,” Shouto sighs, deliberately exaggerated. Flirting or not, this kind of banter puts Midoriya at ease. He relaxes more when Shouto returns his jokes, and he’s missed this easy back and forth with Midoriya. Shouto’s -- (he refuses to use the word crush) -- affections for Midoriya made his dialogue with Midoriya stilted for a while. With a slight concussion, and elevated on the relief of making it through another day, he can afford to lower his guard.

Checking his phone, Midoriya frowns. “I think it’s time for you to go back to sleep. I’ll wake you in a few, and let me know if you need something?”

Waving him off, Shouto turns over into his pillow. He hears Midoriya’s soft footsteps retreat from his bed and towards the hallway. “Goodnight, Shouto,” he calls from the door. Shouto, with his eyes closed, discovers his exhaustion was deeper than he realized. He’s too tired to reply.

He dreams of indistinct shapes of light. A bright smile, a faint laugh. The feeling of a hand combing through his hair, rubbing the aches and pains from every inch in his body. A voice, like the laugh, quiet, muted. He feels warm. He feels safe.

DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
If you have questions, now is the time! 1 Hour only #AskDeku
2,391 retweets | 3,211 favorites
10:01 AM - 28 January X1

funky robot @StandAsper
favorite food???. #askdeku
804 retweets | 1,044 favorites
10:02 AM - 28 January X1

DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
@StandAsper katsudon!
981 retweets | 1,911 favorites
10:05 AM - 28 January X1
Big Bungus Gay @yourslappy
Yoga? #AskDeku
892 retweets | 1,804 favorites
10:05 AM - 28 January X1

DEKUデク✔️ @herodeku
@yourslappy What about it?
1,827 retweets | 1,921 favorites
10:07 AM - 28 January X1

WAKE BEE UP @R1heim
I dont have a quirk but your my role model. How do i become a hero #Askdeku
332 retweets | 270 favorites
10:08 AM - 28 January X1

DEKUデク✔️ @herodeku
@R1heim Never give up. Help those who can’t or won’t help themselves. Your strength doesn’t just come from punching villains or lifting a car. Your strength and determination to see good in the world will take you much farther than any quirk could ever could. You can be the hero you want to be!
1,879 retweets | 1,305 favorites
10:11 AM - 28 January X1

JED! @jed9707
Thoughts on endeavor… #AskDeku
463 retweets | 936 favorites
10:11 AM - 28 January X1

DEKUデク✔️ @herodeku
@jed9707 verb - 1. Try hard to do or achieve something; noun - An attempt to achieve a goal.
927 retweets | 1,122 favorites
10:14 AM - 28 January X1

writers are braver than any u.s. marine @gaydeku
SELFIE??? PLEASE #askdeku
872 retweets | 927 favorites
10:15 AM - 28 January X1

DEKUデク✔️ @herodeku
@gaydeku [Image attached: Pro Hero Deku in pajamas, smiling with his eyes closed and making a peace sign. He’s wearing a faded All Might tshirt. In the background, former Pro Hero Entropy is barely in frame, but his dual-toned hair is visible. He appears to be reading a book on a couch.]
1,827 retweets | 1,989 favorites
10:18 AM - 28 January X1

Dynamite duo @happyharpy
@herodeku is that Entropy in the background? #askdeku
83 retweets | 282 favorites
10:19 AM - 28 January X1

DEKUデク✔️ @herodeku
@happyharpy Maybe..
877 retweets | 982 favorites
10:21 AM - 28 January X1

Uravity ✔ @uravity
How do you get your hair so soft. Asking for a friend #askdeku
892 retweets | 1,321 favorites
10:24 AM - 28 January X1

DEKUデク ✔ @herodeku
@uravity Some secrets are too dangerous to share with the world
828 retweets | 1,462 favorites
10:26 AM - 28 January X1

Plain jane @jjl8er
do u ever get scared when u watch scary movies? #askDeku
632 retweets | 939 favorites
10:29 AM - 28 January X1

DEKUデク ✔ @herodeku
@jjl8er Sometimes
787 retweets | 909 favorites
10:32 AM - 28 January X1

Oh Honey @nyrashanata
What do you think of my little bros choreography ? #AskDeku
[Video attached: A thirty second clip of a toddler in a Deku toddler-sized jumpsuit with the hoodie pulled up, jumping up and down to the music in the background.]
573 retweets | 763 favorites
10:37 AM - 28 January X1

DEKUデク ✔ @herodeku
@nyrashanata Very cute!
897 retweets | 994 favorites
10:40 AM - 28 January X1

Luna #entrodeku @queenentrodeku
Favorite hero? #Askdeku
27 retweets | 272 favorites
10:43 AM - 28 January X1

DEKUデク ✔ @herodeku
@queenentrodeku All Might - Too easy :-)
863 retweets | 984 favorites
10:45 AM - 28 January X1

Naoka @noaka00028
Can you be my hero dad? #Askdeku
343 retweets | 695 favorites
10:46 AM - 28 January X1

DEKUデク ✔ @herodeku
@noaka00028 Metaphorically, sure
673 retweets | 891 favorites
10:48 AM - 28 January X1
There is only one reasonable explanation for this: Shouto is cursed.

It can’t be a coincidence there are criminals robbing the exact same bank he’s standing in at this moment.

Cursed; or the promise he made to Midoriya inadvertently doomed him.

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” Shouto mutters under his breath. The frightened woman cowering on the ground beside him looks at him like he’s a lunatic. She’s not wrong. His reaction is a little out of the ordinary for the average terrified citizen held at figurative gunpoint.

Except Shouto isn’t the average terrified citizen. He’s a Pro Hero -- a retired one, but he knows how to handle a crisis.

Or, he would handle the crisis, except his hero license expired the week before. Which makes him as useless as every other paralyzed civilian in the room.
He’s definitely cursed.

It doesn’t hurt to scope out his opponents, should this impromptu bank robbery take a violent turn. Shouto may not be able to use his quirk, but he’s fairly adept at hand to hand combat. With his hands over his head and without shifting his head, he narrows his eyes and assesses the scene.

All the criminals are wearing masks, which means they’re either recognizable figures or criminals with a record. He doesn’t see the crew responsible for seizing the money, but Shouto knows they must be returning soon. He saw them briefly when they entered, a flash of motion too quick to account for their individual shapes.

The criminals don’t have guns, although one of them does have a quirk that forms sharp needle point spines from their skin. The second criminal in charge of crowd control has a pair of intimidating horns sprouting from their head. They’re both muscular, tall, and possess bulging muscles. His heart sinks. Even if he could figure out a way over to them without drawing attention, there’s no way he can take two at once.

“-- make sure to grab a few hostages.” He overhears the horned criminal snarl at the other. “Her. Over there. She looks scared enough, she won’t be hard to keep in line.”

The spined robber marches over to the space by the counter where Shouto and the petrified women are kneeling. A hand reaches out, grasping the woman’s thin wrist in a meaty scarred hand.

Shouto’s own hand moves before he thinks.

“Please, sir, don’t take my wife,” he begs, clinging to the criminal’s arm. Funnily enough, he kind of wishes he took Midoriya’s acting class. “If you’re going to take her, take me instead.” The woman is too terror-stricken to react to this obvious lie. Shouto doesn’t know how good his acting skills are, but he hopes the shakiness in his own voice serves to solidify the deception.

It works. The spine-skinned criminal laughs, lifting Shouto to his feet by his collar. “I won’t say no to another hostage!” More bargaining room for them, Shouto thinks darkly.

The spined criminal has no difficult lifting Shouto and the woman under each arm, like they’re sacks of potatoes and not two fully grown adults. His horned partner wraps zip ties around their wrists and shoves them towards the stairs. “Walk,” he grunts, pushing Shouto forward with a rough hand between his shoulder blades.

For better or worse, Shouto is a hostage. Looking at the woman’s horrified face, he knows he made the right choice. He can’t do much in his position, but the least he can do is comfort this frightened woman.

Shouto knows it’s a matter of time before the police arrive. The criminals will need to make their escape in the window of time between the confusion at the scene, brandishing their hostages, and their getaway car. He assumes they have a getaway car.

“Hexia said to meet her on the roof,” the horned criminal grunts. “You take care of the door. Make sure nobody gets in or out.” His spined companion grumbles, and behind his enormous shoulders Shouto spots the body of a bloodied security guard. His stomach tightens. He spots spines sticking out of the guard’s shoulders.

Their walk to the roof is short; short enough for Shouto to cycle through every possible escape scenario before coming to terms with the obvious answer.

He has to wait for the heroes to arrive.
On the roof, a woman with a half gold and green mask greets her horned accomplice. She closes her eyes, claps her hands, and suddenly Shouto is weightless. She has a gravity quirk like Uraraka’s, Shouto assumes, although more finely tuned. She waves her hand and hovers them over the side of the building. She drops them on the roof of the building beside the bank. Shouto takes a step forward to shuffle next to the woman, while the horned criminal growls over a portable radio.

“Are you okay?” Shouto asks the woman, lowering his voice to a whisper. She nods slowly, too terrified to form words. Shouto returns his attention to the horned criminal, sizing him up. Shouto doesn’t know if he could take the man in a fight without using his quirk, but he can certainly try. Gritting his teeth, he turns back to the woman. “What is your name?”

“K-Kita,” she croaks. “My n-name is Kita Miyu.”

Shouto nods, offering her a smile he hopes she finds comforting. “Kita. My name is…” She’ll certainly recognize him if he offers his full name. Although only his scar is visible, she’ll connect the scar and the name if he tells her. Later, he can thank whatever deity was responsible for offering him the slightest edge of luck and reminded him to wear a hat that morning. “…Midoriya. I’m going to keep you safe, but you need to listen to me. Can you do that?”

She nods. Shouto steps back, turning his attention back to the criminal guarding them.

A strike across the side of his face decimates his concentration. One moment he’s standing, and the next he’s kissing a faceful of cement. His ears ring. He closes his eyes.

He opens his eyes again after a moment. He has to stay awake. Disorientated, he vaguely makes out the shapes of a hallway. His legs are sliding across the ground. Somebody is dragging him. He blinks. One moment he’s in the hallway, and the next he’s bound to a chair in a decaying office room.

His face smarts. The woman is whimpering beside him.

“-- got him pretty good,” he hears a nasally woman’s voice across the room. “Did you really have to hit him so hard?”

“He was too alert,” Shouto recognizes the gruff voice of the horned thief. “I didn’t kill him or anything. The police might take our request more seriously if he looks a little banged up.”

Shouto blinks heavily, clearing the fuzziness from his vision. He surveys their new location. It can’t be too far from the bank if they’re on foot. A lower level of the building next to the bank, or another building over.

Staying close to the crime scene would usually mean certain capture, but these criminals obviously had some plan in mind. The police would be looking for getaway cars on the street, not the buildings. They probably don’t even know where to look. Even if they found the right building, the police won’t be able to storm in with two hostages on the line.

He hears the crackle of a radio. One of the other criminals whoops. “The police got the message. They know about the hostages.”

“Excellent,” the woman from the roof says. Footsteps approach, and her gold and green mask rounds the corner. Shouto and the woman are out of view from the rest of the room, tucked into a corner with stacks of files and boxes. “Now let’s take a look at those pretty faces of yours, hm? Your big show is coming up.”

Beside him, Kita trembles. One of the criminals in the other room calls “Hexia!” and the masked
woman turns on her heel. Out of earshot, Shouto leans over to Kita.

“Kita,” Shouto says. It takes a lot more effort to speak than normal. He probably has a mild concussion; it can’t be as bad as his last one if he’s still conscious, though. “I promise you, you’re going to be okay. I’ll do what I can...I’ll protect you.”

Her voice shakes, but her eyes shine with hope through the terror in her face. “T-thank you, Midoriya-san.”

Shouto glances towards the other room. The criminals seem occupied with the radio. There’s no chance they’ll overhear him, and Kita needs every ounce of reassurance he can offer. “I’m sorry, I lied to you about my name.” Her face blossoms with confusion. “My name is Todoroki Shouto, I’m a retired Pro Hero. I assure you, I will do everything I can to keep you safe.”

Her eyes widen at his name. Her trembles lessen. Relief consumes her face.

One of the masked thieves in the other room raises their voice. “We could always dump one of their bodies out the window! I bet that’d send them a pretty clear message.”

“Shh,” the woman’s voice, Hexia, hushes them. “No, dead hostages don’t win us any favors.” The radio crackles again. “The police should’ve found our radio by now. I’m sure they’ll start the negotiations soon.”

No sooner than the words leave her mouth, another radio crackles. “This is Tokyo Deputy Chief of Police --”

Shouto tunes out the radio chatter and the arguing criminals. Inching closer to Kita, he says, “Kita, do you have a quirk?”

“I-I do,” she swallows quickly. “I can m-make high pitch frequencies with my voice. I-I’m sorry, Todoroki-san, I-I don’t think that’s g-going to help us, t-though.”

She’s right. Shouto’s own quirk won’t help them in this situation either. He could burn the ties trapping them in place, but that’s more likely to repeat the incident on the roof. Kita’s safety is his priority.

Over the radio, a dog barks. A memory of Midoriya’s voice sears through his body, igniting a different course of action. He’s not helpless here, even without his quirk.

“Kita.” He lowers his voice, almost inaudible. “What kind of frequencies can you make?”

---

HeroWatch @HeroWatch
Bank robbery reported in the financial district in downtown Tokyo. Police and Pro Heroes at the scene are currently looking for the suspects.
245 retweets | 477 favorites
12:09 PM - 8 February X1

HeroWatch @HeroWatch
Police have confirmed the robbers claimed two hostages.
253 retweets | 320 favorites
12:14 PM - 8 February X1

HeroWatch @HeroWatch
Police estimate six suspects for the bank heist. Their location is unknown; police released search
Over the radio, the police negotiator lays down their ultimatum. “Return the hostages, and exit the building with your hands above your head.”

Growling, the leader -- Hexia -- snarls in return. “We have hostages. We’ll kill them if you don’t meet our demands.”


“We refuse your demands,” the police negotiator says over the radio. “This is your last opportunity.”

There’s a thump on the other side of the wall. Shouto assumes she threw the radio. “Fuck,” she snaps. He hears her heavy footsteps round the corner. “Guess one of you isn’t gonna make it home to dinner.”

Straining his ears, Shouto hears the tell-tale sound of increasing wind pressure rising from the window. “I wouldn’t be so sure of that.”

“No,” she steps back. She hears it too -- the whistle of rapidly expanding and contracting air pressure, and the distant sound of crumbling brick. “How did --?”

The wall on the other side of the building explodes. Hexia curses, spitting and coughing at the swell of dust clouds and debris. Shouto ignites his left side, melting the ties around his hands.

With Hexia distracted, he ignites his finger and melts Kita’s with more care. On the other end of the room he hears shouts and the telltale sound of bodies hitting the floor. He hears the spring and quiver of spines released, thudding into the wall sheltering himself and Kita. A grunt, and then an enormous release of wind.

Hexia screams. There’s a laugh, and a gust of stronger wind and the slam of a body hitting the floor. The dust begins to settle.
“Don’t be afraid!” A familiar loud voice carries across the dingy lighting, stepping out from the shadow of dust and crumbling walls. His face isn’t distinct among the heavy smog, but the smile in his voice is clearer than the sun on a cloudless day. ‘For I am here!’

Shouto recognizes the broad shouldered shadow. He peers up, heavily leaning on Kita to support his weight. His head injury is a little worse than he thought. He feels like he’s stepping through water with every step.

The figure in the dust stops, hesitating. He spots Shouto too, by the looks of it. The slowly settling dust reveals his face and the dusty green uniform Shouto knows well.

“Shouto,” Midoriya’s confidence flees, replaced by surprise. It might be Shouto’s concussion, or the dust sticking to his eyes, but the halo of light surrounding Midoriya’s head from the hole in the wall behind him is beautiful. Ethereal, breath taking. His stomach swoops, dives, descends. “What in the world are you doing here?”

---

**HeroWatch @HeroWatch**
The Khakou Bank Hostages are rescued, suspects are in police custody. Pro Hero Deku reportedly defeated the five suspects single handedly, and carried both hostages to safety.

598 retweets | 783 favorites
12:51 PM - 8 February X1

**HeroWatch @HeroWatch**
Police say the strange behavior for their search and rescue dogs is attributed to the quirk of one of the hostages -- a high frequency quirk capable of mimicking a dog whistle! The sound alerted the police dogs and helped narrow down their location. Incredible quick thinking in a tough spot.

255 retweets | 438 favorites
12:59 PM - 8 February X1

**HeroWatch @HeroWatch**
One of the hostages is confirmed to be former Pro Hero Entropy. Talk about coincidence!

141 retweets | 277 favorites
1:08 PM - 8 February X1

**HeroWatch @HeroWatch**
Be sure to check out our HeroWatch Weekly Update this weekend, where we’ll provide an in depth analysis of the amazing hero work and strategies of the #2 Hero in this week’s incident. Stay tuned.

198 retweets | 387 favorites
1:45 PM - 8 February X1

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With the pressure of Midoriya’s hand at his back, Shouto stumbles into his apartment. The windows are dark. The police detained him for hours, gathering eye witness reports and grilling Shouto for every ounce of detail he had to offer.

“This better not become a habit of yours,” Midoriya scolds lightly. “I thought I told you to stay out of trouble.”

Shouto grunts. Midoriya’s hand drops, and Shouto falls forward into the couch. Muffled into the cushion, he grunts, “Not my fault.”

“Mhm,” Midoriya hums. “Although, from what I heard from Kita-san...you pretended to be her very doting and concerned husband.”
Shouto picks up the pillow beside him and throws it towards the source of Midoriya’s voice. Midoriya laughs, which means his toss was horrifically off mark.

Shouto lifts his head, groaning as he rolls his shoulder. He probably pulled a muscle there. His treatment as a hostage was far from delicate. He startles at the hand that drops to his shoulder, rubbing the soreness from the muscle. Midoriya leans forward, dropping his chin to rest on Shouto’s head. “I’m serious. You could’ve been really hurt. You saved that woman’s life, but…”

Shouto snorts, a retort already on his lips. “Like you would’ve done anything different.” Midoriya hums, snaking his other arm over Shouto’s shoulder, resting it across Shouto’s chest.

Shouto’s heart pushes on the outside of his ribcage. He feels Midoriya’s breath tickle the top of his hair. That’s something else: Midoriya’s clinginess after he discovered Shouto was the second hostage. Midoriya is a tactile person, flinging his arms over people’s shoulders and instigating hugs when the thought strikes him, but even this is a little excessive.

“Well, I probably would’ve punched my way out, for one.” Midoriya shifts, leaning forward, tipping Shouto’s head back with a gentle touch on his jaw. Shouto stares up at his face, upside down, but no less handsome. “You’re not a Pro Hero anymore, Shouto. Try to leave the heroics to me.”

Shouto swallows. He wonders if Midoriya is aware of their position; Shouto very literally baring his neck. Leaving himself vulnerable. Midoriya’s fingertips are light, barely applying any pressure, but they feel like brands along his jaw. He doesn’t answer Midoriya. He knows if he opened his mouth, there’s no way of controlling what words came out.

Midoriya leans down. He stops short, enough distance to keep it from treading into dangerous intimacy, but close enough he can feel the slightest change of Midoriya’s breathing. Shouto’s mouth parts, exhaling shakily. Midoriya’s eyes are, for once, unreadable. There’s intent there, but Shouto doesn’t know what kind of intent to expect from him. That’s the problem with Midoriya; at every opportunity, at every corner, Midoriya pulls another hidden card up his sleeve and shatters Shouto’s understanding and expectations from him.

Midoriya’s fingertips recede from his jaw. He trails the hand up to Shouto’s cheek, patting the smooth skin there. “You should go shower. I’ll make dinner.”

Disappointment wells in his chest, like that night he thought Midoriya was going to --

“How do you feel about leftover udon?” Like that, the moment’s passed. Shouto stands, chasing whatever fleeting control he has. He passes Midoriya in the kitchen, nearly smacking into him while Midoriya bustles around looking for pans. There’s still a streak of dirt on Midoriya’s cheek, under his eye. He looks so out of place in Shouto’s kitchen, with his dusty hero suit and wild curls.

Shouto’s stomach flips. The cliff face rises; the edge looming close enough that the nearest hint of wind would send him tumbling over.

He doesn’t know what nudges him into taking the final leap. He can’t pinpoint the exact moment his feet move forward, sending him tumbling over the side.

Sanity flees him. Reason flies out the window. He lifts his hand, watching the movement as though seeing it from someone else’s eyes. It lands, cupping Midoriya’s cheek. His thumb smooths the stain from his skin.

Midoriya’s cheek burns under his fingers. He wonders if that’s the fault of his left side losing
control, but the twin bright pops of color rising on Midoriya’s face would say otherwise.

“You had -- dirt.” Shouto provides, very much wishing he could convince his hand to release from Midoriya’s face. “It’s gone. Now.”

“Thanks,” Midoriya’s voice cracks on the word. “I-I, uh…”

Shouto attempts to salvage his dignity. “No, thank you. For today.”

“I-It’s not a big deal. I happened to be in the area.” Midoriya’s gaze drops to Shouto’s chin, before looking back up. “Shouto…”

Shouto never gets a chance to hear the end of his statement. Midoriya’s phone rings -- his work phone. Shouto drops his hand like Midoriya’s skin burned him, which is an irony he is bitterly aware of.

“I-I’m gonna go take that.” Midoriya stammers, vanishing in a blur of green lightning. The phone ring stops mid-ring. Midoriya answers it, hanging up with a curse. “S-sorry! I-I’ve gotta run. You should have dinner without me.” Shouto blinks, and then Midoriya is gone. The door to Shouto’s apartment slams.

So much for making a leap of faith. He landed face first, pathetically, at the bottom of the most embarrassing and undignified hole.

Shouto wonders if it would be considered overly dramatic if he drowned himself in the shower.

Chapter End Notes

IM SO SORRY THE SOCIAL MEDIA SECTIONS HAVE THE WEIRD SPACING AGAIN ILL FIX IT LATER IM SORRY- fixed now :'^)

hey. you there. yeah, you. im talking to you. comments refuel the dying embers inside my soul. please consider leaving one even if it's just "hey i liked this" because i will reply with a million exclamation points and thank yous. kudos are great but comments are like Pure Joy And Validation injected right into my veins

- if any of you noticed familiar usernames in the social media sections of the fic, it's very likely i used/based it off yours! i like looking for inspiration in every corner, and usernames come in so many different styles/varieties...so consider it a free shout out to you for commenting/kudosing my work. thank You
- i named todoroki's mom "yukiko" which is...so unoriginal. it means snow child/girl. im sorry horikoshi is a coward who wont name her so i guess that leaves it up to me
- edit: yes okay i know todoroki's mom has a name now but i wrote this before those manga chapters came out so i'm keeping it. horikoshi still sucks
- the two scenes i mentioned in the beginning notes that inspired this entire fic were in this part!! the first scene that inspired this was the scene where midoriya says "hey shouto i have a mission...i need your help. please come" and todoroki says "no i'm retired" and midoriya is like :( so then todoroki is like fuck. fine ill go. the second scene that inspired this was the scene were todoroki is held hostage and deku smashes
through the wall like hey what's up! it's me! i am here! and holy shit shouto why are you here
- next chapter: miscommunication continues. yaoyorozu is Amused But Not Impressed by the giant hole of bad communication they dug themselves into. todoroki continues to be a useless dramatic gay. midoriya comes to several conclusions and, unsurprisingly, makes an impulsive decision that has Consequences. there's also a lot more social media in the next part because this chapter was very plot-heavy
- BONUS: a deleted excerpt in my original draft about todoroki and endeavor's confrontation that also serves as a very detailed and accurate representation of my writing process and how i craft scenes from scratch

“Hello, father.” Shouto doesn’t turn around. “I’m sorry it had to come to this but... omae wa mou shinderu...”

“N-nani!?” Endeavor screams as he suddenly disintegrates, falling into a puddle of ash on the ground.

“Somebody clean this up.” Shouto says, as he leaves the office.
reaction

Chapter Summary

Todoroki suffers in silence and accepts his life is basically the plot of a very bad and cliché romantic comedy movie. Midoriya is oblivious as usual. They could solve every single one of their problems if they sit down and have a nice heartfelt conversation and actually say the things they want to say. Are they going to do that? Absolutely not.

Midoriya keeps punching things until his problems go away and Todoroki represses every Emotion his body creates. Also, Iida and Yaoyorozu continue to be The Best Friends Todoroki could ask for, and more villains show up or whatever.

Chapter Notes

hey there. part 2 of chapter 3 here. this chapter is fittingly named "reaction" while the first part of this "chapter" that i divided in half was named "action" because the motion that got the ShitShow rolling in the first part now has a chain effect. and boy do lots of things...happen in this part
- since last part was pretty long & i have 2 jobs now i was like "yeah so i need a break before my cells fucking combust" and took a longer break between updating. sorry!
- on may 27th at around 9 in the evening with 3 hours to go until my final paper was due, i gazed upon my google doc of woe and suffered the heartbreaking realization i simply could not fit in everything i wanted to write in 5 parts. it is with deep overwhelming sadness i confess...6 parts are in order. i have updated the chapter count again. (can you believe i started this fic and set the chapter count to 4 originally)
- todoroki and midoriya are....both very terrible at talking about feelings hence the Absolutely Ridiculous Miscommunication
- i cannot stress just how frustrating the miscommunication gets. i know gays are bad at communication but this gets ridiculous. youre gonna be pounding your fists and yelling "would it kill either of you to TALK AND SAY WHAT NEEDS TO BE SAID?????" throughout most of this chapter
- this chapter is a bit of an emotional roller coaster from todoroki's perspective. poor guy... but to be fair it's all self-inflicted because he's a gay idiot.
- this is the longest chapter clocking in at just under 30,000 words (AT THIS RATE IM GONNA BREAK 100k)
- thank u to ro from the safetddk server who encouraged me to post it anyway even though i wanted to start posting shorter chapters so here i am, doing exactly that, because of one (1) second of validation
- this chapter is incredibly self indulgent when it comes to deku taking number 1. i can say this here because its not a spoiler and yall knew it was coming. also its the first line in this chapter so it doesnt matter
- todoroki comes to Very Much Regret his decision to let his hero license expire. not in an angsty way, i promise.
- this chapter is self indulgent in general thats all im gonna say. i love iida and momo, ok
- the theme for this chapter is im coming out by diana ross
“Everything’s changing so much. The world is changing constantly. You and I, we’re both changing. I can’t help but worry one day -- one day you might not...you might not be around. You might move on. Everyone else might move on too.”

... 

“You can’t possibly mean that.”

... 

[Video: JP TOP HEROES 20X1 REVEALED: DEKU TAKES #1!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! -- HWWN #28 for MARCH 21 20X1.

Thumbnail: Pro Hero Deku in costume, standing on a pulpit in front of the Hero BillBoard Chart Japan Stadium. Grinning, one hand raised to wave to the crowd. Behind him, the other Top 10 Heroes stand on the steps in a line smiling and posturing for their viewers.] 

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472k views

Thanks to Lychee Pro and RedTrack for sponsoring this episode of HeroWatch World News. Get 15% off any item at https://lycheepro.co.shop/ and https://redtrack.store.jp/ + promo code: PRODEKU

The long awaited big biannual Hero Billboard Rankings Chart JP results are out. The big news is BIG and we’re sure everyone’s already talking about it, but... DEKU IS NUMBER ONE!!!!! Keep watching for our full rundown of the big changes in the Top 50 and Top 10 rankings.

Comments 1.8k

REACTION
Like most of Momo’s urgent meetings, there’s no option to decline the invitation. Shouto tightens his shoulders and ducks into her office during lunch hour. Lunch is the best time to minimize contact with sidekicks and starstruck staff, as the room empties out while the employees grab food in the cafeteria.

Shouto doesn’t know what she called him in for either. The meeting is obviously not work related as Momo isn’t his employer anymore. His stomach twists uneasily all the same.

Her text didn’t offer any information, other than a vague “Hey can we meet in my office in an hour to talk about something important.” Shouto thinks it strange she didn’t offer to come to his apartment instead. Maybe it is work related, then.

“Shouto-kun.” Momo calls from behind her desk when Shouto pries open the glass door. Her chair is turned to face the window, spinning slowly towards to face him. “I’m glad you could make it.”

“Momo,” Shouto edges forward warily, closing the door behind him. “What’s this about?”

Momo stands and walks around her desk. She stops, leaning back against the wood right beside her name card in front: CREATI - YAOYOROZU MOMO. Gesturing to the chairs in front of her, she says, “Come, have a seat.” Shouto sits. “Tea?” Momo offers. Shouto nods slowly.

While Momo (rather aggressively) pours them each a cup of tea, Shouto looks around her office. It’s unchanged; the same as his last visit. Momo hands him a cup of tea and leans back against her desk. She sets the pot on the glass coffee table in front of Shouto’s chair. Shouto sips his tea. It’s scalding, but he soothes the burn with an frosty exhale.

Momo sets her cup down on the desk beside her. Clasping her hands in front of her, she breathes in heavily. Gathering her thoughts, he presumes. “I want to talk to you about Deku-kun.” Momo says. Her face is pinched; severe. Worry lines her brow, wrinkling the smooth skin there.

Shouto schools his expression as close to neutral as he can manage. His heart beats off-rhythm at the mention of Midoriya’s name. “What about him?”

“He broke two ribs, again, at the start of this week. I’m...concerned.” Her word choice is deliberate, he knows. “I asked Kyouka to keep an eye on him and assigned him to the surveillance team for a day. She told me he’s been acting off. Unfocused. Distracted.” Tapping her fingers against the side of her cup, she pauses. “Yesterday, he had a close call with one of the sidekicks. You know I don’t like getting involved in the lives of my employees without good cause. But if it’s starting to affect his work, then something needs to be done.”

Narrowing her eyes on Shouto, she purses her lips and continues, “I asked him directly if anything happened between you two.” Shouto turns the hot tea in his cup into solid ice. “Deku-kun isn’t a hard person to fluster, but he was very flustered when I asked. I managed to catch something about you ignoring him. Is that true?”

Shouto sets the frozen tea cup in his lap. “If it is?”

Momo frowns. “Then you need to stop ignoring him.” Shouto glowers down at his tea. “Shouto-kun.” His head snaps up of its own accord. “I’m serious, I can’t afford to have him distracted on the job. I can’t risk his safety or the safety of any person on my team. Or the safety of the citizens of Tokyo.”

Shouto shrinks under her glare as she delivers her final ultimatum: “He’s on leave until Friday. You
have two days to figure out whatever is going on between you two.” Her face softens, as does her voice. “I’m not trying to order you around, and I’m not trying to intervene in your personal life either. I’m worried about him. I’m worried about you.”

“I’m not...ignoring him.” Shouto winces. “I’m trying to keep my distance. Things are -- strange between us right now.” In fairness, Shouto doesn’t have to try too hard to avoid him. Midoriya is a ghost in the apartment, and the only reason Shouto knows he’s still living there is because he leaves dirty dishes in the sink. He spots Midoriya skittering around the corner of his vision; sometimes appearing at the end of the hallway before he spots Shouto and turns away.

“Did something happen?” Sometimes, he wishes Momo wasn’t as perceptive as she is. “I thought you and Deku-kun were getting close. What made you decide to back off?”

“That’s --” The memory of that night flashes before him: the face holding, the softness in Midoriya’s eyes, Shouto almost leaning in. He dismisses the thought. “-- complicated.”

“Uncomplicate it, then. You know I won’t judge you.” He thinks back to Momo’s laugh after he told her he asked Midoriya to live with him and disagrees. “Or if you won’t talk to me, talk to somebody. It might help if somebody else provides an unbiased perspective.” Shouto clenches his hand into a fist. There aren’t any options here where he doesn’t tell her the truth; besides throwing his frozen tea at Momo and fleeing the room. He knows Momo will chase him down if he runs.

In stilted, uncomfortable beats, he tells her about the cliff edge. He tells her about his leap, and Midoriya’s palpable awkwardness the following day. He tells her about the change in Midoriya’s behavior at the apartment. Before Shouto’s miscalculated tumble with feelings, Midoriya was comfortable in his apartment; Midoriya wore his pajamas around the apartment. It took months before Midoriya appeared in anything but his day clothes or uniform outside his room. He used to make Shouto coffee in the morning before he left for patrol. Midoriya made dinner at night and sat next to Shouto on the couch while Shouto read through his stack of International Hero Law textbooks and watched tv. He dropped his feet in Shouto’s lap or left a hand on Shouto’s back while they walked out of the store. Midoriya has done none of these things since that night.

Momo, unexpectedly, groans and puts her head in her hands when he’s finished his miserable story. “You’re so ridiculous.” she says. A familiar phrase. The exact wording she used last time when she laughed at him about his apartment situation. Only, this time she isn’t laughing. “Both of you. I can’t believe...a cliff? You seriously -- that’s so -- why are you so dramatic? A cliff metaphor. What am I going to do with you! Although, you love metaphors, so I’m not really surprised. I should’ve expected you would make this more complicated than it is.” Shouto blinks at her. “Shouto-kun, have you ever thought that maybe you’re thinking about this too much?”

Shouto scowls. “What do you mean?”

“Has Deku-kun even said anything to you?” At his head shake, she blows out a frustrated huff of air. “Exactly! The two of you aren’t talking. You’re assuming he’s upset with you, and he’s assuming you’re upset with him because you’re avoiding him.”

“But he’s --”

Momo pulls out a bright blue ruler from her arm and smacks him over the head with it. Shouto grimaces and rubs the sore spot. “Go talk to him! If he’s upset about what happened -- or didn’t happen, from the sounds of it -- you have to hear him say it. You’re hurting yourself by doing otherwise. You’re hurting him, too, by making assumptions. Talk to him.”

Shouto knows she’s right. It sounds so simple when she says it: Talk to Midoriya. He needs to, he
knows that. He needs to talk to Midoriya.

If his emotional issues are affecting Midoriya’s hero work, Shouto can’t be selfish. The world needs their Number Two Hero at his best. There are too many people counting on Midoriya; too many people that outweigh Shouto’s own desires to bury his feelings in the plot behind his apartment building and avoid Midoriya for the next ten years. Midoriya’s hero work comes before the foreign and discomforting almost-but-not-relationship territory he and Midoriya stumbled into.

He thinks back to the lecture every student in 1-A received sometime during their first year. Heroes don’t date other heroes, Aizawa said, in his usual unruffled bored tone he took with every lesson. Unless they’re willing to sacrifice everything they would have in a normal relationship. When you’re a hero, all your other matters are secondary. It’s the surrender of your personal life when you commit your entire life to being a hero. Having a romantic partner is often an unwelcome distraction.

(Shouto found that statement somewhat hypocritical coming from Aizawa after he learned Aizawa did, in fact, have a partner who was a Pro Hero himself.)

He thinks back to Midoriya and Uraraka’s break up. They started dating shortly before they graduated Yuuei, but they barely lasted a year before the stress of long distance and complicated work schedules brought it to a bittersweet end. We wanted different things, Midoriya said over the phone while Shouto imagined him smiling with that soft and sad twist of his mouth. I’m glad we’re still friends, and maybe in the future we might...I’m not sure, I don’t know. It’s too early to say for me. But I think Aizawa-sensei was right. Heroes can’t date heroes. Shouto isn’t a hero anymore, but all of those same lessons still apply to him. He can’t be the source of Midoriya’s distracted behavior.

“I sent Deku-kun home for the day.” Momo takes his arm as she guides him out the door. “He said he’d take a jog after he went back to your apartment, so you might catch him if you leave now.”

Dimly, Shouto realizes he should make some sound of acknowledgement. “Sure.”

Momo pats his cheek. “Head on down now. If he’s already left for his run, well -- I’m busy with sponsors, so call Ochaco-san or Iida-kun. I know they’re worried about the both of you.”

“I’ll...do that.” Shame stirs in his gut. He promised to talk to Iida and Uraraka more, but after his last disastrous conversation with Midoriya he was (shamefully) moping in his apartment and refusing calls from both of them. He adds a mental reminder to text them and apologize.

“Good. I’ll see you for lunch tomorrow. See you then.”

“See you then,” Shouto says, a beat too late, after Momo closes the door to her office. He turns around. Sidekicks in the bullpen are staring: some shameless, others ducking their eyes once his gaze sweeps the room.

“I may not be your supervisor anymore,” he tells the room. “But I shouldn’t have to remind you all you have work to do.”

A flurry of papers, sidekicks, and staff explode into movement. Sidekicks return to their desks. Staff flee to their corners or run back to their departments. Shouto makes for the elevator. He nods curtly to the receptionist in the lobby and leaves with the door swinging behind him.
Our account was finally verified -- thank you @twittersupport! Now we’re back to regular hero reports and this time with a sweet verified check so you know you’re getting all the right facts from the right source.
110 retweets | 782 favorites
12:58 PM - 13 February X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
Five weeks until the next Hero Billboard Ranking Chart is out -- Who’s going to be #1?
532 retweets | 2,075 favorites
1:42 PM - 13 February X1

DAIA HAS FEELINGS #entrodeku @medoriyas
@herowatch deku is OBV no 1. Working in Tokyo boosted all his arrest stats
5 retweets | 87 favorites
1:45 PM - 13 February X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
Repyling to @medoriyas Deku’s arrest stats are up, and recent popularity polls show he’s pulled in front of Endeavor by quite a few points. The question is if the board decides Deku’s contributions exceed his rival’s and end the long standing Endeavor streak. They would be reshaping the future for heroes if they put Deku at the front of the leaderboard. We’ll see!
180 retweets | 492 favorites
1:59 PM - 13 February X1

Davi don’t dance @cant_pick_a_username
@herowatch is entropy still ranked at number five?
40 retweets | 304 favorites
2:08 PM - 13 February X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
@cant_pick_a_username No, when the office of hero affairs and services processed his paperwork at the end of December he became unranked. This year’s ranking hasn’t been released yet, so there’s been no changes to the ranks officially even though he retired - #5 is currently held by Laser Eye (#6). The rankings don’t change until the official rankings are released, however.
114 retweets | 382 favorites
2:19 PM - 13 February X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
Read more on our homepage FAQ, but to answer a popular question on here: Rankings are processed through the Hero Billboard Chart of Japan. The board chooses the rankings based on cases solved, contribution, and popularity. The rankings are only broadcast twice a year, once in March and again in September.
290 retweets | 404 favorites
2:23 PM - 13 February X1

RENUDEN @udon3re
@HeroWatch do you keep track of heroes in relationships?
74 retweets | 609 favorites
2:24 PM - 13 February X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
@udon3re Official relationships announced by the heroes themselves, yes! We don’t keep track of rumors or tabloids though.
Confronting Midoriya after he returns from his run is a very bad idea. For Shouto’s self control, that is.

Shouto looks up from his book (very dry, *The Complete Volume of International Quirk Regulation Guidelines*) and sees Midoriya; panting, red faced, white shirt practically translucent on his front and back where the sweat sticks to his skin. Shouto isn’t sure if Midoriya notices him when he enters. He clears his throat to grab Midoriya’s attention. Midoriya ignores him, content to stick his head under the faucet and drown himself under the spray. Shouto closes his book with a snap, and Midoriya tenses at the counter. He turns off the sink, grabbing a dish towel from the rack and rubbing his face and neck to catch the excess water.

Shouto swallows a few times before he speaks. He sets the book down on the couch and heads for the kitchen. Stopping behind Midoriya, he clears his throat and says, “Midoriya.”

“Shouto,” Midoriya replies, easy, keeping his back to Shouto. He drops the towel and swings it over his arm. “Need anything? I’m gonna run out to the store after I shower.”

“We need to talk.” Shouto grimaces at his own bluntness. “About -- about what happened.”

Midoriya turns around. He doesn’t greet Shouto with a smile, but he isn’t frowning either. By the look of his wide eyes and pinched brow, Midoriya appears... *confused.* “What happened?”

“I’ve been avoiding you,” Shouto admits. “Since...that night.” His own hesitation cleaves the forced lightness of their conversation with an even heavier, stronger tension than before.

*That* has Midoriya’s attention. He drops his gaze, looking at the space behind Shouto’s shoulder.
“Y-yeah. I-I noticed. That was -- that was, uh. Yeah.”

Shouto braces himself on the counter. The room falls quiet besides the hum of the refrigerator beside him. Words come then, but they’re the wrong ones to start with: “I’m sorry.” Midoriya bites his lip, and Shouto deliberately raises his gaze to Midoriya’s eyes. That’s worse, actually. Midoriya’s eyes are wide and wet and Shouto can’t look any longer. He stares at Midoriya’s forehead instead. “I avoided you, and I thought -- I thought you were upset. We can forget it ever happened.”

“Forget it ever happened.” Midoriya repeats. “If...if that’s what you want. Sure.”

Shouto drops his gaze back to Midoriya’s eyes. He doesn’t know how anybody could look at Midoriya and call him plain; his eyes are so vibrant, they contain so much energy. Steeling himself, he forces the next words out; “I just want us to go back to how we were before. I’m not upset with you, but I thought I…I-I made you upset. I crossed a line, that night. I’m sorry.”

“I’m not upset.” Shouto opens his mouth to call out the obvious lie, but Midoriya raises his hand. “I’m upset that -- I’m upset you shut me out so suddenly. I thought I did something. Whatever happened that night, I don’t care about that. I’m not upset. You’re the only one upset about that.”

“I’m…” Midoriya’s honesty smacks him in the face like a wall of concrete. “…We’re both so stupid.”

Midoriya draws back. “Excuse me?”

Shouto ignores him for a moment. Tunnel-vision blinded him from reality; his emotions for Midoriya blinded him from actually looking at Midoriya. “Momo was right. We’re both so stupid. I’m not upset with you. You’re not upset with me.” Midoriya’s mouth drops open slightly, furrows his brow, and frowns. “Neither of us were actually upset with each other. We just assumed each of us was upset. We’re stupid.”

Midoriya stares at him. Shouto blinks, and suddenly Midoriya is doubled over and leaning on the counter for support. His expression is -- Shouto doesn’t know a better word for it -- shell shocked as he lowers himself to the floor. “That’s so -- you’re right.” To Shouto’s alarm, he chuckles. His chuckles grow into a slightly hysterical sounding laugh, clutching his sides. “Momo-san said -- she said I was being ridiculous.”

Shouto feels light headed. Lowering himself to the floor beside Midoriya, he leans back on the cabinet and sighs. “She said I was being ridiculous too.” He looks at Midoriya out of the corner of his eye, a little dumbstruck at Midoriya’s sudden mood change. Sighing, he adds, “She’s terrible.”

“No, she’s right! She’s so -- w-we are ridiculous.” Midoriya giggles, slapping his own thigh. “I was so worried, you know. When you said we had to talk, I wanted to -- I kept thinking you were like, kicking me out of your apartment.” He laughs again, more forced. “I thought that night I had -- I-I was tired, I thought maybe I-I had --” Midoriya’s disjointed sentences are practically unintelligible, but Shouto nods along. “D-Did it weird you out, though?” Midoriya asks. “We were both kinda…I-I don’t know.” He cranes his neck to look at Shouto.

He feels the crackle of tension build again. Midoriya’s eyes are intent, watching his face, waiting for a response. His gaze feels like a physical touch, grazing his skin. Charged. In the end, he’s a coward. A selfish coward. “No, it was -- fine. I wasn’t uncomfortable. If you weren’t, then we can forget it and move on.”
“Move on. Forget it. Back to normal.”

“Yeah.”

“Then we're okay.”

“Yeah.”

“Yeah...”

“...Yeah.”

“...Yeah...”

Shouto puts his head in his hands and groans. “We’re terrible at this.”

Midoriya laughs again, less forced. “Good talk.” Midoriya says, patting Shouto’s arm. “I forgive you for...whatever this was. I wasn’t actually upset. You weren't upset with me. I guess. We were just not talking to each other.”

“I hate when Momo is right,” Shouto grumbles. Midoriya’s laugh sounds wetter, so Shouto drops his hands. Midoriya rubs his eyes and smiles. Gently, Shouto amends, “No hard feelings. Everything’s fine. We’re fine.” The gentleness of his voice does little to stop the growing wetness from Midoriya’s eyes. He holds his arms out, pulling Shouto into a very warm hug. A very warm, sweaty hug. Shouto wrinkles his nose.

“Can we hug after you shower?” Midoriya chuckles at his petulant request. Damn him, Shouto thinks, beating back the fondness in his own thoughts.

“Absolutely not.” Midoriya says, squeezing him tighter. “This hug is important. I wouldn’t miss it for anything.”

Shouto hates the smell of sweat. He hates the feel of Midoriya’s sweat sticking to his own arms and shirt. He leans into the hug hating all of these physical feelings, soaking in the relief and quiet fluttering joy in his stomach that Midoriya decided to be selfish, too.

“We’re okay,” Midoriya says, cupping the back of Shouto’s head with a gentleness that makes Shouto’s insides feel like they’re melting. “You and me, we’re okay.”

Shouto loses track of time. Midoriya (finally) releases their sweaty embrace and races upstairs to shower. While Midoriya is occupied, Shouto texts Momo and lets her know everything is fine. Momo’s replies are more cryptic than usual.

From Yaoyorozu Momo:

Did you talk about it?

To Yaoyorozu Momo:

yes.

we agreed what happened that night won’t change our friendship
we decided to move on and forget about it

From Yaoyorozu Momo:

Oh mlekelwwlhhhtagilafjklwlmwmmnebwhwwwwww
Are you serious
YOU ARE ARENT YOU
PLEASE TELL ME YOU'RE JOKING

hey its jirou id like to inform u that u r a dumbass
the biggest gay dumbass in japan
the whole world actually
momo also says ur a dumbass
she put her head in her hands shes crying now
im serious u r such a fuckin idiol

Kyouka took my phone I'm back
Shouto why
Why do you do this
What did you say to him

To Yaoyorozu Momo:
what do you mean

From Yaoyorozu Momo:
Next time I see you I will not be held legally accountable for my actions
What did you SAY to him
EXACT WORDS
SHOUTO
WHAT DID YOU SAY

To Yaoyorozu Momo:
i said i was sorry for making him uncomfortable because of my actions that night
he said it didn't make him uncomfortable and i said we're fine
and midoriya said that's okay and we're back to normal

From Yaoyorozu Momo:
I changed my mind
When I see Deku for saturday patrol tell him I'm going to beat
his
hi jirou again bc momo threw her phone
again
shes yelling rn
shes going 2 handcuff the both of u 2gether and toss u off the roof
but she says shell make u a parachute so u dont die
todoroki honestly wat did u do
omg i read up and im crying ur so hopeless
i say 2morrow u invite deku to ur room and accidentally lock the door
Sorry I kicked Kyouka out of my office Its me again
I can’t have this conversation right now but call me later
I have a lot of things to yell at you that I cant over text

Shouto puzzles over the texts and decides to leave them for tomorrow. Momo sends perplexing
texts from time to time, and he needs a good night of rest to decode them. He opens his other
messages from Iida and Uraraka, seeking normal and easily understood conversation.

From Uraraka Ochaco:
It's ok, dw
Call me later if U can!
I was worried about you, I’m glad to hear you’re okay though
My offer to vent your pining about deku still stands :o)

To Uraraka Ochaco:
  thank you
  i’ll call you in a few
midoriya and i talked already we’re fine now
  and absolutely not

From Iida Tenya:
  That is alright! I am not offended. I am not offended.
  My apologies, it is very difficult trying to type while running.
  If you wish me to lend an ear, do not hesitate to call when it is convenient for you!
  I am confident in your abilities to discuss this with Midoriya-kun and come to an agreement.
  Ochaco-san sends her regards, and I as well!
  And if you have the opportunity please remind Midoriya-kun to check his own phone. He has
  ignored several of my messages.

To Iida Tenya:
  thank you
  we talked already and everything’s fine
  i’ll let him know
  he’s in the shower right now

From Iida Tenya:
  Thank you! That is greatly appreciated. I am delighted to hear Midoriya-kun and yourself are on
  good terms again.
  It is not urgent, you may inform Midoriya-kun he may take his time. I do not need an answer until
  the weekend.

To Iida Tenya:
  sounds good

From Iida Tenya:
  I am very sorry, Ochaco-san and I were comparing conversations and she had several unwelcome
  suggestions. I will do better not to share our private conversations out of context in the future.
  Please do not be alarmed, it was nothing too salacious.

To Iida Tenya:
  ?
  what

From Uraraka Ocacho:
  Shower huh
  Did u offer to join
  >;o)

To Uraraka Ochaco:
  ((
  im going to call iida instead

“I’m heading out to the store.” Midoriya calls from the entrance. Shout startles and drops his phone
into his lap, swapping a guilty glance at Midoriya and his phone. Uraraka’s last text flashes across
his vision and he fights the rising heat in his cheeks. Midoriya gestures to the door. “You wanna come?”

Shouto glances down at his phone. “I need to take a call, for the, uh...you know.” A half-lie. He needs to call Iida, and he needs to call the lead recruiter for a follow up on his impending career change.

“Oh,” Midoriya’s jaw drops, disappointment flashing across his face. The disappointment doesn’t linger, quickly replaced by excitement. “That’s great!”

Wincing, Shouto buries the half-truth deeper in cement. “Yeah. Sorry. I’ll help make dinner to make up for it.”

Midoriya snorts. “Help make dinner, huh? Not a chance, after last time. You make your call, I’ll be back soon.” He waves and hops out of the apartment, sliding the All Might cap Shouto wore during his last visit to Musutafu. He shouts something about beef behind his back, closing the door behind him with a gentle click.

Shouto calls Iida first. The recruiter isn’t going anywhere, and he knows that call is more likely to end in frustration. Iida picks up after a few rings. “Yes, hello! Todoroki-kun, I received your message. I take it your conversation with Midoriya-kun was satisfactory?”

He rises from the couch. Talking on the phone makes him restless. He walks to the window and braces his arm against the glass, looking out into the city horizon. “We cleared some things up. We’re good, now.”

“That is excellent news! I don’t wish to pry too brazenly, but have you reconsidered revealing your intentions to Midoriya? I believe it would be beneficial to the both of you, and --”

“No, it’s...” Shouto purses his lips and considers his next words. “We’re not -- we’re fine now. We agreed to move on and never bring it up again. If that’s the price of keeping our friendship intact, I’ll manage. It’s fine.”

“Todoroki-kun,” Iida says, quieter. “Are you sure that’s what you want?”

No. Shouto bites back his instinctual reply and grits out, “Yes.”

“Well, I don’t wish to meddle in your affairs, but I strongly recommend you reappraise your relationship with Midoriya before you make a decision so quickly. Midoriya did not outright reject your feelings, am I correct?”

“No, but he --”

“From what I understand, you didn’t explicitly state your intentions with Midoriya-kun. As his friend of many years, I can say with confidence --” He imagines Iida pausing, pushing up his glasses on the other end of the phone. “-- Midoriya-kun, like yourself, can often be -- pardon my phrasing -- very dense about matters of this nature.”

“You sound like Momo.”

“Momo-san, Ochaco-san, and myself frequently converse together about your situation with Midoriya out of concern for --” That is unsurprising given Uraraka’s knowledge of his conversation with Iida, but irritating all the same. “-- your well-being and Midoriya-kun’s.”

Shouto sighs. He leans away from the receiver and covers it with his hand, muttering curses under
his breath. Taking a moment to collect himself, he murmurs, “Iida, can we -- can we not talk about
this? We’re back to normal, I’m fine. Midoriya is fine. I don’t want to do anything that could...it
doesn’t matter. I’ll figure it out later. Please, let’s move on.”

Iida huffs. “If that is what you wish, I suppose there’s nothing I can say in the meantime to change
your mind. Well, in any case, I must get going now. I take it we shall meet next week?”

“...Next week?” Shouto puzzles.

“Yes, for the LGBT Youth of Japan sponsorship. Midoriya-kun informed me you were invited, if
you wished to attend. That is, unless you are not attending, in which case --”

“I’ll ask Midoriya,” Shouto tucks the phone into his shoulder as he clears off the table. He dumps
the dirty dish towel Midoriya used to wipe his sweat into the laundry bin by the stairs with a frown.
“Since this is the first I’m hearing about it. I’ll text you later and let you know.”

“I believe it will be a fantastic event! I, myself, am quite excited at the opportunity. Midoriya’s
agent arranged many of our old classmates and other top heroes for it. If there’s anything I can do
to convince you to --”

On Iida’s end of the phone, a different voice shouts Iida’s hero name. He mentioned in his text he
was texting and running, so Iida is probably on patrol. It’s not like him to slack off his duties for a
personal call, but he feels warmed at the thought Iida took time out of his hectic schedule to talk to
Shouto. “Sounds like you’re busy.”

“Ah! Yes, I am on my way! It was very good talking with you, Todoroki-kun. I look forward to
seeing you next week!” He hangs up before Shouto gets the chance to argue. Shouto stares at the
screen.

Midoriya returns with groceries and fresh beef for dinner. Shouto never calls the recruiter, because
his phone gets a busy tone after the dial. Sourly, he decides he’ll try email instead. As Shouto
carryes plates to the counter, he remembers Iida’s question. “Are you going to the LGBT Youth
sponsor program?”

Behind him, Midoriya chokes. Shouto spins on his heel, watching Midoriya wipe down the wet
front of his shirt with a new dish towel. “Uh. Oh, shit. I forgot about that.”

“Are you going then?”

Midoriya scratches his jaw, frowning. He rubs over the small patch of stubble he missed in the
shower. Shouto stares at it and mechanically forces his gaze back to Midoriya’s eyes. “W-well.
Yeah, I am. They invited me, and I know Iida-kun and Ochaco-san are going...”

“Right.”

“...They invited you too, but I wasn’t sure if…” Midoriya’s hesitation grows more stilted. “...That
was something you’d be...interested in.”

Shouto blinks. “Why not?”

He can see the wheels in Midoriya’s mind slow, freeze, and then slowly turn backwards. “I-I mean,
you’ve never, uh. Really been. Out to anyone. Besides your friends. This event you’d be,
essentially, outing yourself to everyone in Japan.”

A beat passes. Innocently, Shouto asks, “So?”
“Shouto,” Midoriya braces his elbows over the counter, leaning in as far as he can. “You’ve never really shown any interest in -- you know, being out. I-I mean, it’s up to you. It’s your decision. You can tag along if you want. I’m sure Ochaco-san and Iida-kun would be happy for the company.”

“No, it’s fine.” Shouto gestures to the drawer at Midoriya’s hip, silently begging for the spoon inside. Midoriya opens the drawer and hands him the spoon, handle first. Fully aware of Midoriya’s rapt attention and his weighty gaze on the side of Shouto’s face, he raises his voice. “I want to go. It sounds like fun.”

It will be an opportunity for something normal. The tension between them isn’t completely resolved, but it’s comfortable again. They’re both back to standing on two feet and know where they stand; or Shouto knows, though it pains him where he’s standing at the moment. Midoriya doesn’t return his affections. That’s fine. Shouto is grateful for Midoriya’s company in any form he can have it. He needs this return to normalcy. He needs to feel like nothing’s changed between them. He needs to convince himself move forward. If he breaks his own heart in the process, well… People like Shouto didn’t get happy endings like the ones on tv. His life isn’t the plot of a romantic comedy movie. Midoriya isn’t going to suddenly come to his senses and sweep Shouto off his feet.

Shouto needs to move forward. He needs to move on. His life may not be a romantic comedy, but the useless pining is definitely romantic drama worthy.

Friends it is. Midoriya’s been his friend for almost half of his life, he can do friends. He can be Midoriya’s friend, he will always be Midoriya’s friend as long as Midoriya will have him. As Midoriya’s friend, he must also never let Midoriya know just how much it hurts him to live within arm’s reach and yet remain unable to hold him tight and pull him closer.

Thankfully, Midoriya doesn’t possess a mind-reading quirk and remains oblivious to Shouto’s internal dialogue. Midoriya plays with his fingers, rubbing the scars along his palm. “Uh. Okay. I’ll tell my agent to put you down as a yes, then.” He picks up the pot of beef stir fry and sets it down on the counter by their bowls. “Remind me to ask Momo-san and Jirou-san on Saturday. I think they’d like this kind of thing.”

“Sounds good.” Shouto doles out a bowl for himself, and then another for Midoriya. “Thanks for making dinner.”

Midoriya rounds the corner of the counter, taking the seat beside Shouto. He smiles, ducking his head and shaking as if to say no, that’s not right. “Nothing to thank me for.”

“You know what I meant.”

Midoriya lifts his head, redirecting his smile to Shouto. His eyes are soft, even softer than his smile. One side of his mouth raises higher than the other when he smiles, Shouto realizes.

The stir fry is delicious. Shouto remembers none of it. He can’t remember the taste of the food, or anything about the meal at all. The only memory of that night is the shape of Midoriya’s smile as he looks at Shouto, the brand on his skin as Midoriya grabs his arm to capture his attention. Half of his body may run cold, but that night Shouto feels completely warm.
size too small.

Photo 2: Screenshot of an Instagram caption:
Liked by uravity, iida.t, icreati, tshouto, radio.jack, rredriot, and 11,284 others

herodeku: 交換！

View all 2,019 comments

9 HOURS AGO

Caption: https://instagram.com/herodeku/62kW0Lu21nVe
I'M ACTUALLY CRYING??????????

Comments

number2ingeniumstan: WHAT THE FUCKWH WHAT THE FUC?
gaydeku: so im literally in tears but can i ask why you are the number TWO ingenium stan and not number one. i have questions

number2ingeniumstan: Iida Tensei is the #1 ingenium stan. it says so on his twitter. so I have named myself #2 out of respect for him.
gaydeku: ok valid. carry on
gaydeku: @todoshotos have you seen this yet or no
todoshotos: ????????????? ?????? ????????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ????????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ????????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ????????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ????????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ????????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ????????????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ????????
gaydeku: Big Mood and im adding this to our entrodeku conspiracy masterpost as we speak

bi-uravity: Are they WEARING EACH OTHERS CLOTHES?????!?!!
gaydeku: YES ANDKJKKAKSKFWJFW ALSO LOOK @ THIS
[Picture attached: Twitter screenshot; HGHHHHNN.png

QUIRKY REGRETS @Deku_todoaku
@herodeku WHY ARE YOU SWAPPING CLOTHES
472 retweets | 1,002 favorites
7:39 PM - 14 February X1

DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
@Deku_todoaku He stole my shirt cus it shrunk in the wash but his shirts don’t really fit me though so >:-(
2,605 retweets | 4,018 favorites
7:51 PM - 14 February X1]

????????????????WWHH?????

lesbianiconcreati: im so glad deku is here to feed the gays we owe him everything
deku-the-hero: they did this on.................... Valentines day
thats ................... interesting
Shouto takes the train to see his mother again. She’s very happy to see him, greeting him with a warm smile and a hug. They abandon her apartment in favor of eating out for lunch. Shouto pays the bill despite his mother’s protests. Afterwards, his mother takes him out to the balcony and asks him to help her weed her spotless garden. She asks how Midoriya is doing and laughs when he accidentally turns the trowel into an ice sculpture. He doesn’t run into Endeavor.

In high spirits, he neglects to factor in his streak of misfortune and the universal law of Shouto’s Retirement Life: if the opportunity presents itself, bad things (usually in the form of a villain) will happen.

Somehow, he’s unsurprised when the train is stopped by a villain on the tracks. He can’t get a good look at the villain’s face, but they have long arms made of shadows that are capable of tearing a train car in half. The emergency lights in the train flicker and sputter, plunging the cabin into darkness. Screams and noises of anguish fill the air.

“Which one of you would like to take a ride with me?” the villain demands. Their voice is wicked, low and guttural. The sound grates against Shouto’s ears like nails on a chalkboard. There are children on the train. One of them starts crying pathetically behind Shouto. A mother in the corner whimpers, clutching her child to her chest. The other train passengers are stricken, paralyzed with abject terror.

Ducking his scar and hair under the dark hat he wore as disguise, he surveys the other occupants on the train. There’s no disguised hero leaping to action. Shouto is on his own. No quirk. No plan. In moments like these, Shouto almost regrets letting his hero license expire. He eyes the shadowed arms and calculates his likelihood of survival. He rounds up to about 90% and decides that’s close enough. Shouto stands up. “Sure, why not.”

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
A shadowy villain tore apart a T-Train and claimed a hostage in the downtown area on the border of Tokyo and Musutafu by the train yard.
90 retweets | 812 favorites
6:13 PM - 15 February X1
No civilians were harmed on scene, but several train cars and rail lines were disrupted by the villain’s surprise attack.

97 retweets | 512 favorites
6:20 PM - 15 February X1

The villain is in pursuit from law enforcement, but first responders on the scene claim the villain moves too fast & changes direction at high speeds, making his escape more likely.

84 retweets | 492 favorites
6:27 PM - 15 February X1

A hero is here! Looks like Deku is on the job. Thank you, spotters! #HeroSpots #ActionHero

https://t.co/91LwM6bwE

[Photo attached: A blurry photo of a green streak jumping across the roof of a building onto the next. The black guards on his elbows and knees are distinct despite the motion.]

40 retweets | 352 favorites
6:34 PM - 15 February X1

Law enforcement confirmed the villain is surrounded on every street, and Deku engaged to free the hostage. #GoHero!

72 retweets | 205 favorites
6:47 PM - 15 February X1

Shouto wonders if it’s considered cheating if his arm coincidentally bursts into flames the moment Midoriya arrives. The light and heat are, as Shouto expected, the villain’s weakness. The fire flickering from Shouto’s shoulder startles them, forcing the shadow hand holding him in place to release. The moment Midoriya leaps forward, Shouto leaps away and behind a crumbling brick wall. Bracing his bruised arm against his side, he leans his head back and counts his breaths.

He doesn’t think his arm is broken, but the shadow arms are a lot more physical than they appeared. He’s definitely going to be sore tomorrow. Rolling up his sleeve, he winces at the blooming hand-shaped dark spots forming beneath his skin.

On the other side of the wall Midoriya bellows, “ST. LOUIS SMASH!” followed by the sound of a body hitting the floor. He can’t guess the weight of it, but it doesn’t sound heavy enough to be Midoriya’s. Shouto hesitates before peering behind the corner, relief making his head light.

Midoriya finishes wrapping the villain in capture tape and slaps on a portable quirk restraint around their wrists like cuffs. “Just a moment! Let me finish securing them, I’ll carry you back to --” He snaps his head up and looks at Shouto. Groaning, Midoriya drops the villain unceremoniously back on the ground. “Is that -- ! Shouto, really?”

“Sorry.” Shouto says, sounding not very sorry at all. He tucks his injured arm closer to his side, grimacing as he steps over to Midoriya. Eyeing the cracks in the cement flooring and ducking his gaze from Midoriya’s, he explains, “They caught me on the train back to Tokyo. Bad luck.”

“I thought I recognized that hat.” Midoriya scowls, picking up the unconscious villain and tucking the body under his arm like it’s a sports bag. “Come on, I need to take this guy in. Need a lift?” He says the last part in English, teasing, like the line in the movie they watched the night before.
Shouto glares at him. He represses the urge to run over to Midoriya, lay a sweet, lingering kiss on his -- *no*. He tucks the thought into a folder in his mind labelled *You’re Only Friends, You Fool* and recovers with, “You just like saying that.”

Midoriya smiles wickedly. He set Shouto up for that tease. “Maybe I do. Let’s go, I want to beat the rush home, and I don’t want to be in the office filling out paperwork until next week.”

In the end, Midoriya doesn’t give him a choice. He wraps his arm around Shouto’s waist and jumps, launching the three of them high above the other buildings. “Hold tight,” Midoriya says, his mouth pressed to Shouto’s ear. Shouto’s entire body forfeits control and traps him in a limbo of freezing and melting at the same time which is incredibly uncomfortable. “I haven’t really mastered landing yet.”

He embellishes the truth about his landing skills: he manages to land with only a small stumble, while holding a body in each arm. An impressive feat alone: it’s *extraordinary* with awkward added weight. Midoriya drops the villain’s body and straightens, tightening his grip around Shouto. He barks an order at the officers on the scene and watches over as they send off the villain in a police van. Shouto attempts to pry himself away and escape into the background, but Midoriya presses a firm hand against his back and keeps him in place. Like he’s trying to keep Shouto where he can see him.

“I don’t need a babysitter.” Shouto groused, muttering his complaint into Midoriya’s hair where it can’t be picked up by the first responders or the reporters on the scene. Midoriya smiles. The warm hand around Shouto’s waist tightens, squeezes, then relaxes.


Smiling, Midoriya says, “If I don’t look out for you, who knows where you’d end up?”

---

**HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch**

Villain apprehended, Deku claims another victory for the safety of all of us in Japan! The hostage is safe, and coincidentally, Former Pro Hero Entropy was unfortunately taken hostage (again). We bet he misses being a hero right about now! [Visit this link for more](https://t.co/9mJs02T9kVX) #HeroSpots #GoodWorkHero

[Photo attached: Pro Hero Deku waving and smiling while the shadow villain is carted into a security van in the background. Todoroki Shouto (Former Pro Hero Entropy), the unfortunate hostage during the train attack, stands to the side beside Deku. Deku has his other arm wrapped around Todoroki’s waist, with the edge of his white glove visible on the opposite side of Shouto’s torso under his arm. Todoroki appears bored, almost exasperated, with the attention.]

290 retweets | 878 favorites
7:09 PM - 15 February X1

**HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch**

Airborne camera crews picked up the last few moments of the battle -- Deku used a powerhouse kick to bring down his opponent. That guy certainly won’t be getting up anytime soon! Take a look [here](https://t.co/vid/0L2sMNt8k21)

198 retweets | 687 favorites
7:14 PM - 15 February X1

**ANNA WANTS ANSWERS #tododeku @hidsa_anna**

@HeroWatch why was entropy the hostage again????????

29 retweets | 172 favorites
HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
@hidsa_anna Todoroki Shouto, former Pro Hero Entropy, claims all the incidents in the last few weeks were coincidence. Maybe it’s fate trying to convince him back to the hero ranks!
95 retweets | 321 favorites
7:29 PM - 15 February X1

ボーカルチーム @platis_8h2
@HeroWatch are entropy and deku dating? That photo frm 2nite was SUPER .. yanno
18 retweets | 58 favorites
7:41 PM - 15 February X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
@platis_8h2 There’s tons of rumors! Our crew started paying attention (given how popular it is) to their relationship - even though we usually ignore tabloids - and couldn’t come to a conclusion. All we can say is: we don’t know. ／_（ツ）_／
291 retweets | 998 favorites
7:48 PM - 15 February X1

#ENTRODEKUCONSPIRACY @softdeku
Literally what the fuck else are we supposed to interpret this as im fuckign screaming like this is jsut so fuckign obnoxious like tomorrow deku could announce he’s been married for like 4 years and people would believe it without hesitation because this is jsut so ufckiw gDGFFF
93 retweets | 331 favorites
8:06 PM - 15 February X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
According to @LGBTJP there will be an event next week for LGBT Youth in Japan by @frwrdjpn, and they’ve got a ton of surprises to be excited about. All the guests at the panel are going to be heroes! There’s also going to be a video sponsored through Buzzfeed -- exciting! We’ll keep you updated when we learn more. It’s rumored Deku will be among the panelists, so if you are interested make sure you keep an eye out.
182 retweets | 443 favorites
8:49 PM - 15 February X1

“Seriously, again?”

Shouto shrugs helplessly, loosening the rope with a shake of his shoulders. He cheated a bit before Midoriya arrived by melting one side of the rope around his hand to free his arm. He was almost out before Midoriya arrived. He offers Midoriya an innocent smile.

“I told you not to make this a habit.” Midoriya scolds, although he’s fighting his own smile. His light tone is teasing, a complete contradiction from his scolding words. “I should’ve known you wouldn’t listen. You’re basically a magnet for trouble.”

“That’s you,” Shouto corrects. “I’m just a helpless, unlucky, terrified citizen. My greatest thanks to the brave hero who rescued me.” Midoriya glares at him.

“For that,” Midoriya waves his finger patronizingly. “I’m carrying you out. I bet there’s tons of cameras, so put on your best awestruck by brave hero rescue face.” Shouto rolls his eyes. Midoriya shakes his head with faux-irritation. “Not like that at all!” Midoriya ignores Shouto’s alarmed cry when he literally sweeps Shouto off his feet, carrying Shouto to the window and hopping out.
Shouto clings to his neck for the sake of survival instincts with absolutely no other nefarious intentions. And not because Midoriya’s hair smells like his shampoo.

Midoriya drops three stories and lands with a swell of air, scattering paper and debris from his landing spot. Shouto shifts slightly at the landing, but Midoriya tightens the hand wrapped around his knee. “Much better.” Midoriya smiles absolutely guileless at Shouto’s dumbfounded expression.

Momo says he’s the dramatic one, but in truth, Midoriya is much more dramatic.

Around them a ring of officers, reporters, and first responders leap into action. The officers race up into the building they leaped out of, presumably to drag out the body of the criminal who took Shouto hostage at the drugstore. He was picking up a prescription for soothing cream for his scar. The hostage situation was (again) all due to poor timing and unfortunate luck.

Wincing at the flash of cameras, he slaps Midoriya’s arm. This is Midoriya’s cleverly crafted revenge: he knows Shouto jumps in front of bystanders and volunteers himself as the hostage, and in return Midoriya guarantees Shouto a spot on the front page of every Hero Journal with these public displays. “You’re terrible. Put me down.”

Midoriya grins. Shouto tucks his head between Midoriya’s neck and shoulder, hiding his face from the greedy flash of wild reporters and camera crews. “Smile for the camera, Shouto.”

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**HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch**

Pro Hero Deku packs a powerful punch (and kick!) as witnessed by an audience of spectators and first responders while he took down a villain -- through a window -- with an impressive Pyrokinetic quirk! Check out all the photos on our site: https://herowatch.com.jp/events/1920Ve0b82k #WowHero

[Picture attached: Pro Hero Deku, posing triumphantly next to a building. His hair is windswept, expression bright and charming smile. Beside him, officers are speaking attentively to the hero and assisting first responders on the scene.]

502 retweets | 2,082 favorites 4:03 PM - 18 February X1

防弾少年団 @ee_dgeshot

Retweeted from @herowatch なんてこった！??????????????

43 retweets | 251 favorites
4:08 PM - 18 February X1

@_marikun_

HELLO????????????? UJH??????

[Photo attached: Pro Hero Deku, beaming, holding the rescued hostage bridal style. The rescued hostage has his face ducked into Deku’s shoulder, but his two-toned hair of Todoroki Shouto (formerly Pro Hero Entropy) is clearly visible. Deku appears cheerful, smirking at the camera holder.]

369 retweets | 686 favorites
4:10 PM - 18 February X1

yume @yumeme_m7

@_marikun_ WHAT WAIT WHAT WHERE WWHEN

23 retweets | 113 favorites
4:14 PM - 18 February X1

えみな @aminamina1231
Stage A is in chaos. Ayako shuffles nervously to the side, tapping her clipboard against her chin. Weaving behind and in front of work crews, she scans the mass of technicians and cameras for a familiar face.

A sharp voice rings out among the chaos. “Kuriyama-kun! Where’s the sound crew?”

As the director’s assistant, that question is Ayako’s duty to answer. She spots the director by the cameras; the very face she needs right now. Rushing over, she calls out, “Right away, Sakamoto-san! I’m very sorry, we ran into technical difficulties.”

Sakamoto, the director and coordinator for the day, softens his glare upon spotting Ayako. Ayako’s neon yellow hair is easy to spot, even among the chaos of the camera crews and sound boxes. With her in sight, Sakamoto focuses all of his attention to her -- in the form of a scolding. “Kuriyama-kun, please don’t wander off. We’re on a tight schedule.”

Stumbling over the wires for the sound booth, she slides beside him. She bows, haltingly. “My apologies!” Sakamoto is one of the nicer directors in the studio, but he is no less intimidating. It would be very dishonorable to irritate him during her first week with him. She inwardly mourns the loss of kind and soft-spoken Director Suzuki, who left for maternity leave the week prior. “It’s fine,” Sakamoto waves her off. One of the stagehands calls the director’s name, yelling about heroes. “Actually, can you please grab our guests at the front of the studio? I imagine they’re a little lost. Come back here when you’re done.”

“Of course!” Sakamoto barely pauses after giving her orders and starts lecturing the camera assistant in front. Ducking under work crews and the large table they’re carrying into Stage A, Ayako makes it to the studio entrance with no major incidents. She drops her clipboard when she sees the crowd of guests loitering at the door, all of which are staring at their phones or observing the wall of artwork beside the desk. She stares. “U-uh,” she stammers. Clearing her throat. “I am h-here for the -- LGBT Youths party? The -- the stage area is ready for you.” The lobby is full of Pro Heroes. Not just any Pro Heroes. Top Pro Heroes. Leaderboard heroes. The heroes she sees on the news every other night on the kitschy tv in her depressingly cheap apartment. She spots Ingenium at the head of the party, who nods and waves her down with excessive hand motions. None of the heroes are in their uniforms, but she recognizes their faces on the late night reports. (Or, she recognizes most of their faces. Some of the heroes in the room are either lower on the leaderboard or unrecognizable without their gear.)
She pinches the inside of her arm. There’s no way she tripped over the wires in the stage area and fell into a coma, right?

Ingenium marches over to her. Ayako suppresses a whimper. Ingenium bows and greets her with more zealous than she expected. “Thank you! I shall gather everyone in a moment.” Oh no, Ayoka thinks miserably. He’s even hotter in person. Ingenium is one of her favorite heroes, she watches all of his fights on the reruns of Hero Nightly News. He’s one of her role models, besides Red Riot.

Behind Ingenium, she catches a glimpse of pink -- the Alien Pro Hero, Alien Queen-- and a flash of dark curls. Deku? Shouting, explosive hair and personality -- Dynamite, for sure. Why are there so many top heros here for an LGBT Charity event? She feels like she’s on one of the terrible roller coaster rides her brother used to force her on -- dizzy, slightly nauseated, and definitely on the verge of mental collapse.

On days when her dysphoria kicks up an overwhelming combination of anxiety and self-loathing, she turns on the tv. She watches Deku destroy a building with a single punch, Ingenium kick a villain in the face, or Red Riot’s motivational speeches. Seeing the people on her screen in front of her -- knowing they’re standing a few feet away from her at this moment -- it’s enough to make her eyes sting. Crying is a terrible first impression, however, so she wipes her eyes with the corner of her sleeve and prays her eyeliner doesn’t smear. She’s going to spend a day with heroes. Her heroes. Giddiness erupts in her stomach. She’s getting to film heroes.

She’s still not going to forgive Sakamoto (even if this is the best day of her life) for not giving her any warning about who exactly their “special” guests would be.

A woman with a round face and a soft smile mingles closer to the desk where Ayoka is leaning against. Ayoka doesn’t notice her approach, too absorbed in her own worry and deep reflection about the sudden appearance of heroes in the studio lobby. “Hello! Are you the director?” She waves. She’s very cute. Ayoka climbs out of her stupor with the grace of an elephant in a muddy hole. Attractive person talking to her. Focus. She needs to say something.

“No,” Ayoka feels her lightheadedness recede. Conversation. She needs to say more things. Words are hard. Words are very hard. Scrambling to maintain a façade of calm, she replies in a wheezy voice, “I’m actually his assistant, Kuriyama Ayoka.”

“Ah, Kuriyama-san! Well, you must see a lot of interesting people in a studio like this.” Smiling, the woman gestures towards the wall of portraits and celebrities.

“Um. I-I don’t really meet them, but I sit behind the camera and help…” Feebly, Ayoka racks her brain for a memory of the woman’s familiar voice. She must be a hero too, but her face is harder to place.

“Ochaco-san!” The man with dark curls she spotted earlier bumps into the smiling woman. “Sorry, I didn’t see you.”

Ayoka places her with the name. She’s used to seeing her on tv with a visor, which is why she couldn’t place her face at first. Uraraka Ochaco. Uravity, a leading Rescue Pro Hero, climbing the Top 15 on the charts. In a whisper, Ayoka murmurs, “U-Uravity-san.” The man with messy hair turns around and Ayoka’s brain does collapse. “A-and -- and that’s -- D-Deku-san.”

Pro Hero Deku, Number Two Hero in all of Japan, beams at her. He’s not wearing his signature green suit or face guard, but she knows she could pick out his smile from any crowd. It’s the smile she sees every night, the same smile that appears on her screen and every screen on Japan while they sit and wait for his reassuring smile to grace their tv again. Hero Deku.
Deku, oblivious to her impending mental breakdown, grins and waves. “Oh, hello!”

A low rumble behind Deku swats the waving hand aside. “Stop smiling like that. You’re terrifying her.” The body it belongs to leans over and rests his chin on Deku’s shoulder. He blinks at Ayoka, an expression of casual indifference, despite his subtle chiding. She knows the hair and the owner in a heartbeat. Even if she took a moment to place the unusual hair, she recognizes the scar covering half of his face.

Ayoka swallows. “U-Um. E-Entropy-san.”

“Ignore Midoriya.” Entropy says, in what she assumes is supposed to be a reassuring tone. Deku makes a tiny noise to protest the statement, shoving Entropy off his shoulder. He jabs a finger into Entropy’s side, like he’s going to begin an Ultimate Hero Battle Duel of Tickles. Entropy’s nose twitches, but otherwise he doesn’t react. “He forgets his own popularity sometimes.”

Uravity laughs. Deku stares at her like she’s committed a crime right before him, wiping the grin from his face. “I’m sorry, Deku-kun, but he’s right. Did you see her face when you turned around? You’ve got to stop surprising people like that. You scared the life out of the poor limo driver outside. I thought he was going to faint.”

Ayoka thinks she might faint too. She clears her throat, swallowing despite the dryness in her mouth. “U-Uhm-y-yeah! If everyone’s ready, w-we can head back. Sakamoto-san is your director today, he’ll -- h-he’s in charge.”

Uravity gives her a thumbs up and another smile. Ayoka bites her lip to keep herself from blurting out any embarrassing questions or exclamations. Distantly, she realizes her brother is going to be so jealous when she tells him who she met at the studio today.

Ingenium rounds up the remaining stragglers. Ayoka walks face forward, occasionally glancing back to make sure she didn’t lose the gaggle of heroes. The image strikes her: she is the mother duck followed by a pack of baby duckling heroes. She giggles to herself and quickly stifles the noise before she gets any weird looks from her companions.

The heroes make themselves comfortable in Stage A while Sakamoto completes the finishing touches. Mic checks, boom poles out of the way, camera crew ready to film on command. Ayoka is grateful for the opportunity to relax and lose herself in mindless technical tests. Sakamoto calls for the all clear and Ayoka gives him a jittery thumbs up.

Ayoka settles in beside the crew for camera B, off to the side. Sakamoto smiles and talks with the group of heroes, sending most of them into the directors booth. Over the sound of mic beeps and radio static, she hears Sakamoto’s booming laugh, and -- “You can stay out here, as long as you behave yourselves!” A group of fifteen or so adult, revered, *Pro Heroes* can be trusted to stay quiet and act professional in a studio, right? Sakamoto seems to think so. Behind camera A, she watches Deku playfully shove Uravity, who stumbles into Ingenium. The two instigators burst out into contained giggles. Or not...

The first pair of heroes settle into the chairs in the middle of Stage A. The background is a green screen, as most of the stage areas are. The two heroes in the chairs are Battle Fist and Froppy. Sakamoto calls for a final call, and calls the crew to action. Ayoka pushes on a pair of headphones and monitors volume levels. She lets their voices wash over her and consumes herself with mindless mic checks while they deliver their final statements on stage.

For a while, filming continues without interruption. She takes notes of the familiar faces. Earphone Jack and Creati spend most of their quasi-interview making jokes and teasing each other. Flirting,
Ayoka realizes. It’s odd; she thought Creati was dating a civilian. Maybe that was just a rumor. It’s hard to trust everything she reads on the hero fan forum.

She zones out, unintentionally missing the first half of Creati’s emotional letter of encouragement to young LGBT fans. Guiltily, she remembers she can always watch it in post, or after the video is posted. She should’ve been paying attention as it is; she shouldn’t be zoning out on the job. She does her best to redraw her attention to the stage. Creati is an impassioned speaker. No wonder she’s clawing at the heels of the Top 10 heroes. “– that’s not all about being a hero. Being a hero can even mean coming out! When you share yourself with the world -- even the parts of yourself that make you afraid of other people’s reactions -- you are a hero. You are very brave, and very strong. I’m very proud of all of you.”

Creati sinks into her chair, energy spent. Ayoka may have missed the first half of her speech, but she feels teary-eyed from those final words alone. Earphone Jack nods. “I’m not so great with the speech stuff, so -- what she said. You all rock, don’t let anybody tell you otherwise.”

They wrap up with their introduction statement. No matter how many times Ayoka’s on set she’ll never understand the logic of filming out of order.

Earphone Jack waits for the go ahead from the director and leads into her intro. “I’m Jirou Kyouka, Hero Earphone Jack. I’m a pretty big lesbian.”

Beside her, Creati giggles, but she stifles them with a harsh look from the director. “And I’m Yaoyorozu Momo, Number Eleven Pro Hero Creati! I’m also a pretty big lesbian.” Sakamoto cuts. The two leave the stage giggling and whispering to one another.

Dynamite and Red Riot take the longest to mic and perform volume checks. Every time Dynamite opens his mouth, he launches into an explosive rant and blows out the audio levels. The mics produce so much feedback it nearly deafens Ayoka and the entire sound crew. His volume control is stuck with two settings: zero or a thousand. Sakamoto asks him to tone it down, which results in a pair of completely blown out mics. Red Riot shrugs apologetically to Sakamoto and the sound crew.

Ayoka takes her headphones off while Dynamite and Red Riot remain on stage. She’d like to keep her eardrums intact. Sakamoto makes the executive decision to un-mic Dynamite for their intro segment. Red Riot doesn’t look concerned, despite Dynamite’s severe death glare.

“Hey, I’m Kirishima Eijirou, also known as Red Riot. I’m a gay transman! With me today is Bakugou Katsuki, otherwise known as Dynamite. He’s also gay. He’s sulking, so I’m doing most of the talking.” Dynamite’s growled response is picked up by Red Riot’s mic as a stream of unintelligible muttering. Ayoka figures they can correct that in post, like most of the other magic they fix in post.

Uravity and Ingenium begin the next round of audio issues. Uravity’s mic malfunctions a minute into their recording. Ayoka replaces her mic, relieved the trembling in her legs is gone now that she’s over the starstruck wonder of being in the presence of heroes. Uravity laughs and thanks her. Then Uravity’s mic disconnects from the portable receiver. Ayoka returns to change the plug and performs another mic check. After Uravity’s mic issues are solved, Ingenium’s mic struggles to keep up with his boisterous exclamations and the frantic motion from his arms creates noise when his mic rubs against his shirt.

Ayoka nearly trips over the camera anchor and slaps aside the poor sound crew member struggling to adjust his mic. “We need to move your mic,” she informs Ingenium. He nods and gives her the go ahead. “U-Uh. Do you mind -- do you mind lifting your shirt?” It is only through the power of
Professionalism she finishes the question without her face erupting into flames.

Ingenium allows her to strap the mic against his collarbone. He lifts his shirt up to his armpit, flashing his abdomen to everyone on the right side of the stage. Someone from the crew whistles appreciatively, causing the rest of the staff to break out into giggles.

Uravity wheezes, slipping off her chair. “Oh yeah! Show us more, Iida-kun! You heard ‘em, they wanna see more!” She is awfully giggly. Ayoka isn’t sure if that’s her natural personality or if being around so many other Pro Heroes makes her more playful than usual. She doesn’t really know Uravity enough to make that judgement.

“We should be almost all set, two more groups and then we’re going to tackle Deku’s intro. His is longer than most of the other bits, but they’re going to trim it down in post. Now, don’t touch any of the lighting -- we need that continuity. Let’s go through the audio tracks, get a rundown of the…” Ayoka scribbles down an organized list on her clipboard. Sakamoto rambles a lot, and he likes lists. That’s why Ayoka is his assistant, to give him direction and help pull his head out of the clouds.
exhale she releases when she sees who the hand belongs to.

Deku smiles, albeit not as confident as his smile in the lobby. “Oh, uh, hey! I was trying to get your attention, sorry. You are, uh -- Sakamoto-san, our director, yes?” The question is for Sakamoto. Ayoka responsibly takes a step back to clear the space.

“Yes, that is me.” Sakamoto replies, laughing. “Deku-san, well, anybody here could recognize you.” Deku chuckles. Ayoka’s face flushes. Lowering her face, she raises the clipboard to try and disappear behind it. He’s attractive on tv, he’s attractive in magazines, he’s attractive on daytime talk shows. He’s so much more attractive up close in person. She was too starstruck in the lobby to take a long look at him, which in hindsight was for the best. Using the clipboard as a fan, she prays he doesn’t notice her outrageous blush.

“I had a question about my bit,” Deku plays with his hands as he talks. For most people, it might be a show of anxiety or weakness. On Deku, it makes him adorable. Or maybe that’s Ayoka’s personal bias. “I, uh, brought my friend Sho -- Entropy, and since he’s not in the program he doesn’t really get a chance to talk. I was hoping he could join mine? Maybe? If that’s okay.”

Sakamoto hums thoughtfully. He holds out a hand -- Ayoka stares at it for a moment and suddenly remembers she’s at work. She shoves the clipboard towards Sakamoto. He takes it, flipping through her notes and reviewing her list and the time schedule. “Well,” Sakamoto considers. “I suppose we can make that work. It would save time instead of recording a completely separate bit. If you don’t mind sharing your spotlight, that’s fine.”

“Great!” Deku’s star smile returns. “I’ll let him know.” He raises his hand to the side of his mouth, leaning in. Lowering his voice like he’s sharing a secret, he says, “I know Entropy acts pretty grouchy, but he’s actually really excited about this. Although he’d never say it.” He turns like he’s about to leave, winking at the pair as he returns to the huddle of heroes. Ayoka’s brain flatlines.

Sakamoto hands the clipboard back to Ayoka and slides it between her frozen fingers. She takes down the rest of Sakamoto’s orders in a mindless robotic state.

Deku and Entropy allow the audio crew to mic them without any resistance. Deku keeps making jokes, taunting Entropy and elbowing him in the side. “Come on! Smile!” Uravity shouts, teasing, “no PDA, you two” and a bark of laughter rings out among the group of heroes from camera B. Deku freezes, but he quickly regains his natural ease and returns to teasing Entropy and demanding a smile.

“Do we have the all clear?” Sakamoto demands. Ayoka finishes attaching the clip on Entropy’s shirt to hide his mic and gives Sakamoto a thumbs up. It’s a miracle her brain didn’t combust at their close proximity -- she can barely handle being in the room with these heroes, let alone beside them. Her jitters have died off. Mostly. She still feels like she’s going to turn into a puddle of human goo every time Deku smiles in her direction.

Right before they start rolling, Entropy turns to Deku and bizarrely unleashes a giant grin. Sakamoto calls action. Entropy wipes the smile from his face and returns to his resting indifferent expression. Deku, stunned for a beat, bends in half and unleashes a gale of laughter which effectively ruins the take. In most scenarios, the director would call for cut and redo the take. Sakamoto doesn’t call cut. Maybe he’s trying to save time here; although post isn’t going to be happy about making so many editing cuts. Instead, he hands Ayoka the bowl and nudges her in the back. He gestures to the stage. “Give them the bowl.”

Walking across the line of cameras, she concentrates all her energy into not tripping over the wires around the set or dropping the bowl. Sakamoto doesn’t usually break set rules, and sending a crew member across set -- while filming -- is against one of his top rules. She doesn’t understand why he
would break his own rules, but she doesn’t question him. Talking back isn’t on her job description.

Deku takes a second longer to notice her than Entropy, who extends his hand out to take the bowl. “Okay!” Deku spins around in his chair. He has too much energy. Mournfully, Ayoka realizes he might be prove to create more audio issues than Ingenium or Dynamite. “What are we doing, again?”

Entropy takes the bowl from her hands. She shivers as his cold fingers brush against hers, while his warm ones are much more palatable. “Thank you.” He stares down at the slips of paper. “What are these?”

Deku notices the bowl and the Buzzfeed logo on the side. He pales, slapping a hand over his forehead. He pushes the curls on his brow to the top of his head, exposing his bare forehead. Miserably, he groans, “No! This better not be the reading thirsty tweets -- not again! I refuse!”

Somebody from camera A starts laughing, setting off a chain reaction across the set. Ayoka pushes the bowl towards him. “These are questions from fans. You have to answer as many as you can. We’ll cut when we’re out of time.”

“Oh, okay!” Deku brightens and grabs the bowl out of Entropy’s grasp. “Do you wanna stay and help answer some?”

Entropy flickers his gaze to Deku, disinterested. “Sure, I guess.” Strange, despite Deku’s mention from earlier. Maybe he’s hiding his excitement, or his excitement is harder to see. Ayoka ducks and waddles back towards camera B to check in with the audio crew. Thumbs up all around. She heads back to camera C and waits on Sakamoto’s call. It’s strange he hasn’t called to cut and reset, but maybe he sees something worthwhile among the silly shenanigans that she doesn’t.

“First question!” Deku shoves his hand into the bowl and rips out a slip of paper. He drops the bowl into Entropy’s lap and unfolds it, turning it sideways, turns his neck sideways, and then flips it upside down. “From, uh...Na -- Nashalee?” An English name. Ayoka doesn’t know a lot of English names but she’s pretty sure he butchered it. Or his pronunciation might be on point, she has no gauge to know for sure. “Thank you, Nashalee. Your question is -- ‘how did you know you were bisexual?’”

Deku taps his chin, pausing to think. “Well, I was probably sixteen or seventeen at the time. Growing up I was always awkward around girls, so that was kind of a given for me. I think there was this -- I guess one time I was jogging around my neighborhood and ran into a guy who didn’t go to Yuuei, and...” He frowns, losing track of his train of thought. “For me it was the first time I really noticed I looked at another guy and thought ‘oh wow, he’s pretty cute’ and then I spent a few weeks kind of freaking out about it before I decided to do anything about it. Then I told my mom, and a few of my friends at school.” Deku turns his focus to Entropy and throws the slip of paper at him. “What about you?”

Entropy slaps the paper away. “I’m not bisexual, I’m not sure I can answer that question.” He puts a heavy emphasis on the word, but not with disgust or irritation. It sounds like he’s making a joke. Ayoka isn’t sure, but she thinks he might be smiling a little. Deku blinks for a moment, and breaks into a laugh.

Deku tears through the next set of questions with ease. He hesitates on the six or seventh. “Have you ever kissed a guy?” He snorts and unfolds another slip. “Oh, another. ‘You ever kissed a dude?’ Everybody wants to know that, huh...”

Entropy reaches his hand into the bowl. He takes out a slip of paper and unfolds it. Whatever he
reads must be surprising, as his eyes widen. It’s the most expressive he’s looked since his impromptu teasing smile for Deku before filming. “Some of these are very candid.”

Deku snatches it out of his hand. He reads it faster than Entropy, immediately barking out an uncomfortable laugh and flushing. Crumpling up the paper in his fist, he tosses it towards the camera crew. “I’m definitely not answering that!”

Entropy laughs, finally breaking character. The laugh breaks his control for a moment. It must be his persona, Ayoka decides. Like Deku’s exuberant Cool personality, Entropy must have his own personality for the cameras. “Are you sure? Your fans really seem like they really want to know.” Boisterous laughter from the remaining group of heroes huddled outside the director’s booth is picked up by one of the boom mics. Sakamoto banishes the remaining heroes to the booth and everyone else in the stage area that isn’t staff.

Amidst the shuffle, she almost misses Deku’s reply: “No, I’m not -- why don’t you answer it?”

Entropy rolls his eyes. “Whatever.”

“Yeah, that’s what I thought!” Deku jabs an accusatory thumb at him. He blinks, as if remembering where he is, and turns back to the camera. “Anyway, uh, what was the question again? Oh, yeah. I have. A few times. It’s really not that different from kissing a girl, I don’t get the big deal.”

Entropy digs his hand into the bowl. After his unexpected reaction to the scandalous question, he loosens up. He rips out another slip and unfolds it. “This question is from Mai. She wants to know ‘whether you find any other heroes attractive.’”

“You’re joking.” Deku leans over to read the slip. “Oh, you’re not. Well. Sure, I guess. Should I start alphabetically or by ranking?”

“Now you’re joking.” Entropy tosses the slip behind him. “Next question.”

Deku smacks his hand away when Entropy tries to grab another slip. “These are supposed to be my questions, you know.”

“I’m helping,” Entropy denies, innocently. Ayoka doesn’t believe him. Neither does Deku apparently, because he laughs and playfully shoves Entropy. Entropy’s chair teeters dangerously to the side, almost sending the retired Pro Hero flying. He recovers by grabbing Deku’s arm and yanking himself upright. Deku laughs again.

“Wrap it up.” Sakamoto mouths, deliberately exaggerated. Deku settles down, pulling out another slip with a generous wave.

“Last one! Alright, this one is from Mari, and she wants to know...if ‘gay people can be loved like other people?’ She says she fell in love with a girl from her grade, but the girl rejected her feelings because she didn’t understand them.” The stage falls quiet. A sheet of heavy thought pressing down on the space. Solemn. Ayoka’s heart breaks a little for this young girl, whoever and wherever she is.

“I’m sorry to hear that, Mari.” Entropy’s reply cuts through the air. “I...I can tell you no matter who you love, you are no different than anyone else. As for the girl you loved -- I can’t promise it will all work out, but perhaps she will recognize your feelings are genuine. Maybe she’s as lost as you are.”

Deku clears his throat. His voice trembles, but he regains confidence as he talks. “Y-yeah. You are
so capable of love, and I hope you find a day soon when you realize you are surrounded by love too. Or find people who will surround you with love.” Quietly, he adds, “It’s never too late. Some people take more time to understand how they feel than others.”

Sakamoto cuts the recording after Deku finishes his thank you wrap up for the Buzzfeed staff and fan questions. The crew starts the stage reset, albeit more somber than usual. Deku hands the bowl to one of the stagehands and remains seated, rubbing his hands and tracing the scars with his fingers. Entropy leans over into Deku’s shoulder. His expression is severe; but even from the distance Ayoka observes, his eyes are soft. He raises his own hand and hesitates for a moment before he drops it into Deku’s, gently prying his fingers apart. He says something to Deku but Ayoka is too far to hear it. Deku nods, a small smile returning to his face like the first flowers in spring pushing through frost.

By the time the stage is reset and Sakamoto calls for action, Deku is wearing a bold smile and bouncing with energy. Their intros are the last bits recorded like the rest of the other heroes. Deku waves and grins, staring at camera C with intense focus: the teleprompter. Even top heroes need a little help with their speeches every now and then. Entropy stands off to the side by Camera C, arms crossed and staring intently at Deku’s figure in the middle of the stage.

Deku is a wonderful public speaker. There’s a reason why so many people in Japan tune into his programs; he’s a captivating presence. He has an energy that demands attention. In a way, he’s a younger version of All Might: charismatic, genuine, and very handsome.

Grinning, Deku begins his lengthy speech. “Hey there! If you’re watching this, we have a message for you from Japan’s LGBT Youth Program, Forward Japan: Thank you for all your support and continued positive messages and donations. Everything you’ve given to us has changed the lives of thousands of young LGBT teens. For those of you who are new to our name and program: we are a non-profit organization dedicated to educating and aiding LGBT youth in Japan.” Deku pauses. Whether it’s a deliberate pause or a chance to catch his breath, Ayoka doesn’t know. “Today, we’ve gathered several top ranking heroes who are here to send you their own messages of encouragement. At the end of this video, we will provide clips from the Forward Japan program panel in February if you missed it or couldn’t make it. There’s also a bit provided by the wonderful people from Buzzfeed where myself -- and a super secret surprise guest -- will answer questions you sent us. Now, on to the heroes!” Sakamoto motions for him to break and calls cut.

Entropy returns to his seat on stage. Ayoka resets his mic and gives Sakamoto the all clear. Deku waits for Sakamoto’s mark. “Hello everyone! I’m Midoriya Izuku, although more of you probably know me as Pro Hero Deku. I’m the Number Two Hero, and I am bisexual!”

He tilts his head to the side, a silent gesture. Entropy stirs beside him. “Hello. I am Todoroki Shouto, more well known as the Pro Hero Entropy.”

“Retired Pro Hero.” Deku corrects.

“Yes, retired.” Entropy agrees. “And I’m gay.” Ayoka inhales sharply. She feels the collective quiet gasp among the crew. “I’m also the super secret surprise guest.” In her free time (when she’s not acting as the director’s enslaved crew monkey) Ayoka stalks a ton of hero forums. Inside the forums, fans constantly cover the discussion board with theories or gossip about Entropy’s personal life. She knows this is the first time he’s ever made a public statement about it.

Deku grins, nodding his head enthusiastically. The curls on his head bounce with the movement. “We’ll get to that later.” Ayoka catches a glimpse of movement on Entropy’s shoulder, revealing Deku’s hand as he pats Entropy’s back as an show of comfort. Sakamoto cuts, and that’s a wrap.
Ayoka frees the heroes playing hostage in the directors booth. They chatter with excitement, laughing and taking selfies next to the stage crew members. She pulls herself back towards Sakamoto. She keeps a fair distance, but not out of earshot. While the crew and hero crowd mingle together, Deku and Sakamoto claim the corner on the opposite side. She doesn’t meant to eavesdrop, but it’s hard to convince her legs to turn around and walk away. She ducks behind one of the camera pits, easily hidden among the equipment and wires.

“-- my husband and I, we never thought we’d see this day. An openly out, proud, Number Two Pro Hero. You’re making so many people in Japan happy. You’re making so many of us proud. You’ve given us so much hope. We trust your vision for what you see in this world and what it can become. Thank you.” Sakamoto’s voice is tight, emotional. His voice breaks a little. Ayoka knows how much this means to him. For people like Sakamoto, for people like Ayoka herself -- seeing gay and trans heroes on the news everyday is an exhilarating, astonishing marvel. It makes all the difference.

“I-I’m trying,” Deku insists. “I’m still -- I-I’m still fighting to earn your trust -- a-and your symbol of hope, but I promise I won’t let you down. Any of you.”

Sakamoto sighs, “Young man, you’ve already made us proud. We know you won’t let us down. Seeing you today with Entropy-san, it made me so happy. It’s why I didn’t interrupt or cut during your bit. I saw the look on your face and it reminded me -- it reminded me of the way my husband used to look at me when we were young.”

Ayoka peers out from behind the camera in time to see Deku flush like a scandalized school girl. “I-I, uh --”

“Forgive me for presuming,” Sakamoto begins, “But the two of you are...yes?”

“Um.” This flustered Deku is nothing like the cool, bravado and charm Number Two Hero she sees on tv. This is nothing like the smooth talking hero who joked or teased his friends on stage. “I-It’s -- we’re not. W-we’re not...it’s not like that at all. Shouto -- Entropy and I, we aren’t -- he doesn’t feel the same.”

She hears Sakamoto’s soft, understanding, “ah.” She wonders if Deku realizes the enormity of what he’s -- perhaps -- unintentionally revealed. “Perhaps you are right,” Sakamoto says, after a moment. “But, take it from the words of a director who’s seen the acting talent of an entire generation of stars: you don’t fake chemistry like that. Actors can act. But nobody’s acting is that good, Deku-san.”

She doesn’t know if Deku replies. Red Riot runs up to her, grinning with nervous excitement. “U-Um, I am very sorry to interrupt you if you’re busy, but we’re kind of running late. We need to head back to the limo and get to our panel. Have you seen Deku-kun?”

Red Riot. His energy and positive aura are much more potent in person. Despite the hardness of his face and his hair, his smile is soft (even with the razor sharp teeth). This is the same guy who cheers her on from “POSITIVE THINKING - LIFE TIPS FROM RED RIOT” videos on YouTube. Besides Deku, Red Riot is one of her favorite heroes. She has his poster hanging on her wall along with her hero merch shrine.

Talking to the person -- a real live, breathing, talking person! -- who exists outside of her posters is as disorientating as the rest of her afternoon. “R-Right, U-uh, Deku-san is right behind here.” She steps out from her place behind the camera. “U-Um. Sakamoto-san, I’m going to finish audio uploads. I’ll get back to you later!” She flees. It’s not her finest moment. Red Riot drags Deku off set behind her while Ingenium rounds up the remaining heroes like cattle and lectures about
sticking to the schedule.

She doesn’t end up doing any audio uploads. Instead, she stalks the #ForwardJapanCon hashtag on Twitter and hunts down every tweet about the panel. Sakamoto is very displeased when he discovers her slacking off. Ayoka knows he’s not actually upset because he smiles when she shows him her favorite tweets from the tag.

sooga @ forwardjapancon @k_hoshe
q: when did you figure out you weren’t straight? d: my second or third year of high school. im thankful my friends&family were so supportive of me and im very grateful for them (hi im crying and my friend is the one who asked the question so hes crying too)
191 retweets | 498 favorites
3:48 PM - 21 February X1

Akida Akira (#forwardjapancon) @2a_918
fan: entropy i love you but why are you here / e, staring directly at deku: somebody with bad persuasion skills invited me / fan: ???? / e: because i invited myself. he tried to convince me not to go. thats why his persuasion skills are very bad
65 retweets | 118 favorites
3:54 PM - 21 February X1

Akida Akira (#forwardjapancon) @2a_918
the entire room fucking lost it why did nobody tell me entropy was actually a giant ass comedian
15 retweets | 102 favorites
3:59 PM - 21 February X1

Keyen @frwrdjpncn @keyeeni92
F- i’m a transwoman, and i’m afraid if i apply to a hero academy i’ll be denied. RR- if they deny you for that i’ll kick their ass. D- i would also volunteer to kick their ass but if i did that i might also bring down the whole building. (i love them so much) #forwardJapancon
34 retweets | 209 favorites
4:03 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
AT FRWRDJPNCON PANEL AND IM SCREAMING A FAN BROUGHT UP A SCRIPT FOR A CHEESY ROMCOM MOVIE AND ASKED DEKU TO ACT IT OUT
201 retweets | 788 favorites
4:13 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
DEKU OFFERED TO PLAY THE WOMANS ROLE AND HE KEEPS RAISING HIS VOICE AND IM FUKCING DIYING
155 retweets | 408 favorites
4:19 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
Im so sorry if you came to my twitter for gaming or video updates because my feed is going to be completely abt this panel until the day i die. deku asked ingenium to play his husband and ingenium is getting SUPER into it. What a time to be alive
198 retweets | 398 favorites
4:27 PM - 21 February X1
MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
CREATI IS PLAYING DEKUS OVERBEARING FATHER IMSKESWKSFSJSSKSJ
155 retweets | 513 favorites
4:29 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
PLOT TWIST THE WIFE WAS CHEATING ON HER HUSBAND AND FELL IN LOVE WITH
A SUAVE PLAYBOY BANKER
182 retweets | 503 favorites
4:36 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
i literally have no idea what fucking movie this is and i don't think anybody on stage does either
they're all making these ridiculous accents and dancing i am crying sm
191 retweets | 498 favorites
4:39 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
ENTROPY IS THE BANKER
201 retweets | 508 favorites
4:43 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
HLO????????????????????????
184 retweets | 477 favorites
4:44 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
I cannot WAIT to see all of this uploaded to yt so the rest of you can lose your shit w me
111 retweets | 482 favorites
4:47 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
entropy: “i love you hanako-san i want to be w you forever. the two kiss with passion”
271 retweets | 838 favorites
4:51 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
deku: this is a movie ur not supposed to read that part out loud / entropy: i have artistic liberty.
TLFORT THEY ARE FLRITING I AM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! THEY ARE FLRIITING ON STAGE
MYMNnnnn
353 retweets | 890 favorites
4:54 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
DEKUUWWHT DID U JSUT SAY
87 retweets | 257 favorites
4:55 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
Iiiiiiiiiiiiiiijjjjjjjjjin my brain shut down i am going to need a minute
10 retweets | 292 favorites
4:56 PM - 21 February X1
MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
I am good now evetythings FINE
14 retweets | 194 favorites
4:58 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
BIGGER PLOT TWIST THE WIFE LEAVES THE BANKER AND FALLS IN LOVE WITH A DIFFERNET GUY WHO IS APPARENTLY JESUS OR SOMETHING IDFK
56 retweets | 300 favorites
5:02 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
RED RIOT IS JESUS MAN
37 retweets | 1369 favorites
5:04 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
the panel determined the movie was run thru a bad translator generator which is why it doesn't make a lot of sense but honestly this movie is gold i would watch all of it as it is
72 retweets | 1319 favorites
5:08 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
d: you are the perfect man for me / rr: and you are the most beautiful woman in this city. kiss me my sweet angel AIS THEY'RE BOTH LAUGHING AND RUINING THEIR LINES
55 retweets | 428 favorites
5:11 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
DKEU KISSED HIM AND TEVERYTONES LOSING THER SHIT
90 retweets | 855 favorites
5:15 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
He didnt actually kiss red riot he did that hand thing but the heroes on the panel LOST it and so did everyone here and dynamite blew up the microphone
64 retweets | 1683 favorites
5:21 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
This panel is out of control omgf…………best panel
41 retweets | 332 favorites
5:24 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
THE MODERATOR YELLED AT DEKU FOR GETTNING EVERYONE OFF TRACK IM CTYING THEY MADE DEKU RUN LAPS AROUND THE ROOM AS PUNISHMENT AND DEKU IS JUST HIGH FIVING EVERYONE
69 retweets | 1722 favorites
5:33 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
DEKU HIGH FIVED ME AND SAID HE LIKED MY SHIRT
MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
Replying to @edamame_eigh I’M WEARING MY ENTROPY HERO SUIT SHIRT ITS DISCONTINUED AND IT WAS SO EXPENSIVE BUT IT WAS WORTH IT
23 retweets | 441 favorites
5:38 PM - 21 February X1

MIYU / IM @ FORWARDJAPANCON ✔ @miyuplays
this is the best panel i’ve ever been to and that includes last years herocon i am having a GREAT time
81 retweets | 506 favorites
5:41 PM - 21 February X1

AISIME [wishing i was at frwrdjpncon] @_aismie12
Seeing all these tweets abt #forwardjapancon and i wish to GD i was able to teleport there right this minute it looks like so much fun
15 retweets | 109 favorites
5:41 PM - 21 February X1

DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
BIG THANKS 2 @frwrdjpn & @LGBTJP for hosting and organizing today’s panel for #ForwardJapanCon and inviting myself and many of my fellow heroes back on @BuzzfeedCeleb for a collaboration project - video will be out soon! :-) 982 retweets | 2,045 favorites
6:28 PM - 21 February X1

Uravity✔ @uravity
@frwrdjpn @lgbtjp thank you for inviting me - I had a great time & best of luck to your future campaigns!! If you ever do another, you know how to find me… #ForwardJapanCon 566 retweets | 1,355 favorites
6:31 PM - 21 February X1

INGENIUM✔ @t_ingenium
@frwrdjpn @LGBTJP Grateful for the opportunity to speak with LGBT Youth today and meet so many young aspiring heroes and fans. Your work for charity is immense and commendable, you should be very proud! #TakePride 752 retweets | 1,925 favorites
6:35 PM - 21 February X1

Red Riot!✔ @rredriot
@frwrdjpn @lgbtjp THANK YOU!! CANT WAIT TO SEE THE VIDEO!!! Dynamite also says hes excited and hes sorry for breaking the con equipment. He promised to pay for it dw 486 retweets | 1,692 favorites
6:41 PM - 21 February X1

DYNAMITE✔ @iamdynamite
@rredriot NO I WILL NOT AND FUCK YOU 599 retweets | 1,621 favorites
6:48 PM - 21 February X1

Red Riot!✔ @rredriot
“Give me that.” Midoriya demands. He rudely tears the glass of expensive champagne out of Shouto’s hand.

“It’s been a long week.” Shouto protests. “Give that back.”

Between the near-daily accidental abductions, the tumultuous emotional turmoil that nearly ruined their friendship, and Shouto’s pitiful lingering depression upon locking himself firmly into the Friend Zone until the end of time, he really deserves a drink. Several drinks, in fact. Enough drinks to part ways with his consciousness and exist somewhere else for a while.

Today only exacerbated his still healing wounds from Midoriya’s rejection. He spent the day glued to Midoriya’s side, endured an entire session of playful back-and-forth flirting (he only returned the favor to keep up appearances and lower Midoriya’s suspicions) in front of an entire set. And he outed himself to a room of complete strangers; and the entire world. The entire world doesn’t know yet, but when the video is released it will become public knowledge. It’s not that being out is a huge concern for him, but with the nagging rumors about *Deku and Entropy’s Secret Love Affair* he knows outing himself will likely encourage more.

His self control is stretched paper thin. Half of him relishes in the closeness of Midoriya’s presence, taking advantage of their proximity and keeping Midoriya as close as is comfortable. The other half begs him to move away. His desires ache and twist with conflict, wishing he could both pull Midoriya closer while also stepping as far back as possible out of reach.

He has no right to want Midoriya’s attention in the way he does. Midoriya doesn’t appear to mind, but Shouto is a selfish creature. He knows this is only temporary. Midoriya will end his contract in Tokyo in a few months while Momo’s agency readjusts their work schedule and finds a replacement. He’ll leave. He’ll move on, and Shouto will be alone.

That thought sinks, heavy and burdensome, deep in his chest. He won’t have Midoriya’s time or attention forever. His time is limited. Midoriya will move on and Shouto will be left with his lifeless apartment that leaves him aching with loneliness at night. If he’s lucky, he might get to call Midoriya once a month and check in. Everything will return to how it was before Midoriya decided to take an extended leave in Tokyo. Everything will be back to normal, and Shouto will be alone.

He doesn’t know why these reminders are so heavy, especially tonight. Maybe it’s a full moon. Maybe the weight of today’s momentous announcement put him in a brooding mood. Or maybe he’s reached his breaking point.
Shouto’s not good at dealing with his emotions when they reach the overwhelming point. He has two methods of dealing with them: intense repression and drinking. Unfortunately for Shouto, he reached his maximum capacity for emotional repression some time ago. That leaves drinking. At least he won’t be drinking alone, as Shouto isn’t the only one taking advantage of the free bar privileges. Uraraka toasts him over a class of high class sake. She chose one of the most expensive drinks on the menu, and even Shouto does a double take at the price tag.

“I think I deserve it after today,” Shouto says. Midoriya doesn’t budge. He half-heartedly swipes his hand at Midoriya, who dodges with ease. “Get your own.”

Midoriya eyes Shouto’s champagne with new interest. Shouto hates the gleam of manic glee in his eyes because that means he’s planning something terrible. Without warning, Midoriya tips it back and drinks the entire thing. Shouto gapes at him. Recovering quickly, he groans and leans back in his chair, defeated. Uraraka laughs and tips back her own glass -- although she doesn’t down the whole glass in one go.

Across the table, Momo chides, “Deku-kun is looking out for you.” With a glint of humor in her eye, she adds, “I know how you get on champagne.” Shouto knows what she’s referring to and hates her for bringing it up at all. At the last Pro Hero conference dinner gala he got demolished on fancy champagne and performed a lap dance for half the attendees. That’s not something he’s ever going to live down; and as Momo was one of the people who received his... attention, he knows she’s right. He shouldn’t be drinking his feelings away. He’s an adult. He’s mature. There’s no reason to drown his woes at the bar. He is certainly not wallowing. (He is. A little.)

He orders a light beer to spite Midoriya anyway and resigns himself to unfortunate sobriety for the remainder of the evening. The waiter returns and takes orders for appetizers and entrees. After the waiter leaves, the table breaks into idle chatter again. Midoriya orders another beer for himself from the bar. Iida erratically waves his arm while recounting a harrowing tale about a reconnaissance mission and knocks over two glasses of water (neither of which his own). Everyone seated around him surreptitiously moves their glasses a few inches away in the aftermath to reduce the odds of a repeated incident.

Jirou’s phone rings before their food arrives. Iida ardently reprimands her for breaking the ‘no work phones at the table’ rule they established upon entering the restaurant. With so many Pro Heroes in one room, the group recognized the likelihood of a distracting call and made a pact to leave work to their sidekicks and the heroes on active duty.

Except for Shouto, that is. For the first time he feels out of place among a table of heroes; like there’s an invisible wall erected between them. Heroes on one side, and Shouto, now a regular civilian, on the other.

Jirou ignores Iida’s lecture and pats Momo’s thigh, standing. “Hey, babe, I gotta take this call. I’ll be right back.” Vanishing behind the army of waiters she leaves her seat empty. The dozen or so heroes at the table don’t hold back the clear delight in their faces.

“Babe, huh?” Uraraka croons. “That’s so sweet!”

“I wasn’t sure when you were going to announce your relationship, but it looks like you two are getting serious.” Asui comments, tapping her chin. “I’m very happy for you, ribbit.”

Momo’s blush starts at her cheeks and slowly consumes the entirety of her face. “That’s -- yeah. I think she likes saying it.”

“Wait,” Shouto says. “You two are dating?” The dozen or so dumbfounded faces return to him.
Momo’s blush recedes, paling her skin. Her mouth opens in surprise, transforming into an expression resembling horror.

“How did you not know?” she shrieks. “I literally told you the night she asked me out -- you --!” Shouto’s mouth twitches. He doesn’t know how much longer he can hold his expression. “Oh, I’m gonna -- you jerk! I really hate when you do that. That’s not funny.”

“No, this is the first I’m hearing of it. I truly did not know you were dating.” Shouto replies, deadpan. His traitorous mouth twitches again, destroying his impassive delivery. “I had no idea whatsoever.” Momo throws a napkin at him. Midoriya’s shoulders shake beside him with silent laughter.

“Woo!” Ashido shouts across the table. “I love those lesbians! My friends are lesbians! And they’re in love! Yeah!” Iida stands, nearly upending his chair, and marches over to lecture her about volume control and professionalism in a public restaurant. Uraraka laughs hysterically. Shouto subtly slides her glass of sake out of reach. Jirou returns to the table and blinks at the chaos, lowering herself back into her chair with a wary glance around the room.

Midoriya leans into Shouto’s left shoulder. Shouto resists the urge to pull away. He whispers, close enough to touch Shouto’s ear, “Are you really okay? You’ve been pretty quiet.”

Damn him. Figures with Shouto’s luck, Midoriya would be the first to notice how unsettled he is. Midoriya’s lips brush the outer shell of his ear before pulling away. Shouto wonders if one of the restaurant staff is playing with the thermostat, or if he’s the one responsible for pumping up the restaurant’s temperature an unnecessary extra ten degrees.

“I’m fine.” Shouto says. He turns away, exhaling a smoky breath. Too close. “But I think I’ll feel better after a few drinks.”

Midoriya frowns. Shouto’s stomach flips; he didn’t sound convincing at all. “That’s -- that’s not a good idea.”

“You’re telling me,” Shouto mutters, too low for Midoriya to hear. Midoriya blinks, confused, and asks if Shouto said something else. Uraraka saves him from defending his claim by pressing a cold glass into his hand.

“Whiskey!” She shouts, giggling when Iida reminds her to use an appropriate level of volume. “It’s not as good as Iida’s, though.”

Midoriya grimaces when Shouto takes it. Shouto ignores him, because Shouto is a mature adult who is perfectly capable of handling his emotions without using alcohol to cope. It’s just one drink. A very horrible drink. Shouto hisses, coughing at the rough burn. “Oh, that’s terrible.”

“I know!” Uraraka cries. “It’s so expensive too!”

Midoriya sighs. “Ochaco-san…”

Shushing him, she hands Shouto a different glass. “This very brave man just outed himself to the -- the whole world -- and as his friend, we are celebrating. With drinks. Lots of drinks.”

Shouto sniffs the drink inside. Wrinkling his nose, he hands it to Midoriya. “I changed my mind. You can have this one.” Uraraka breaks out into another fit of giggles when Midoriya glances at the glass and downs it without complaint.

Uraraka is sneaky, however. She doesn’t give up so easily. She pulls out her trump card: a bright
colored sweet smelling drink with a tiny umbrella. She’s deliberately leveraging Shouto’s fondness for sugary drinks. Midoriya groans when he sees it. “Ugh, those are awful. I had a hangover for like two days when I had one of those.”

Uraraka snorts. “After you drank half a bottle of sake, maybe. Your tolerance is inhuman.” Midoriya shrugs, attention lost and refocused on the arrival of their food.

Shouto knows better to drink around Uraraka but somehow she slips him another sugary drink after he finishes the first one, and Shouto knows he’s in trouble. Iida forces him to eat some of his dinner because otherwise it’s a generous waste of food. Shouto agrees, too relaxed and compliant to argue otherwise. The food is good; or maybe that’s the alcohol. His drink is very good. Strong, too. The room tilts a little as he stirs the umbrella and plays with the cherry at the bottom.

After a few drinks, it comes to no surprise he and Uraraka stumble back into their old ways: Drunk Philosophy. This is the duo that theorized The Deku Complex and many other strange and thought provoking theories that test the boundaries of human knowledge. Together, he and Uraraka (with added alcohol) are a fascinating combination. Shouto doesn’t know how they start their discussions, but they always end up in the middle of a debate without any idea how they got there. Much like this one.

“Creating a numerical hero ranking system that is essentially based on popularity is inherently flawed.” Shouto says. Uraraka raises a glass, nodding slowly. “It makes the Number One Hero title useless. Hero rankings are a social construct.” Shouto’s words slur together a bit on the end, but he’s far more eloquent than the last time he and Uraraka participated in Drunk Philosophy. “Our society has adapted to the appearance of quirks, but at its core our society functions like a high school class election. Most citizens who put their faith in the top heroes don’t know the heroes personally. They have no idea who they really are.”

These are rather treasonous discussions to have among a table of Pro Heroes, most of which are among the Top 50 or Top 10 placements. As it is, most of the table is either intoxicated themselves or dead to the world in a food coma. Even Iida’s eyelids droop, startling when he pitches forward and nearly faceplants into his empty bowl of stew.

“It’s not an accurate measurement of what makes you a hero.” Uraraka mutters sourly. “I’ve been at number fifteen for ages! It’s so easy for heroes with -- like, fighty quirks.” Shouto nods, like fighty quirks is a scientific description for the battle-suited quirks that most top heroes possess. “The rest of us have to be creative and do all these celebrity events. I’ve done so many ads at this point I’ve probably done promotional for like, half the companies in Japan. I do more ads than I do rescues. It’s -- popularity.”

“Popularity isn’t an indicative measurement of skill or morals.” Shouto agrees. “I mean, look at my old man. He’s skilled, sure.”

Uraraka pipes up, moodily stirring the noodles in her bowl, “But he’s a massive sack of dicks.” Shouto nods with fervor.

Midoriya chokes. Shouto turns to him. “Are you alright, Midoriya?”

“Yeah.” Midoriya wheezes, thumping his chest with his fist. “Swallowed wrong. M’good.”

“Anyway,” Shouto continues. “Number One Hero, the whole ranking system -- it’s arbitrary. Endeavor has the position because the board is full of sentimental old fools who don’t like to rock the boat. They make up this whole angle about looking for popularity and arrest stats. But
Midoriya’s completed far more cases per quarter and he’s far more popular among the general public. He’s just bad at finishing paperwork.” Midoriya sinks a little in his chair.

“Being bad at paperwork is an unfortunate side effect I inherited from All Might,” Midoriya’s mouth twists. “Or at least, that’s what Aizawa-sensei tells me.”

Stirring the umbrella in his glass, Shouto adds mildly, “They won’t kick Endeavor off the podium until he does something to rock their faith in him. Or Midoriya physically kicks him off it.”

Ducking his head, Midoriya whispers like he’s sharing a deep secret, “That offer is still on the table, just so you know.”

“Aim for the -- you know...” Uraraka makes a rude gesture with her hand and indicates below her abdomen. Iida awakens from his slight doze and scolds her for indecency, but she laughs and pats his cheek fondly. “Oh, we're just joking, Iida-kun!”

The alcohol really loosens Shouto up. The heavy weight in his chest and the ache of last week’s woes are insignificant. Unfortunately, he’s a little more loose lipped than usual, too. “The Number One Hero isn’t really a symbol of peace, either. All Might was the embodiment of the strength and stability of hero society, but after he retired there wasn’t anybody to replace him. Endeavor’s had the spot for over a decade, but you don’t see anybody calling him a symbol of anything. Maybe besides being a symbol for being a flaming pile of --” Midoriya slaps a hand over Shouto’s mouth as a waiter passes. “-- Mphmph.”

Uraraka dips her head. Her eyes slide half-shut. She’s definitely drunk, on the verge of falling asleep in her chair. Shouto is not far behind her. They’re both going to be miserable tomorrow. She perks back up, catching herself before she slides off her chair. “Because being the Number One Hero doesn’t automatically make you the next pillar for human society.”

“Midoriya is the closest thing we have to the next symbol of peace.” Shouto comments mildly. Midoriya sputters and waves his hand to dismiss the idea, but Shouto presses on. “No, Midoriya, listen. They already call you the rising star hero, I’m simply sta-- state -- state -- I’m saying facts.” He slurs the last three words together. Shouto overdid it a little with the drinks. Tomorrow, when he’s hungover and uncomfortable, he’s going to blame Uraraka. This is her fault.

“The Number One Hero role is so dumb,” Uraraka whines. “If they actually followed their own rules, Deku-kun would’ve been Number One ages ago.” Shouto nods solemnly. Energized, she raises a glass to toast and her voice; “Deku deserves Number One! And Endeavor is a bitch with --” Midoriya silences her by slapping his other palm over her mouth.

“You both are trying to get me in trouble.” Midoriya mutters, performing a quick check over his shoulder to spot any eavesdroppers or waiters in the vicinity who could overhear the sensitive contents of their discussion. Uraraka licks his hand and Midoriya withdraws his palm, disgusted. He wipes his hands on the tablecloth.

“Thank you for the inspiring message, Uraraka. Perhaps we should have this discussion somewhere else.” Shouto says, straight faced.

Uraraka raises her glass and continues speaking like she didn’t hear anything he said. Her voice cuts across the room, clear and shrill, “Deku-kun will take Number One this year or I’ll kick Endeavor in the --!”

Midoriya cuts her off with a sharp laugh. “HA! You’re so funny, Ochaco-san! Good one!”

Lowering his voice, he hisses, “Cut it out. Go finish your food and drink your water.”
“He wants us to shut up before we get in trouble.” Shouto confides to Uraraka. She nods seriously, dramatically placing a finger to her lips and shushing Midoriya, who appears bemused at the reaction. Properly admonished, Shouto reaches for his sweet-smelling drink again. He frowns at the near-empty glass. Midoriya reaches over and plucks it out of his hand.

“No more for you.” Midoriya orders. He snatches Uraraka’s glass as well. “You too, Ochaco-san.” Uraraka whines, but she’s ultimately too tired to put up a fight. Shouto glances mournfully at his stolen glass and wonders if there’s a way he can distract Midoriya and take it back.

Midoriya doesn’t give him the chance. He picks up Shouto’s glass and downs the remainder, including the cherry.

Shouto stares at him. Midoriya leaves the cherry resting between his teeth, the corners of his lips turning up into a mischievous grin. Shouto opens his mouth to complain, *That was mine,* but Midoriya closes his mouth and swallows it, leaving a stain of red across his bottom lip. Shouto leans forward, catching himself before he sways too far into Midoriya’s personal space. He wants to -- do *something.* He stares at the patch of red that Midoriya swipes away with his tongue. Midoriya grimaces. “Ugh. Still too sweet.”

Lost for words, Shouto nods mechanically. He feels frost creeping up his leg and shifts to cross his left leg over to melt the ice and balance his temperature control. Inwardly, he bemoans Midoriya’s unbelievable obliviousness.

Dinner is paid by the LGBT group sponsors, but the heroes at the table tip *very* generously. The staff was nice, and most of the heroes at the table had a little more to drink than what would be considered responsible. Shouto decides there are worse crimes.

Midoriya carries Uraraka out of the restaurant. Iida, exhausted from a day of travel and serving as the impromptu leader of a bunch of high-energy Pro Heroes, slumps against Shouto at the door and clings to him like an overzealous baby koala. Shouto doesn’t wake him up. Iida deserves the rest.

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In the lobby, Asui takes Uraraka into her care and promises to watch over her for the night. She places a gentle possessive hand to Uraraka’s back. Her expression melts into fondness and an emotion Shouto recognizes in his own reflection when he looks away from Midoriya. He blinks. He wonders when he missed that change in their relationship. He knew Asui and Uraraka were close, but he didn’t realize they were *that* close.

Now free of Uraraka, Midoriya hunts down the receptionist to get the keys to his room. Shouto assumes he’s grabbing the key to Shouto’s room as well; as Shouto left the reservation planning to

Iida grunts, blinking awake and adjusting his crooked glasses. Shouto returns his attention to the sleeping hero currently using *him* as a pillow. Iida jolts up like he received an electric shock. “Ah! Todoroki-kun, I apologize. I was not aware how fatigued I was from today’s activities.”
“It’s fine, Iida.” Iida nods sharply. “Do you want me to walk you to your room?” Shouto’s not in much better shape, but it feels wrong to leave Iida stumbling around the hotel while half-asleep.

Iida refuses. “I am quite alright, thank you for your kind offer! I shall retire to my room. Please enjoy the rest of your evening. I recommend you rest. You may not be a hero anymore, but proper sleeping schedules are very important. I brought earphones if you would like them, I know some hotels are quite active at --”

Midoriya slings an arm over Shouto’s shoulder. Shouto’s hand twitches, begging to push away. He forces himself to relax. “You don’t have to worry. Shouto could sleep through an earthquake.”

Shouto rolls his eyes. The alcohol loosened him up too well, as he replies without thinking, “And you could sleep through a typhoon.”

A laugh behind the group startles all three of them. Kendou, the former Class 3-B president, smiles and gestures to Midoriya. There’s an understanding shine in her eyes that Shouto doesn’t understand until she speaks. “Oh! I didn’t realize you two were together now, congrats! Well, I’m off. Good seeing you all, have a good night!”

Her words carry a painful clench in his stomach (although clearly unintentional) which slaps Shouto into sudden sobriety. Midoriya drops his arm from Shouto’s shoulder, bringing Shouto’s shoulder bag with him. He slides it over his own overnight bag. “Yeah, haha. Goodnight. Well. I’ll carry your bag for you, you’re dead on your feet. And I-I’m gonna, uh, head up.” Shouto nods dumbly, unable to form a proper response.

“I, as well.” Iida announces. He presses the button for the elevator and the three wait in silence for the gleaming steel doors to open. Shouto knows there’s a good chance he will get in trouble if he accidentally chars the ceiling, so he musters all of his resolve by concentrating on keeping his quirk under control. The uncomfortable silence stretches into eternity.

Iida steps into the elevator first. Shouto hesitates, realizing he isn’t sure which floor his room resides. Midoriya grunts and punches the number for the third floor, while Iida presses the button for the fifth floor.

Midoriya’s floor arrives first. He twists around to look at Shouto and says, evenly, “Come on, Shouto.” Shouto has no choice but to follow. Iida wishes them a night of pleasant rest and heads up to his own room. Midoriya plays with his pockets as they walk down the hallway. Shouto stumbles as he walks. The carpet is a chaotic pattern, his head spins when he glances down at it. He’s not as sober as he thought.

Midoriya clears his throat and stops in front of room 332. “My agent made the reservations for us. They were pretty last minute so I couldn’t get you your own room.”

“That’s fine.” They live in the same apartment, after all. Spending the night in a room together can’t be too difficult.

Midoriya opens the door. He stands there for a moment and stares into the hotel room. He makes a small noise in the back of his throat. Curious, Shouto leans over his shoulder to see what caught his attention and his heart drops into his stomach.

There’s only one bed.

Of course.

“That’s --” Midoriya groans. “-- that’s just great. Shit. You take the bed. I’ll take the floor, it’s
“No,” Shouto says. “You’ll be exhausted tomorrow. I’ll take the floor, I can sleep on the train.” Midoriya stubbornly crosses his arms. A thud from their neighboring room startles both of them. “Uh. Maybe we should have this discussion inside.”

“Right.” Midoriya closes the door behind him. “And I’m taking the floor. Don’t worry about me, it’s my fault I didn’t check with my agent. I forgot to let him know you changed your plans.”

“Midoriya,” Shouto starts, but Midoriya shakes his head.

“The floor is fine. I fall asleep on your couch all the time, and that’s basically the same thing.” Shouto doesn’t know if he should be offended by the indirect insult. He likes that couch.

Shouto’s mouth takes this unfortunate opportunity to open without thinking: “It’s fine. We can share.” Great work, he thinks to himself bitterly.

Midoriya’s expression doesn’t change, but his breath catches. In a neutral tone, he agrees, although reluctantly. Shouto almost wishes he refused. He needs to stop making impulsive decisions like this around Midoriya. He’s going to slip up and create real problems, and there will be nobody to blame besides himself.

Sharing a bed with Midoriya is one such real problem. “What side do you want?” Midoriya asks. Shouto grunts, noncommittal. He needs to get out and away from Midoriya as soon as possible before his irresponsible mouth runs wild again. “Alright, fine.”

Shouto claims the bathroom first. The door is a welcome barrier between them while they change into night clothes. Separately. It also gives Shouto a chance to release his impending mental breakdown in the bathroom. He splashes water across his face in the sink, staring at his weary expression in the mirror.

This is your fault, he thinks, as he stares at his reflection. He brushes his teeth and smooths cream over his scar. He leaves the restroom and finds Midoriya laying face-down on the bed, already snoring. Shouto stares at his form a beat too long -- he’s wearing green boxers and a plain white tshirt -- and hides his flush by flicking off the room light. He steps forward blindly, waiting for his eyes to adjust in the dark as he walks to the bed.

Shouto stubs his toe on the bed frame. “Fuck,” he hisses, rubbing the sore appendage and hopping forward. In the dark, he can’t judge the distance from the bed, and pitches forward with no control over his landing. He lands on something warm and stiff. He does not land on the bed.

“Fucking shit.” Midoriya groans, half-muffled with his face in the pillow. Shouto landed awkwardly on Midoriya. Guilt floods his system. He feels Midoriya roll over beneath him, and his voice is much closer than before. “Ow. Feels like you broke my spine. What was that about?”

“Sorry. Tripped.” Shouto mumbles. He sighs, untangling himself from Midoriya. He’s too tired to feel embarrassed. He’s too exhausted for anymore emotions. He feels numb instead. Hollowed. Empty. Dropping onto the bed beside Midoriya, he releases all the tension from the day before. He knows he’s going to wake up with a blinding hangover and sleep is a necessity if he plans to survive tomorrow’s train ride.

He rolls over. Midoriya’s breathing evens out. Staring up at the darkened ceiling, Shouto places his arm across his face. If he doesn’t think about Midoriya sitting a few inches away -- if he concentrates on ignoring the warmth radiating from the other side of the bed -- he can pretend he’s
in his own bed in his apartment.

Sleep does not come. He takes a deep breath and holds in a sigh; he can’t wake Midoriya a second time. That’s unfair.

“I-I know you’re awake, Shouto.” Midoriya says, breaking the shroud of silence in the dark room. “Your breathing stopped.”

Shouto grunts. “I was trying to sleep.”

Midoriya doesn’t seem as interested in sleeping as he was a few minutes ago. “Is something bothering you?”

“I’m just tired.” Shouto knows that’s as close to the truth he can allow. Switching tactics, he turns his head toward the sound of Midoriya’s voice. “I was surprised Bakugou came today.”

He can’t see Midoriya’s face in the dark, but the brief hesitation before Midoriya speaks gives him a clear mental image of the face he’s making. “Kirishima convinced him. Kacchan, he -- Kacchan knows how much these events mean to Kirishima, and he...he likes doing them. I think.”

“It’s hard to tell with Bakugou. He doesn’t seem to like much of anything.” Shouto says. Midoriya laughs, quiet.

Aloud, Midoriya muses, “I think he likes Kirishima...and that’s good for him. He’s changed a lot when he’s around -- when they’re together.” Shouto never noticed. He never pays as much attention to Bakugou. Not like Midoriya does. He’s never understood Midoriya’s intense focus on Bakugou’s well-being. Their relationship is wrapped in too many years of tension for them to ever be friends, but in recent years they’ve been civil; or the closest Bakugou can be to civil. He wonders how much of that change is Bakugou’s maturity, or Kirishima’s influence. A combination of both, he thinks.

“He’s changed a lot.” Midoriya sighs. “But we’re still...” He doesn’t need the vocalize the end of that open-ended sentence. Shouto understands.

“You’ve changed a lot, too.” Shouto says. “You’ve changed a lot more than you realize.”

The weight on Midoriya’s side of the bed moves closer. “Everyone keeps telling me that.”

“Do you think I’ve changed?” Shouto asks. He hates his mouth for opening again. Shouto’s Drunk Philosophy Hour isn’t over, apparently.

Midoriya’s arm brushes against his own. Shouto sucks in a quiet breath. “I suppose. You’re more...open, now. You smile a lot more. Although you still pull away, sometimes. I can never tell what’s really going on in your brain. That hasn’t changed since Yuuei.”

“Oh,” Shouto says.

“Why’d you ask?” Midoriya doesn’t sound curious. He’s not asking for his own gain. He’s asking because he cares; he wants to understand Shouto better. He wants to help. Shouto’s chest aches. Midoriya’s attitude, his looks, the way he carries himself: all those changes are purely aesthetic. They don’t really matter. Midoriya’s core, the innate sense of wishing to help everyone around him -- that hasn’t changed at all.

The honesty of Midoriya’s answer pulls the truth out of his own mouth. “Everything’s changing so much. The world is changing constantly. You and I, we’re both changing. I can’t help but worry
one day -- one day you might not...you might not be around. You might move on. Everyone else might move on too.” He's grateful for the dark. Midoriya can’t see his face burn.

Midoriya’s reply is soft, softer than Shouto expects. “You can’t possibly mean that.” Shouto bites his lip, tucking his reply under his tongue and trapping it there.

“I’m retired now.” Shouto says carefully. He can’t run his mouth again. “I know that I -- I guess now I’m realizing the rest of you are going to leave me behind.”

“Shouto,” Midoriya’s weight shifts again. He feels Midoriya’s hand trace along his arm, feather light and ticklish across his skin. “Shouto, look at me.” It’s too dark to see. Even with his eyes adjusted to the dimness of the room, he can barely make out the outline of Midoriya’s shoulders. He turns, pressing the side of his head to the pillow. Midoriya’s breath mingles with his own, warm and light upon his cheek. “A-Are you...are you worried you’re going to be alone?”

He reads Shouto too well. It’s Midoriya’s talent, or maybe his secret second quirk. That kind of intuition can’t be natural. I can never tell what’s really going on in your brain, Midoriya said. It certainly doesn’t appear that way to Shouto. “I-I don’t know.”

Midoriya’s hand enfolds his own, gently pushing apart his fingers. Shouto notices, then, he was digging his nails into his own palms. This is why he hates drinking; he loses control of his emotions. He shouldn’t have let Uraraka take advantage of his momentary weakness. He should’ve listened to Midoriya at the start of their dinner. Pathetic, he thinks.

His hands are warm -- Midoriya’s hands, that is. Shouto feels the rough edges and shapes of the scars on his hand, brushing lightly against Shouto’s own calloused hands. “You won’t be,” Midoriya says quietly, but firmly. “You have so many people who love you. Your mother. Your sister. Momo, Jirou, Iida, Uraraka -- they all love you. You’re never going to be alone.”

Shouto hates the vulnerability in his voice when he asks, “What about you?”

“You’re one of my best friends,” Midoriya answers, as quiet as before. “Of course I love you. I’m not going to leave you alone, either. I’m not going anywhere.”

Shouto closes his eyes. The push-pull in his chest, the urge to pull Midoriya closer, the urge to push him away falls apart. The paper thin weight of his heart shatters. He hates the relief that follows. He knew he was going to get his heart broken, and knowing it’s over, he’s glad it’s over. No more waiting. Of course I love you. You’re one of my best friends.

Midoriya’s question is a welcome distraction. “What’s got you so worried about this now? Did something happen?”

“No,” Shouto lies, shying away from his gentle hands and the softness of Midoriya’s voice, like they physically hurt him. He turns over. Facing the window, he looks out at the sky. The moon is out. The stars and lights from the city blend together into one blur of light. “I was just thinking.”

[Video: WHO IS GOING TO BE JAPAN’S #1? - HWWU for February 22nd, 20X1 (#518). Thumbnail image: Endeavor’s blacked out fiery silhouette in the background with Hero Deku in front and in color, an intense grin on his face. One arm is raised to throw a punch.]

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Thanks to MegaMegaMerch for sponsoring this episode of HeroWatch Weekly Update. Get 5% off
The first of the biannual Hero Ranking Billboard Chart Rankings in Japan are less than a month away. Everyone’s excited, especially because this year’s polls all predict Deku in the #1 spot… We’re also excited to see who will officially take retired Hero Entropy’s #5 position! Laser Eye (#6) is technically his replacement, but we’re sure Laser Eye will be more than happy to finally make it official.

This year’s rankings are expected to change significantly from previous years. A spike in villain activity and crime has put heroes at the forefront of everything in media these days. The Top 10 is expected to change a lot!

What are your predictions?

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Shouto naps on the train, too tired to keep his eyes open. Unsurprisingly, his sleep from the night before was light and restless. His mind kept twisting and wringing out Midoriya’s response inside his brain like a roll of wet cloth. It leaves him feeling like there’s a gaping wound in his chest. He’s hyper aware of Midoriya’s hand on his shoulder, keeping him from nodding off or slamming his head into the person in front of him. The touch doesn’t soothe him, even though the heat from Midoriya’s palm is warm. He misses the numbness of exhaustion. Feeling nothing was better than feeling everything.

Midoriya busies himself with his phone, offering his earphones to Shouto for blocking out the general noisiness of public transportation.

“We should’ve asked Iida to bring his car.” Shouto grumbles, after he receives another rough elbow into his kidney. The earphones are useless. He abandons the pretense of napping after the third child aboard the cabin releases a splitting wail.

“He’s going shopping with Ochaco-san and Tsuyu-chan later.” Midoriya replies, without glancing
up from his phone. “They slept in and wanted to spend another day in Kamino, I think.” Shouto and Midoriya did not have such luxury. They left Kyoto early and boarded the first train to Musutafu.

“Should I bring something?” Midoriya asks. “For your mom, I mean. I’ll be stopping at my mom’s house, I’m sure I can pick up flowers.”

“No, it’s fine.” Shouto is grateful he won’t be spending the entire day with Midoriya. He gets a chance to see his mother without any distractions, and Midoriya is definitely a distraction. “Come for dinner and you’ll make her plenty happy.”

Midoriya huffs. He looks out the window of the train. “I’ll ask my mom if she wants to send anything over, then. She goes over to see your mom sometimes.” That’s news to Shouto. He wasn’t aware his mother knew Midoriya Inko. His mother never mentioned it. “I gave my mom her number,” Midoriya explains, when Shouto frowns at his response. “I thought she could use a friend. My mom is...well, you’ve met her. You know.”

Shouto nods slowly. He regrets not stopping for coffee before they left. His poor rest from the night before leaves him sluggish. “No, that’s...that was a good idea. I’m glad my mom is making friends her own age.” Midoriya turns to Shouto. There’s something in his face, a question behind his eyes. Whatever the question is, Midoriya decides not to voice it. Maybe he’s aware of Shouto’s solemn mood. Shouto hopes not; but he knows it’s more than likely Midoriya is aware, and is purposefully treating Shouto like fragile glass as not to upset him. His stomach twists at the thought.

Shouto exits the train first at his mother’s stop. Midoriya waves him off and promises to text him later with his plans. Shouto completes his walk in silence, shedding the layers of gloom around him like pulling off an extra layer of clothes. He doesn’t want to disappoint his mother, he needs to force a smile and bear it.

At the door, his mother doesn’t greet him.

“Shouto!” Fuyumi says, rushing forward to hug him the moment the door sprays open. “It feels like I haven’t seen you in forever.” Shouto tenses at the surprise, quickly relaxing into his sister’s familiar hold. “I’ve missed you. Mother said you’ve been visiting, but we always miss each other, huh?”

“Sorry,” Shouto says, because he feels like that’s the right thing to say.

“Don’t be sorry. Try and pick up your phone once in a while!” Fuyumi ushers him in, allowing Shouto a chance to slide off his shoes before she attacks him with a new question. “Just you, then?” Shouto tilts his head to the side, confused. Fuyumi explains, “Mother said you were bringing a friend. Did they change their plans?”

Shouto follows her into the kitchen, where Fuyumi lays out a roll of seaweed and resumes rolling the rice. There’s a small stack of freshly prepared sushi beside her. She was cooking before Shouto knocked. Shouto’s stomach growls. He regrets skipping breakfast. Denying himself the thrill of stealing a sushi roll, he answers, “He wanted to visit his mother first. She’s in the area, and he hasn’t had a chance to see her in a while.”

“Oh, that’s nice. Well, mother is outside. She’s watering the garden if you want to say hello.”

Shouto leaves her to the sushi. He opens the sliding glass door and steps out onto the balcony. A few feet from the door, Todoroki Yukiko crouches between an immense presentation of green leaves and flowers. “Mother,” Shouto calls, as not to startle her. His mother turns around, a broad
smile already on her face at the sound of his voice. Her face glows when she sees Shouto in the doorway.

“Shouto,” she says, standing and brushing the dirt from her palms onto her trousers. “I’m so happy to see you.” She gathers him up into a hug, and although her arms are thin and frail looking, her hug is strong and firm. She pulls back, lifting a cool hand to his cheek. “Your friend is here, yes?”

“He’s out visiting his mother.” Shouto replies. “He’ll be back for dinner.”

“Ah, that’s perfect. Come, help me in the garden.” It looks less like a farmer’s garden, and more like the inside of a florist shop. Shouto is relieved for the distraction. His mother loves her garden, and Shouto would never deny the opportunity to see her happy.
“There’s something troubling you,” his mother starts, after Shouto finishes weeding the tomatoes and moves onto watering the carnival collection of flowers.

Shouto hums. “A lot on my mind. Don’t worry about me.” He returns his focus to the flowers, hoping to relieve his mother’s concern and redirect her attention. “Why all the flowers? You planted a lot more from the last time I came. They’re not like the vegetables, they don’t have any use.”

His mother stands, slipping off her gloves and tucking them under her arm. She stands beside Shouto, looking over the trays of bright blues and yellows and purples. Planting a soft hand on his cheek, she gently nudges his face to look at her. “Not everything needs to be useful for you to have it,” she says. She’s more perceptive than Shouto gives her credit for; she has a mother’s intuition. The force of sincerity and weight behind her voice causes his hand to still. The water from the hose reduces to a small trickle. Her smile is sadder, but Shouto doesn’t need to puzzle over it to figure out why.

Shouto’s ears ring. Softly, she says, “You’re allowed to have things that make you happy, Shouto.”

Leaving him to finish watering the rest of the garden, she returns inside to help Fuyumi finish making dinner. Shouto remains on the balcony, leaning against the railing and staring intently into the rows of flowers. He watches the drops of water collect and fall at the base of the table before landing on the ground. The dripping motion leaves him transfixed, mulling over his mother’s unexpected wisdom. Shouto doesn’t move until his mother calls his name from inside. He follows the sound of her voice to the door, leaving one last lingering stare into the depths of the flowers.

Midoriya is at the table when he enters. Fuyumi sits beside him, her face alight with reverence as Midoriya waves his hands and describes (what Shouto assumes) the last great battle he had with a villain. His mother calls him to the counter, gesturing to a plate of sushi and sauce. Shouto carries them over to the table and catches the end of Midoriya and Fuyumi’s conversation. Midoriya and Fuyumi sit together, forcing Shouto to the other side of the table. He sits down gingerly, rubbing the stiffness from his legs. He stood outside for a lot longer than he planned.

Fuyumi giggles, “— and he had an All Might onesie I would put him in. I think I took photos too, I’m sure they’re somewhere in storage. Did you know Shouto used to be a huge All Might Fan as a child?”

“No,” Midoriya gasps theatrically, leaning forward with shining eyes. “But now you need to show me.”

“Don’t.” Shouto interrupts, tamping down the frustration in his voice. “Fuyumi, please.”

“I’m just telling Deku-kun here some of young Shouto’s greatest tales!” Fuyumi pleads innocently. “Like the time he bought an All Might poster and hid it for over two years by tucking it under his pillow —”

Shouto kicks her under the table. Fuyumi doesn’t flinch, but Midoriya’s lip twitches. “Ow,” Midoriya murmurs, turning his attention to Shouto. “Was that kick meant for me?” Fuyumi gapes at him and breaks out into uncontrollable giggles. Shouto flees the table and returns to the kitchen.

His mother hands him a stack of napkins. “Thank you for bringing your friend, today.” She says, low enough that Midoriya and Fuyumi can’t hear her across the room. “He is the one you said makes you smile, yes?”

Shouto grimaces. His mother pats his cheek, taking the napkins from his hand and placing them
back on the counter. She inspects his face. “Did something happen?”

Lowering his voice, Shouto gives her the shortest summary possible. If he tells her the truth, she’s less likely to pry. “He said...he said we’re friends. Just friends.” His mother frowns. “It’s fine, really. I’m -- It’s probably for the best.”

“Shouto,” she says, but she bites her lip and holds back whatever she plans on saying next. Shouto has only a moment to wonder why, as a warm hand presses against his back.

“Sorry to interrupt, but where’s the bathroom?” Midoriya grins sheepishly. “Fuyumi went upstairs to grab something and I forgot to ask her.”

“Uh.” Shouto says intelligently. Midoriya’s hand is very warm.

His mother thankfully answers for Shouto. “It’s the first door off the entrance way, next to the closet.” Midoriya thanks her and bounces off to find it. Shouto ducks out of the conversation, picking up the napkins and setting them on the table.

“Shouto,” his mother calls. Her voice rings out sharply. Shouto snaps his head up to look at her. “Listen to me, for a moment. Please.”

Warily, he traces his steps back to her. “Yes?”

“You said this boy told you he wished to remain friends?” Shouto nods slowly, deciding not to delve into the complex half-said things between himself and Midoriya. “Are you sure he was telling the truth?”

The question pulls him up short of an answer. “...What?”

“Shouto, honestly,” his mother chides gently. “You always worry about these things so deeply, you get so trapped in your own head. I’m sure if you looked in the mirror you’d see how much you love him on your face.” Shouto curls his hand into a fist, ducking his gaze from his mother’s open expression. “But if you saw what I see on his face, I know without a doubt he loves you too.”

Stiffly, Shouto nods. His mother says it like it’s a fact, no room for argument. An ultimatum. He starts, “I...” but Midoriya returns from the bathroom and relieves Shouto from providing an answer.

Fuyumi appears a moment later with a photo album, laughing and teasing Shouto with his baby pictures. Midoriya is delighted to discover Shouto owned, at one point in time, not just one but two sets of All Might pajamas. Shouto wishes he could crawl under the table.

He doesn’t speak much at dinner, turning his mother’s words over and over in his mind between bites. He looks at Midoriya in front of him, tracing the profile of his face as Midoriya talks to Fuyumi and memorizes the curve of his smile. Shouto does not know if his mother’s words are true; but when Midoriya turns his head to look at Shouto and asks him a question with gleaming eyes, Shouto can’t look away. He’s used to the feeling, the warmth that dances along his ribs whenever Midoriya turns his attention to Shouto, and Shouto takes it, selfishly.

It is selfish to want more than what he has. The world needs Midoriya. Shouto has no right to demand any more than what he is already allowed. His mother’s voice, however, brushes those thoughts aside. You’re allowed to have things that make you happy.

Is it so wrong to want more? All of his reasons for keeping Midoriya at arms length seem smaller in comparison now.
He does not know how much more time Midoriya has beside him -- but, perhaps his mother is right. He can be selfish and relish in the remaining moments he spends alongside someone like Midoriya. These thoughts are selfish, and he will bite down the sour feeling of wanting more. This is enough. He has enough. He will endure. He will move forward. *Plus ultra*, he thinks wryly. *I will go beyond.*
resembling Deku’s signature uniform. The other sidekick, Geowave, is wearing a bright blue and orange jumpsuit and a helmet.

Creati | #11 ✔️ @icreati
#AskDeku Why are you on your phone? Get back to work! >:(
967 retweets | 3,155 favorites
10:26 AM - 8 March X1

DEKUデク ✔️ @herodeku
@icreati Sorry :-(
896 retweets | 2,855 favorites
10:29 AM - 8 March X1

DEKUデク ✔️ @herodeku
#AskDeku is over...I’ll be back for more next time. Thank you!
789 retweets | 2,509 favorites
10:33 AM - 8 March X1

Earphone Jack ✔️ @radio_jack
@herodeku B-)  
1,077 retweets | 3,132 favorites
10:36 AM - 8 March X1

Creati | #11 ✔️ @icreati
@radio_jack You too!
990 retweets | 2,202 favorites
10:40 AM - 8 March X1

Earphone Jack ✔️ @radio_jack
@icreati B-(
1,208 retweets | 3,015 favorites
10:44 AM - 8 March X1

From Yaoyorozu Momo:
Hey we’re gonna be late to lunch
Ran into trouble on the way in
If you’re there already can you request a table for four
Please

To Yaoyorozu Momo:
sure
why?

From Yaoyorozu Momo:
Brought a friend

To Yaoyorozu Momo:
who

From Yaoyorozu Momo:
Closing his messages, he opens Twitter. His feed refreshes slowly, struggling against the low speed WiFi in the tiny cafe he usually meets Momo and Jirou for lunch in. He scrolls through his feed and types his hero name into the search bar.

The first tweets are heartwarming. They express their excitement and gratitude, praising Shouto for his courage and kindness for sharing himself with the world. He scrolls through a hundred different tweets before Momo clears her throat, dragging out a chair to sit beside him. The sound is louder than usual, as the cafe is as silent as a graveyard despite the busy staff and patrons.

Jirou takes the seat across from him. Midoriya ducks his head, sheepishly crouching like he’s trying to make himself smaller than he really is. Momo, Jirou, and Midoriya are still in their uniforms. No wonder the entire cafe is staring at them.

“Didn’t have time to change, sorry.” Momo explains fretfully. “We’ve got to head back on patrol after lunch. We were already late too.”

“Busy schedule, I know.” Shouto looks at the agency time slots every so often in his email. Mostly to keep track of Midoriya’s schedule, and plan accordingly. “Any luck finding my replacement yet?”

“I’ve put that into Midoriya’s capable hands. He knows how to spot talent a mile away.” Momo smiles. Jirou elbows Midoriya, who is oddly quiet. He seems deep in contemplation, staring at the space above Shouto’s head with puzzling intensity. Shouto self consciously runs a hand through his hair, pulling at the impromptu bun he created before he left the apartment. He needs a haircut.

“Y-Yeah!” Midoriya startles at the light jostling. He blinks, recovering from whatever daze he fell into. “Uh. Yeah. I’m -- I’m working on it.”

“O-Okay then.” Jirou says, raising both eyebrows and making a face at Shouto like, you see this? The waiter passes by their table and takes their order, breaking the lull of uncomfortable conversation. After the waiter swings off to another table, Jirou leans forward in her chair and jabs a finger at Shouto. “So. The video came out. You saw what people were saying on Twitter?”

Shouto smiles. Midoriya relaxes in his seat, clearly relieved the conversation shifted from him. “Yes, I did. It was -- it was really nice.”

Momo beams at his response. “It’s wonderful! I already got a call from the agent at Night in Tokyo -- they want you to come on! They called me because you don’t have anyone in charge of your PR.” Shouto scowls. He hates doing tv spots. “I know you’re retired, but I think a lot of people would appreciate if you did some small publicity. All those happy people on Twitter would be thrilled if you went on one of the most popular shows in Japan to talk about your experience.”
“I doubt that…” A phone alarm sounds. Midoriya, Jirou, and Momo frantically scramble for their gear. Midoriya pulls his work phone out of his pocket and makes a face. Momo shoots Shouto an apologetic look.

“Villains don’t know how to take a lunch break, huh?” Jirou jokes. She flips her work phone upside down. “You two go, call me if you need backup.” Midoriya shoots her a thumbs up and takes off with Momo. With the two of them alone at the table, Jirou narrows her eyes on Shouto. “So. You and Midoriya. Spill.”

“Nothing to spill,” Shouto grumbles. “We’re friends.”

“Yeah, but --” Jirou’s work phone vibrates. She scowls, pressing the receiver to her ear. “Earphone Jack here, what’s up?” Her expression tightens, glancing over at Shouto with a guilty frown.

“It’s fine,” Shouto says, “You go. I’ll pay the bill.”

Jirou waves him off. “Give me ten minutes. Don’t move.” She dashes out the door behind Momo and Midoriya.

Nine minutes later Jirou bursts back into the cafe, Momo and Midoriya in tow. Momo has a small bruise forming on her jaw, and Midoriya sits down with more care than he did when he entered. He has ash in his hair. “Sorry about that!” Momo slumps back into her chair. “Where were we?” The other patrons in the cafe mutter and point, awe-stricken at the casual display of heroics. Shouto ignores them.

Shouto slides a glass of water to Midoriya, who is grimacing and pressing a hand to his side. “Are you sure neither of you need a hospital --”

“Bruised.” Midoriya wheezes. He lifts his other hand and makes a shaky thumbs up. “Little winded. Don’t worry. M’fine.”

“If you’re sure.” Momo says, eyes laser-focus on his apparent injury. Midoriya offers her a weak grin. She pinches her brow, turning back to Shouto. “So? Will you do it?”

Shouto glances at Jirou. Jirou smirks. Shouto doesn’t trust the excitement gleaming behind her eyes. Those are the eyes of someone scheming. “I’ll think about it.”

“Not for much longer,” Momo smirks into her cup. Shouto blinks. “I hear the winds are changing.” She doesn’t elaborate on her cryptic response, and Shouto doesn’t ask. Some mysteries are best left unsolved.

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HeroWatch ✔️ @HeroWatch
To celebrate 1 week until Hero Rankings we’re doing all sorts of fun polls and quizzes to get you HYPED for this year’s jam packed event -- our sources claim this year is going to be full of
exciting twists! #JHBBCX1
572 retweets | 13,982 favorites
12:05 PM - 14 March X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
Who is your #FaveHero? Vote now!! https://t.col/herowatch/poll/92K4jmW8L5t
598 retweets | 4,236 favorites
12:50 PM - 14 March X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
Poll closes in 2 hours, we’ll announce the results then! #FaveHero
372 retweets | 1,082 favorites
12:58 PM - 14 March X1

小尾 @mimamairou
#favehero (vote deku!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!)
8 retweets | 42 favorites
12:56 PM - 14 March X1

professional ingenium stan @ren_edu2931
#Favehero VOTE INGENIUM OR I;LL (GUN EMOJI)
224 retweets | 542 favorites
1:07 PM - 14 March X1

professional ingenium stan @ren_edu2931
im not kidding every single one of my followers better SMASH that ingenium upvote or i’ll beat
their ass. ingenium for #favehero or bust
335 retweets | 758 favorites
1:13 PM - 14 March X1

TiênMai @e__199
#FaveHero DYNAMITE!!!!!!!!!!!!
2 retweets | 5 favorites
1:16 PM - 14 March X1

macaroni @Blirb3584
My soggy bones sense #favehero will be deku, the bone breaking juice hero
19 retweets | 49 favorites
1:26 PM - 14 March X1

ashley is in anime hell @dku_lv9
@Blirb3584 That boy sure loves his bone breaking juice
6 retweets | 31 favorites
1:35 PM - 14 March X1

♡IKO♡ @3arphonejack
#favehero YALL KNOW WHO I STAN
45 retweets | 197 favorites
1:58 PM - 14 March X1

amaki/uwb? @ujon__b
#Favehero R E D R I O T
18 retweets | 125 favorites
2:11 PM - 14 March X1
JUJU’S BAR @akawiai
#FAVEHERO creati bc I stan LESBIAN POWER and a vocal trans ally & feminist icon and I adore her
86 retweets | 209 favorites
2:37 PM - 14 March X1

Yuu_93 @yuu002892
#FaveHero dynamite !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
8 retweets | 25 favorites
2:48 PM - 14 March X1

#entrodekuconspiracy @cao_8
They offered an OTHER section and left entropys name as an option and im crying bc hes still my #favehero :’)
25 retweets | 47 favorites
2:57 PM - 14 March X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
#FaveHero Poll is closed! Results will be up shortly.
406 retweets | 592 favorites
3:13 PM - 14 March X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
RESULTS ARE IN -- Here’s the Top 10 #FaveHero
#1 Deku & Ingenium (TIE!)
#2 Red Riot
#3 Optimo
#4 Creati
#5 Gale
#6 Earphone Jack
#7 Kamui Woods
#8 Laser Eye
#9 Uravity
#10 Dynamite
The rest are available on our site: https://t.co/hw/m
976 retweets | 2,492 favorites
3:16 PM - 14 March X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
Thank you for voting! Here’s a few of our other heroes who didn’t make the top picks but made the Honorable Mentions: Battle Fist, Froppy, Wash, All Might (Retired), Blindside, Entropy (Also Retired), Lemillion, Silver Comet, and Best Jeanist
646 retweets | 2,161 favorites
3:19 PM - 14 March X1

professional ingenium stan @ren_edu2931
INGENIUM MADE NO1 #FAVEHERO FUCK YEAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH
72 retweets | 387 favorites
3:27 PM - 14 March X1

professional ingenium stan @ren_edu2931
i mean we all kinda knew deku would take #favehero but INGENIUM STANS YOU PULLED THROUGH IM SO FUCKING PROUD OF YOU
Midoriya receives the call after dinner. It’s from his work phone. Shouto exchanges worried glances with him and Midoriya warily picks up. Clearing his throat, he lowers his voice a notch. Shouto notices he does that when he’s talking to reporters as well. Maybe it helps him get in character. “Deku here, what’s the situation?”

Shouto clears the table, dumping their dishes in the sink and leftovers into containers. Midoriya stays at the table, frozen. “Are you --” his voice raises a few pitches. Shouto abandons the food and returns to his side. “-- are you serious? You’re not -- you’re not joking.” Midoriya’s eyes glitter with unshed tears. Sniffling, he shakes his head. “O-Oh -- uh, y-yeah. I can, I-I’m gonna book the tickets right now.”

“What’s wrong?” Shouto asks quietly, worry chasing his tone.

Midoriya ignores his question. Tears rapidly form and fall, leaving streaks down his cheeks and collecting at his chin. He clutches his hand to his chest like he’s in pain. Shouto’s concern freezes in his veins like solid lead. “I-I’ve got to -- I-I’m gonna -- y-yeah, f-fine. I-I’ll talk to you l-later. Y-yes. R-Right. That’s -- g-goodnight. Thank y-you.”

“Midoriya,” Shouto starts, and Midoriya hushes him with a wave of his hand. He smiles, shakily, and there is no sorrow or anguish in his face. Shouto’s concern ebbs as Midoriya breaks out into uneven, slightly hysterical laughter.

“I-I made it,” he says, his knuckles white as his fists the collar of his own shirt. “Shouto, I made it.”

His answer only provides more questions. “Made -- made what, exactly?”

Midoriya doesn’t hear him. “I need -- I need to prepare a -- I need to call my mom. I need to call All Might. I need to -- I’m gonna need to say something, they’re going to be expecting me to say something.” His muttering is feverish, the words spitting out of him like the energy in them is too much for his body to contain. “I’ll have to write it tonight, or -- I can write it tomorrow on the train. I’ll need to remember to bring my laptop, actually -- I’ll bring my notebook. That makes more sense.” Shouto repeats his name again. “Yes, I heard you,” Midoriya says. He’s grinning despite his tears, sniffling and rubbing his eyes. “I-I’m just -- I-I’m a little overwhelmed.”

“...I can see that.” Shouto says.

“I need to call my mom.” Midoriya jumps into action, crossing the distance to the stairs in a flash of green lightning. His voice echoes from upstairs. “Give me a minute.” The door to his room slams.

Bewildered, Shouto returns to the dishes. He finishes cleaning the dishes, spoons, and chopsticks. Midoriya doesn’t return. He moves onto the food and packages it in tiny disposable containers, rearranging the complex geometry space in his fridge to slide them in. Midoriya is taking a long
time on the phone. Shouto turns on the tv, flipping through the stations mindlessly. He doesn’t pay
attention to the shows on screen. The noise washes over him, filling his head with a slight buzz.
The sound of Midoriya clearing his throat behind him snaps him out of his daze.

Hands shoved awkwardly in the pockets of his sweatpants, Midoriya smiles. His face is relaxed,
although his eyes are puffy and pink. “Hey,” he says, stepping towards the couch. “Sorry about all
that, earlier.”

“It’s fine.” Shouto says. “You worried me with the...crying.”

Midoriya shrugs with one shoulder. “You know me, I’m an easy crier.”

“Is...everything alright?” Shouto asks, hesitating on the question. Midoriya doesn’t appear
devastated, but he could be putting on a brave face.

Midoriya ducks his head. Shouto stands, leaving the couch in favor of facing Midoriya directly.
“Midoriya?”

Midoriya lifts his head, an enormous smile splitting his face. “Everything’s more than alright,” he
says, jittery. He takes Shouto’s hand from his side and lifts it to his chest, squeezing firmly.

“Shouto, I -- tomorrow I’m going to walk out on a crowd and -- I’m going to greet the world as the
new Number One Hero.”

The words sink in slowly. “You’re serious?”

“Unless my agent is pulling a cruel trick on me. Yes.”

Shouto moves. He’s not much of a hugger. Midoriya is the one to initiate most of their hugs. Yet,
it’s so easy to pull Midoriya into his arms. Midoriya goes willingly, freely, as if he was expecting
the reaction. “Midoriya,” he says, his throat tight. “That’s incredible. I’m so proud of you.”

“I’m so nervous,” Midoriya confesses, into Shouto’s collarbone. “In -- in other years I didn’t have
to give a big speech like this, but people are going to expect -- they’re going to expect so
much from me. I don’t know if I can -- I don’t know what I should say.”

Shouto is notorious among the press for being ‘a man of few words’ or ‘untouchable’ so he’s
definitely the wrong person to ask. “You could always call Momo. She’s good at this press stuff.”

Midoriya huffs. “Maybe. I need to call Ochaco-san and Iida-kun first. They’re going to -- they’re
going to be so excited.”

Pulling back, Midoriya lifts his face to look up at Shouto with that soft expression that makes his
heart feel like it’s melting. He’s very close. Shouto can see the reflection of lights outside the
window inside Midoriya’s eyes. Midoriya’s joy is plain and shining on his face.

“I did it,” Midoriya repeats, disbelief and awe and astonishment furled into his tone. “I really did it,
Shouto. I did it.”

“You did,” Shouto says. Midoriya’s smile glows. Shouto ignores the tremble he feels in his bones.
Shouto thinks, I could kiss him right now, followed by, I want to kiss him right now, and a third
follow up thought: I can’t kiss him right now. This moment belongs to Midoriya alone. He tamps
down those feelings and shoves them as far away as possible, pushing past the burn and ache of
Midoriya’s closeness and strengthens his resolve.

“You beat Endeavor fairly, at a time where nobody can question your ability or aptitude. His career
didn’t tank. He wasn’t involved in any scandals. You beat him through your own skill and strength.” Shouto continues. “You did all of that on your own.”

Midoriya shakes his head. “I wasn’t alone,” he corrects, smiling. “I’ve never been alone.”

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**TOP HEROES REVEALED: DEKU TAKES NUMBER ONE!**
March 21, 20X1

KAMINO -- Announced by the Japan Hero BillBoard Chart Board this morning, Pro Hero Deku climbed the last step to the top of the Pro Hero rankings. Ranked as the new Number One Hero, all eyes are on this powerhouse figure.

He was joined by other Top 10 Heroes -- including his current employer Creati (#10) -- who introduced their own short statement about their new placements. Alongside Creati, Pro Heroes Optimo (#4) and Red Riot (#8) offered their congratulations to the new head of top heroes. Dynamite (#3) did not attend the ceremony, but his agency issued a statement later in the afternoon thanking the board and congratulating Deku as the new top hero.

“Deku deserved this spot,” said Pro Hero Uravity (#12), accompanied by Deku at the meeting. “He’s worked every single day since we graduated to get here. I’m very proud of him.”

Former Pro Hero Entropy (Todoroki Shouto) also attended the New Number One Hero’s inaugural Hero Address. “There’s no doubt in my mind Midoriya [Deku] will go above and beyond everyone’s expectations for him,” said Todoroki. “There is no one else I believe more deserving and more dedicated to rising to the challenge and exceeding it.”

Former Number One Hero, Endeavor, returned to his long held position as Number Two Hero which he retained during All Might’s tenure. Notably, Endeavor did not attend the Billboard Ceremony and could not be reached for comment about the new ranking order. Allegedly, his son (Todoroki Shouto) attended in Endeavor’s place to greet his father's rival as the new top hero.

Midoriya cries after his speech. He doesn't cry right away, or in front of the crowd of fans and cameras. He has an image to maintain. One glance at Midoriya's pinched expression, however, Shouto knows the tears are not too far off. Normally, he would leave Midoriya to his own devices and let him recover on his own; but Shouto follows him because there’s a tightness between Midoriya’s shoulders that stirs concern in the pit of his own stomach.

He does not know how Midoriya retains his confidence after the cameras turn off. The media and crowd are not finished with him yet, even though Shouto recognizes the tension in Midoriya's jaw and the apprehension in his eyes. To the rest of the world, Midoriya appears at ease among the cameras and reporters. To Shouto, he looks like a man on the verge of fleeing. Midoriya walks off the podium and shakes hands with the board and endures an unbearable hour of questions. After the press strips him of every answer he has to offer, the crowd parts and lets him sneak off for some well-deserved privacy.

Midoriya’s speech was phenomenal. Shouto has no doubt in his mind that young heroes in the future will dig up recordings of this speech, eyes alight with awe and respect at the man who will become the greatest hero in history. Shouto might be a little biased, but he knows Midoriya has the makings of an incredible hero. Not a great hero -- the greatest hero. In perspective, Midoriya’s career is only beginning. Midoriya will stand among the wall of timeless heroes alongside All Might and every other momentous figure in hero society.
He will, someday -- but first, Shouto needs to find him.

Ducking and weaving between press and photographers, Shouto performs a thorough search of every bathroom on the first floor. He lost Midoriya in the crowd, and there’s too many people and fans in the stadium. Midoriya wouldn’t go outside, would he? He checks the bathroom again. As he walks past the side entrance, he spots Uraraka and Momo engaging with a rabid mob of fans. Bright flashes cast bright spots on the floor.

Spinning on his heel, he quickly escapes down a different hallway. He spoke with the press already, and he maintained a tight lip throughout the media horde. He answered one question, and took advantage of their surprise to walk away and find Iida.

He passes a storage closet. A few feet past the door, he stops. He tilts his head to the side, listening for the muted shuffling noise from inside. Shouto takes a step back. Then another. And another. Bracing his hand against the door, he knocks. “Midoriya? Is that you?”

He hears sniffling on the other side of the door. “U-Uh. Yeah.”

“It’s Shouto,” Shouto says, unnecessarily. “Can I come in?”

Midoriya snifflies again. “Give me a minute,” he says. Shouto steps away from the door. Giving Midoriya a chance to collect himself, he stands to the side and leans against the wall. The cement at his back is cold, leeching the heat through his shirt. The door opens with a small click. Midoriya steps out rubbing his puffy eyes, offering Shouto an embarrassed smile. “H-Hey. Sorry.”

“Feel better?” Shouto asks. He doesn’t ask if Midoriya feels alright. The question would be redundant.

Midoriya nods. He anxiously wrings his hands, pulling loosely at his face guard like it’s suffocating him. His gloves are off, tucked into the inside of his utility belt. “I -- I-I don’t know what happened. I-I was fine, but then I -- I kept thinking about the speech. I-I know it was terrible, I don’t -- my hair was a mess. T-There was so many people. I-I wasn’t expecting so many cameras, and the -- it was so loud.” Shouto recognizes the beginnings of a panic spiral. He steps away from the wall and stands in front of Midoriya. “Then -- there was -- I-I couldn’t believe how many people were asking about -- about Endeavor, and I-I don’t know if he skipped because he knew he lost, or -- or if there’s going to be -- and Kacchan, why -- why would he…” Midoriya’s nervous rambling dissolves, too low for Shouto to make out. Midoriya puts his head in his hands and groans, slowly wiping his hands down his face and pulling lightly at the skin. “I-I’m sorry. Sorry. I’m good.” Shouto waits for his mumbling to stop before he speaks.

He hesitates. Shouto needs to balance the edge of genuine concern and levity. If he’s too concerned, Midoriya will launch into a full blown panic and cry again, and Shouto does not want to make him cry. If he brushes off Midoriya’s concern with a joke, Midoriya will spiral into self-inflicted angst.

Midoriya’s lips tremble. Shit. Think. Make words faster. “Your speech was fine, Midoriya. I promise nobody was looking at your hair.” That’s a lie. Shouto definitely was. Not because it was messy; but the fond swell of affection in the deep cavity in his chest makes him more aware of everything about Midoriya. “It was amazing. You’re amazing.”

“I-I, uh. That’s -- thank you.” Midoriya says feverishly. His eyes gleam, wetness forming around the edges of his lashes. Shouto internally berates himself. He never says the right thing in situations like this. He should’ve dragged Uraraka out of the crowd and asked her for help.
“I mean it.” He steps forward, shrinking the distance between them. “You deserve this. You deserve this more than anybody else. Even if your speech was a disaster -- which it was not -- that doesn’t change everything you’ve done to get here.” He takes a deep breath, his next words spilling out in a rush. “There’s absolutely nobody else I would rather see up there. You’ve fought harder than anyone to get where you are. You’re going to change everything, Midoriya. I can’t wait to live in a world you’ve helped build.” Against his will, he feels a sting behind his own eyes. Midoriya has that effect on him, he supposes.

He cups Midoriya’s cheeks with his hands. You’re just friends, don’t do anything foolish. Shouto ignores the reminder, tossing self control aside for a moment. Midoriya’s skin is warm and slightly damp from the remaining tear tracks from his earlier outburst. His lips part slowly, eyes wide.

Flickering his gaze from Shouto’s chin up, Midoriya’s eyes sparkle with a new anxious energy Shouto doesn’t understand.

He says, softly, “Shouto,” and Shouto startles at the soft touch of warm hands against his own cheeks. Rough, battle worn, but his hands are incredibly light as he brushes the soft space under Shouto’s eye and his cheek. “You’re crying.”

Shouto offers him a shaky smile in return. “Your influence, I’m afraid.”

Midoriya’s hand hesitates on the other side of his face, before rubbing the wetness under his other eye. His hands are gentle, treating the scarred skin with even more careful attention than his right side. “Don’t cry,” he continues, his voice barely above a whisper. “Don’t cry because of me.”

Shouto’s heart rate picks up uneasily as Midoriya’s face softens with a smile. He needs to step back. The force of Midoriya’s bright grin, the intense gratefulness and adoration on his face: it’s too much. His heartbeat thunders in his ears like a symphony of drums. Midoriya’s hands shift, applying more pressure to the back of his neck. Shouto stoops a little to accommodate, nearly headbutting Midoriya in the process. When did he -- when did he get so close?

“Shouto.” Midoriya repeats, an added weight to his name, like there’s a new meaning behind it, a meaning lost on Shouto. “… Resolve transforms his face. The air between them trembles under a new current of energy. Shouto senses the change, and yet he is completely blindsided by Midoriya’s unexpected behavior. Midoriya pulls him down, closer, tugging at the hair at the back of his neck. His face is flushed and desperate, hands trembling against the side of Shouto’s face. Shouto swallows. He should say something. He needs to say something, but words are far from the forefront of his mind. Language is beyond his current capabilities. He doesn’t think he could speak even if he miraculously found the right words to say. He looks at Midoriya, breath stuttering, as he tries and fails to make a decision: Does he lean in? Does he pull away?

Midoriya makes the decision for him. He’s the one who closes the distance.

Midoriya kisses him like he’s drowning. Like Shouto is his last resort for air; clinging to the last of his oxygen to survive. He kisses with urgent, frantic energy, like it might be the last thing he ever does.

Shouto is too stunned to move. His brain halts, every coherent and rational thought flying out through his ears and evaporating. He’s frozen with indecision, the hands on Midoriya’s cheeks sliding off and hovering, unsure where to land. Midoriya’s fingers slide against the back of hair. Shouto doesn’t know how to respond. The iron clad walls he built to contain his feelings quivers and crumbles. All the desires he locked away deep in the forbidden chest of his mind burst open, spilling out in every direction.

There’s nothing holding him back now. He presses into Midoriya’s kiss, weaving his fingers
through Midoriya’s messy, beautiful, dark hair. As far as kisses go, it’s very uncoordinated. Shouto’s taller, and Midoriya doesn’t seem like he intends on releasing his vice hold around Shouto’s neck to let him adjust. Midoriya tugs at the end of his hair, tilting his jaw, and oh, that’s much better.

Some of Shouto’s rational thinking skills return. He doesn’t know how much time passes, only that awareness slams into him with the force of a freight train. What are you doing? his mind wails. He stiffens. Midoriya notices, snapping back and widening the gap between them in the blink of an eye.

“I’m…” Shouto begins. He brings up a hand and curiously rubs at the soreness of his bottom lip. Did Midoriya bite him? “U-Uh…” Midoriya’s face, flushed from before, drains of all color. His expression cycles between intense humiliation, horror, and shame. Shouto can’t see the expression on his own face, but he assumes he’s wearing the expression of someone who looks like they were sucker punched in the stomach. He certainly feels that way.

“I-I’ve --” Midoriya stutters. “I-I’m so -- I’m -- I can’t --” He presses his lips together into a thin line, wiping a hand down his face and scrubbing the tear tracks and vulnerability away. His face hardens, jaw clenched. His words, now collected, are firm and emotionless. “This -- this was a mistake. I’m sorry. I...I need to go.” He turns his back on Shouto, shoulders hoisted higher and tighter than before.

Shouto does not chase after him this time.

Chapter End Notes

comments are terrible i hate all of them. if you leave one i definitely will not reply with 9000 exclamation points or thank yous. in fact i will ignore them because comments are terrible reactions and do not inspire me in any way whatsoever. only leave comments if you despise me. comments are the worst.

translations for mobile users:
交換 - Kōkan - exchange, substitution, swap, replacement
なんてこっ - the equivalent of 'oh my g-d' or 'what the fuck'
デク様はもう結婚しましたか。 - Are you already married?
いいえ、まだ結婚しません。 - No I'm not yet married
- thank u to sakamaki_suzuku for helping w my japanese! gd bless
- the other untranslated usernames in japanese/korean/chinese are either names or puns and i didnt see the point in translating them. i stole most of them from twitter
- again, i avoided google translate and i copied these directly from forums about learning japanese because i wanted to get as close to accurate as possible. sorry if they're wrong, im trying!!

actual chapter notes:
- >:
- i warned you!
- todoroki upon entering a convenience store that is currently being robbed at gunpoint: gd fucking damn it not again. midoriya is going to be so mad at me and im
gonna make us both late to dinner
- when todoroki uses emojis he only uses russian smileys. thank you to the people in my discord who inspired that

- yaoyorozu setting todoroki and midoriya up to talk in their apartment and finally confess their feelings: hah! i did it! finally. no more intense pining. they're going to thank me at their wedding and name their first child after me.

- yaoyorozu reading todoroki's text and realizing he's somehow still managed to Fuck Up confessing his feelings to midoriya at the perfect opportunity: please say sike

- fun fact while writing this chapter i asked the bnha discord im in if anybody knew how the hero rankings work or if it's never explained and none of us could remember. i pulled out the biannual announcement out of my ass and decided i'd go with that. well, lo and behold, upon rereading the kamino ward arc i found a panel that actually explicitly states how the rankings are prepared and it turns out the 6m number i pulled out of my ass is CANON. so basically i am gd

- note edited before posting on 5/26: so as it turns out chapter 184 was just released in the manga and it actually dedicated an entire panel to the hero rankings which is a fun coincidence

- todoroki is going to get a new job! i know you've all been waiting, but it's soon. i promise. i didnt want to hype it up so much because i feel like it might disappoint a few people so i havent said much about it kjwkjkwkj

- about 2/3rds of the usernames for the social media accounts in this chapter were either taken from usernames of people in my discord server OR usernames from people who left a kudos/comment. free shout out to you! the other usernames are either ones i made up or i copied from twitter. dont ask me what they mean idk

- i forgot to mention it but the tweet by twitter user softdeku was supposed to be a subtle nod to a fic inspired by mine by dreamtowns which is a future fic where todoroki also has the name entropy except it's set in a different futureverse than mine and todoroki and midoriya are secretly married for six years. and he doesn't retire he's just happily married and living life. if you love that sweet secret relationship trope content go check it out!

- in case you missed it i updated the chapter count from 5 to 6. for those of you in the comments who were begging for more: it is with a heavy heart that i confess i dont know when to shut up so your wish has been granted

- next chapter: turns out, good communication IS the key to fixing dumbass gays. also, there's feelings and stuff. the angst pining train finally leaves the station and doesnt return. midoriya and todoroki have a good run messing with the media. their friends are in on the gig too. and the only people not enjoying this game of media tug of war are the media people themselves, midoriya's agent, and the hero fans who are
absolutely clueless to whatever the fuck is going on.
truth (reprise)

Chapter Summary

Midoriya's actions have Consequences and Todoroki is very confused. Not to worry! Everything will be fine. (Probably.)

Chapter Notes

last chapter was something else, huh...

- feedback from chapter 4: several people threatened to kick my ass. some people yelled at me in the tddk server and others dmed me to yell at me there. i laughed at every single reaction. i DID warn you. :3c
- i didn't realize until i posted but it's been like 3 months since i last updated AAHH like i said i'm sorry but life got busy. although i have put a lot of love into writing this, unfortunately Real Work (i have 2 jobs) and School (summer courses) take priority. to be fair – my punishment for the cliffhanger last chapter was that i had to rewrite large sections of THIS chapter because i wasn't satisfied with how it turned out. i hate rewrites. Also this is now the Longest Chapter. It’s over 35,000 words.
- me, seeing the wordcount for this chapter: oh that’s neat (collapses into a puddle as every bone in my body turns into oatmeal)
- Thirty Five Thousand Words.
- after this chapter is posted, all the new readers who haven't been sticking this out since Chapter 1 will never have lived through the experience of last chapter's cliffhanger and then a 3 month long hiatus. you're lucky if you're new here, i guess.
- there’s now memes about my fic too which is pretty hilarious (read the end notes if you want to know why)

Car salesman: *slaps the roof of fic*
"You can fit so much slow burn into this bad boy"

- i lost my entire draft of chapter notes for this chapter & chapter 6 so i had to try and recreate them because ao3 sucks toes and i forgot it deletes things after 30 days. oops :-(
- the only part of this chapter that was beta'd in any form was the sections from iida's
Pov because I am a dumbass and I was worried I couldn't get his characterization right.

Hey Ren... I owe you my life.

- I would guess about 50% of the usernames for the social media bits in this chapter are free shout outs to people who commented, friends, or people I know in my server who I just dropped into my fic for no reason other than I wanted to.
- *strums guitar* I love Iida.
- Only like 3 other people will appreciate the symbolism but Chapter 5 (moment of truth [reprise]) is the reverse of Chapter 2 (the moment of truth). Iida takes on Momo's role from Chapter 2 as the bridge between the narrator/chorus aspect (by chorus I mean, in the sense if this was a dramatic theatrical production) and as I promised he gets a much bigger role. I had a really hard time planning his parts because early on I hadn't finished planning the subplot but now that it's nailed down I'm living for it. And I hope you enjoy Iida as much as I loved writing him. Iida companion solo fic WHEN....
- Never fear! The pining Olympics comes to an end in this part. Yes, you did read over 90k (HOLY SHIT....) of pining but good communication solves all woes. Sooner.
- There's also drama that is (finally) unrelated to the self inflicted angst/pining. I finally bring back the subplot from the early chapters! I promise didn't forget about them!
- Enjoy and like comment share subscribe
- If you missed my last edits from Chapter 4, this is now a series! Scroll up top for the link.
- Plus a super amazing announcement -- this fic has a TV TROPES page now too!!!!!! I'm sweating so hard aaaaah.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“It's not up to me. It's your choice.”

... 

“It is. But I was asking for your opinion.”

... 

“I don't know what you want, Shouto. All I can say is: do what you want. Make the choice for yourself.”

... 

Empower Magazine
The last Japan Hero Billboard Chart release from March shook the world and placed one of the youngest Top 10 Heroes at the head of the ranks.

A decade ago, this sharp-witted and independent aspiring hero graduated with a mile long list of sponsors and Pro Heroes begging him to take a place alongside their agency as a rising sidekick. “Deku” was already a household name given his rise in popularity during his years at U.A. Academy and his top placement in his last Sports Festival. His short term as a sidekick alongside Pro Hero Lemillion during his last year with the Tokyo Trigger Epidemic made headlines. Even before he received his diploma, this rising star hero proved he was on the track for greatness.

Within weeks of graduating, this young hero opened his own office and completed the investigation into the remaining stragglers of the League of Villains. He assisted law enforcement with tracking down the group’s leader and the aerial televised final battle put his name at the front of every Hero Magazine and forum.

Six months later, for his first ranking season, he graced the Top 10 Heroes ranks at number five: an incredible feat that even tenured heroes rarely met. The next rankings brought him to number four, where he remained for two consecutive years. In the aftermath of a high security prison break, Deku lead the charge to round up the escaped vigilantes and criminals. His time in the limelight was far from over: his dedication to the community and willingness to take on any case, big or small, amplified the trust and support from the citizens of Japan. He’s one of the first openly out Top 10 Heroes, barring a few retired Pro Heroes who revealed more personal details about their lives after retiring from the spotlight.

Somehow, in three years under his own agency and ability, he climbed to the summit of Top Heroes and took his new position at number two. For the next seven years he dedicated himself to the pursuit of a new future. He slowly stripped away the strong foundation created by former number one hero, Endeavor; defeating him in popularity polls, arrest stats, and finally taking his place as the new number one.

With Endeavor’s indefinite suspension by the Board of Hero Affairs and Services for an investigation into unethical practices, it appears Deku will stay at number one for the foreseeable future. There are no other licensed heroes at this time to rival his stature, popularity, or power. Deku is #1 and he’s here to stay.

Our world is changing. New quirks are discovered every day, and more challenges test the limits of our abilities. The increase in criminal activity among individuals with powerful quirks is on the rise; with younger, unfulfilled vigilantes filling our streets with terror as our society struggled and failed to find a place for them.

The history books will hold a place for the name Deku: a hero who gazed out onto the horizon of challenges before him and said to an audience of millions with utmost certainty and conviction:

“I can do it.”

MOMENT OF TRUTH (REPRISE)
DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
ありがとうございました...頑張ります！#JHBBCX1
8,736 retweets | 14,202 favorites
11:02 AM - 21 March X1

まり＠tiama_i
@HERODEKU YEEEEEEREEEEESSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS #DEKU IS NUMBR1!!!
64 retweets | 309 favorites
11:16 AM - 21 March X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
#Deku #JHBBCX1 #JPTop10
[Photo attached: Pro Hero Deku, costumed, mouth open mid-sentence. His face is alight with passion and energy as he gives his first #1 Top Hero Inaugural Address. He’s wearing his signature dark green spandex with his alternate color black guards and gloves. His traditional red belt is removed in place of a black one. The shoulder pads are also black and his cape is white and trimmed with gold - a clear nod to his predecessor and mentor. The cape is part of his event costume, as he doesn’t wear a cape on duty.]
2,833 retweets | 9,667 favorites
11:30 AM - 21 March X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
Our HWWN Video will be released on schedule later this afternoon, sponsors and Gold members already have access to the early release.
[Photo attached: Pro Hero Deku in costume, standing on a pulpit in front of the Hero BillBoard Chart Japan Stadium. Grinning, one hand raised to wave to the crowd. Behind him, the other Top 10 Heroes stand on the steps in a line smiling and posturing for their viewers.]
1,333 retweets | 4,777 favorites
11:42 AM - 21 March X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
So many heroes, so many new designs! The heroes really went all out to dress up for the event. Who’s your favorite? (Ours is Ingenium’s Dark Knight design - wear it more often, please!!!!)
[Photo attached: A line of heroes at the stadium entrance; Pro Hero Ingenium (dark metal and black helmet) in front with Earphone Jack (dark jacket and holographic headset removed, making a peace sign at the camera) with Red Riot in the background jumping and waving (alternate red and gold costume from Rising Heroes Gala XX). The area is packed with heroes, some out of focus or blurred from the distance. Pro Hero Luminesce, with a glittering belt and dazzling visor, stands slightly out of focus in the lower right corner and offers the viewer a direct smile.]
1,507 retweets | 5,499 favorites
11:50 AM - 21 March X1

Creati | #10 ✔ @icreati
Words cannot express how I feel right now. As #10 hero, and now the #2 agency in Japan. I am overwhelmed and very grateful for everyone in my life and who has helped me reach where I am now. And, congratulations to my friend, the new Number 1: #Deku ! #JHBBCX1
6,736 retweets | 13,204 favorites
11:54 AM - 21 March X1
Liked by Uravity, INGENIUM, Earphone Jack, and 14,201 more

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
no 2 pro hero agency hell yes B-) #JHBBCX1
Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
@icreati babe i am SO proud of you rn B’-
1,001 retweets | 4,482 favorites
12:14 PM - 21 March X1

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
But im back down at #36 huh…guess i better get back to work >B-( #JHBBCX1
1,192 retweets | 4,011 favorites
12:17 PM - 21 March X1

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
how could i forget to say congrats to @herodeku !!!!! im so proud !!!!!
935 retweets | 3,884 favorites
12:20 PM - 21 March X1

♪マイ♪ @_9midi
#DEKU IS NUMBER ONE MY MOM WOKE ME UP&TOLD ME THIS MORNING AND IVE LITERALLY BEEN ON MY COUCH CRYING SINCE I WOKE UP AND IM STILL CRYING AND HES N2 TRENDING ON TWITTER BITCH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! YEAH!!!!!!!!
66 retweets | 597 favorites
12:21 PM - 21 March X1

Iida stans only interact @in_genius
#INGENIUM YOU DID SO GOOD IM SO PROUD OF YOU NO 16 YOU DESERVE IT AAAAAHHHHH AND #DEKU NUMBER ONE YEAH YOU GO!! THAT SPEECH WAS WOW!!!! IM SO SO PROUD
114 retweets | 808 favorites
12:28 PM - 21 March X1

IGIY @maegpoy
GIRL POWER #URAVITY #CREATI #OPTIMO FUCK YEAH #jhbbcX1
80 retweets | 203 favorites
1:14 PM - 21 March X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
Big day for our new #1 Hero...but where is #Deku ? Fans are waiting for him by the signing booths but the event staff say they can’t find him! #FindThatHero
944 retweets | 2,858 favorites
2:59 PM - 21 March X1

-Don’t worry about Dynamite- @_dynariots
this is probably old news and I’m gay and forgetful but seeing @heroentropy twitter name change made me really sad…
[Screenshot of a Twitter account page:
Square icon of Todoroki Shouto, grinning and making a peace sign, an uncommon gesture from the stoic retired hero. He’s wearing a faded All Might shirt. Barely cropped into frame is a hint of darker hair and the edge of someone’s face; Deku.
轟焦凍 Todoroki Shōto ✔ @heroentropy
Official account of former pro hero Entropy.
Joined January 20X-6]
As a responsible hero, Tenya possesses two phones on his being at all times. One phone dedicated to hero work related activities with the contact numbers of every sidekick and Pro Hero he’s
crossed paths with in the last ten years. Another phone for personal use, for family and close friends. Large events like these make for poor attentive skills, regardless of the number of phones on his person or their ringtone volume. There are too many people, crowds, and general noise to hear his ringtone over the ambient noise of shouting and music. He feels the vibrations against his thigh from his personal phone. This is no place to take a moment and review the contents of his phone. If it was urgent, he is certain the person attempting to reach him would use his work number.

It is too loud in this area to receive a call at this time, in any case.

Tenya does not appreciate the overwhelming noise or the feeling of elbows in his spine, so he makes for the outer edges of the stadium. He is easily half a head or a full head taller than most of the other people in the crowd. His height gives him a greater advantage in this environment, but it also serves as a detriment to his desire to escape the crowd. He is tall; and in costume, and his helmet and metallic armor, he sticks out among the rest of the fans and media. Among the outer edges, it is more apparent he is out of place. Cameras flash in every direction, but Tenya is capable of maneuvering out of their range. The photographers are relentless, but Tenya is not the only hero. They will tire of chasing him and pursue other heroes; more likely, Tenya guesses, their frantic search continues for Midoriya. After his speech, Midoriya vanished from the crowds. The press engaged in an animated manhunt, searching out the new Number One for a statement and a photo.

“Have you seen Deku?” A reporter yells in Tenya’s direction. “Ingenium! Hello! Do you have a statement about --?”

“My sincerest apologies!” Tenya addresses the reporter. “I am occupied with other concerns at the moment, please send your inquiries to Idaten Agency and I will refer back to you. Thank you!” The reporter bows awkwardly, mumbling their thanks, and shuffles out of the way. Tenya resumes his course for the visitor center.

A short, brutish man invades Tenya’s personal space and nearly unbalances him. “Hey, watch where you’re --” The man hollers, and stiffens as he turns to face Tenya. Apologies force past his lips, as harsh as his outcry. “-- Ah! Sorry!” Recognition strikes the man’s face. Tenya raises his hands and removes his helmet. The relief of escaping the claustrophobia of the crowd and the helmet are welcome and immediate.

He smiles at the man. “No harm done! This area is quite difficult to maneuver with an assembly of this magnitude.” Peculiarly, the man doesn’t speak. The color of his face rises, an unflattering complex with his lime hair. “I must be on my way now, but please do enjoy the rest of your time here today!” Helmet tucked under his arm, he seeks the refuge of the visitor center inside.

The visitor center is in sight, but he does not enter as planned. A pair of children -- perhaps no younger than five or six years old -- barrel into his legs about 20 meters from the door. They laugh and shout, but their laughter hiccups into silence as they peer up at Tenya. He scans the crowd. The children appear to be alone. The smaller child’s lip quivers.


“How!?” Tenya says, and crouches down to their eye-level. These children are much shorter than the others in the crowd. They are less likely to hear him if he speaks from his full height, and it would be unkind to brush off fans! At their height, he notices their hand made costumes. The taller of the two children with ashen hair squeaks and ducks their head into their hands, hiding between their green Froppy-inspired gloves. The other child sports a pink cap and an Uravity design shirt. Her cheeks pinken, the same shade as her hat.
“I like your costume!” The child in Uravity’s costume continues. “Are -- Are you a hero?”

Tenya’s ribs squeeze around his heart. Such a display of sweet innocence is surely enough to melt the spirits of even the hardest stone! “Yes, I am Ingenium! I am glad you like my costume. Your costumes are very well made as well.” Tenya assures the children. “Did you make it yourself?” At their hesitant nod, he beams. “Amazing! You are very talented indeed.”

The child in Uravity’s costume brightens considerably. “You -- You really think so?”

“Of course!”

Tenya would fret over two small children lost in a crowd this size, but he thankfully does not carry that anxiety for much longer. The children’s parents push through the crowd and hug the two small costumed heroes. Their children receive a light scolding before they recognize the fifth uninvited companion.

The children demand photos. Their parents oblige. He kneels beside the two, but the position is far from ideal. Tenya would appreciate it if other people did not step on his legs, and he is sure the children are in a similar predicament. With permission from the two mothers, he hefts a child into each arm. The child in the Uravity costume requests to hold his helmet, and drops it over her own head and laughs with delight. It covers her entire face, but she does not appear to mind.

While their mothers set up their camera, he turns his focus to the children. “What is your name?” Tenya knows this question is far overdue. The children do not appear to mind.

The girl in Uravity’s costume bounces with enthusiasm. Tenya shifts his arm to accommodate, as he does not wish to drop either child. “I am -- My name is Takasugi Mayako! Please take care of me!” She nods vigorously and turns to her sister. “This is my sister, Takasugi Izumi!”

“I like your name! Ingenium is so cool!” Izumi exclaims. She hides her face in her green gloves again. Her sister giggles. Her mother with the camera calls their names and demands a smile. Mayako does not remove the helmet until Tenya releases her. She plucks it off and hands it up to him, beaming and bouncing on her toes.

He bids the mothers and their children well for the remainder of their visit with a bow and seeks the comforting solitude of the visitor center. Inside, he has a chance to open his phone and reply to the message on his personal phone.

From Todoroki Shouto [GROUP MESSAGE +3 Others]:

*come to my apartment whenever you’re done. iida - bring whiskey*

How odd, Tenya thinks. He crafts a reply for Todoroki while new messages from Ochaco fill his screen.

To Todoroki Shouto:

*Todoroki-kun, is everything alright?*  
*Ochaco-san informed me you left the event rather unexpectedly. She’s with Jirou-san right now. They are looking for Midoriya-kun. Do you know where he is?*  
*Todoroki-kun?*  
*Please reply when you can!*

From Uraraka Ochaco:

*Any luck finding D?*  
*J and I can’t find him*
I’m getting worried he won’t answer his phone and I got a weird text from T did U get one too?

To Uraraka Ochaco:

I am sure he is fine, he must be occupied with fans. He will turn up eventually.
I will contact Hatsume-san if necessary if you cannot find him within the next hour.
And yes, I received it as well. I asked the meaning, but Todoroki-kun has not replied yet. I will inform you of any new developments.

To Uraraka Ochaco:

Ty iida <3

From Yaoyorozu Momo:

By any chance did you get a weird text from Shouto
He said to come to his apartment

To Yaoyorozu Momo:

Yes, Ochaco-san and I received the same message. He ignored my messages after.
I am quite concerned.

From Yaoyorozu Momo:

that’s not good
Im moving this to the group chat

Tenya does not like the group chat. The conversation often moves too quickly for him to follow, and their names in the chat are often unrecognizable. Although the benefits of speaking in one coherent conversation will outweigh the disconnect from sharing in three separate conversations. With heavy trepidation, he opens the new messages on top.

[GROUP MESSAGE - “Pining Solutions Support Group Inc.” (4 Members)):

Yaomomo: before Shouto left he sent me a cryptic text about Deku
I think something happened

Iida Tenya: Do you believe this has something to do with their situation?

Yaomomo: I don’t know what else it would be

Earsbian Jack: as co-founder of this chat its my duty 2 name evry1 in here&enforce the nicknames
as they r

Earsbian Jack has changed Iida Tenya’s name to Fast Legs.

Fast Legs: Please stop changing my name.

Zero g: Hold on D texted me back finally

Fast Legs: What did Midoriya-kun have to say about what happened? Did he say anything about Todoroki-kun?

Zero g: Gimme a sec

Earsbian Jack: herowatch found deku im gonna grab him

Yaomomo: great
Iida Tenya: Where did the fans spot him? Or where did you find him?

Earsbian Jack: hiding in the press meatbox

Fast Legs: Ah...That is out of character for Midoriya. His agent still has him on probation for his last incident, he shouldn’t be talking to reporters alone.

Earsbian Jack: dammit he saw me & ran ill find him tho dw

Zero g: i’m gonna lose myf
You are not going to believe this
Im going to strangle one or both of them
Probably D because i know how he is
I think i understand why T asked for whiskey
Im gonna need whiskey too
[Image attachment: “SCREENSHOT_09111”

Ochaco:
Where are you
??????????
ANSWER YOUR PHONE

Deku:
I'm fine

Ochaco:
What happened
Where have u been
We’ve been worried

Deku:
I made a mistake

Ochaco:
What did u do
????????????????????

Deku:
It’s fine
Not a hero emergency
Can’t make it to dinner
Sorry

Ochaco:
T looked really upset before he left did you say anything?

Deku:
It’s not important but I imagine he doesn’t want to be around me right now
We’ll figure it out later
I might need to move out
Busy now talk later]

The group chat ceases all other conversation. Tenya’s cursor hovers in his keyboard, as he attempts to craft an appropriate response for this reveal. Jirou, as usual, responds first.
Earsbian Jack: o shit

Yaomomo: That’s interesting. Who said what?

Fast Legs: My assumption is Todoroki-kun said something. He appeared quite upset before he left, and it is unlike him to leave an event like this without warning. Perhaps he finally spoke to Midoriya-kun about his feelings and was rejected?

Zero g: No, it was D.

Fast Legs: May I ask how you know that?

Zero g: Trust me on this. D ran from J which means he doesn’t want to talk to us right now but T invited us to his apartment. Which means we can talk to HIM.

Fast Legs: You may be correct, but what makes you so sure we should be comforting Todoroki-kun? Why should we not pursue Midoriya-kun and express our concern? I’m not sure we should leave Midoriya-kun if he is in an emotionally vulnerable state. How do we know which of them instigated this?

Zero g: D said he might need to move out. I doubt T would kick him out after getting rejected. He’s not that kind of guy. D on the other hand WOULD do something stupid and make the decision to move out on his own. Which means it was him.

Fast Legs: I see. That does make sense, as it would be against his nature to treat Midoriya-kun in that way. I trust your instincts, and we will wait for Midoriya-kun to come to us instead.

Learsbian Jack: they r idiots omg

Yaomomo: I have to finish up here so you three head over. I’ll be there soon.

Earsbian Jack: todoroki didnt invite me tho

Yaomomo: I doubt he’ll care if you show up, but you can text him and ask.

Earsbian Jack: hes not rplying 2 texts tho

Tenya abandons the group chat. His phone vibrates in his hand, alerting him of a new message.

From Uraraka Ochaco: Make sure you bring whiskey

After Ochaco’s last text, Tenya makes for the stadium gateway with subtle assistance from his quirk. He’s technically on duty (as he is fully costumed) even at a press event. He retrieves his travel bag from the visitor center and changes in the restroom.

He doubts any reporters will question his hasty exit. He is a hero; and most people aren’t inclined to interrogate his coming to and from of a highly ranked Pro Hero. Sending out a short (but urgent)
message to the sidekicks at Team Idaten he apologizes for rescheduling the office party and promises to make it up next week.

While Todoroki’s last text would carry the assumption that entering his apartment at any time is acceptable, Tenya remembers his manners and texts Todoroki outside of his building. Instead of replying, Todoroki greets him outside.

“I could go for some soba.” Todoroki explains. “And I’d like to talk to you about some other stuff before the others arrive.”

“What other ‘stuff’ is there to talk about?” Tenya inquires. A fair question given the vagueness of Todoroki’s statement.

Todoroki shakes his head. “I don’t want to talk about Midoriya right now, if that’s what you’re implying.” Tenya does not know if his expression of disbelief offends Todoroki or not, who walks on without any hesitation. “I’ve got some work talk for you. I need a second professional opinion, if you’re willing.”

“Of course.” Tenya answers, like there is any other reply in his arsenal.

With a bag of food tucked under his arm, Todoroki lays out his future in a short summary of bullet points on the walk back to his apartment. “...it’s a lot to ask, I know. I think there’s a lot to be gained from this. I can always edit something out if it’s too much. I can be vague, if necessary. Only a few people know the exact details.” As if sensing Tenya’s hesitation, he tacks on; “I won’t mention you by name, either. It’s something I’ve been working on for a while.”

“What is it for, exactly?”

“My new job. Maybe.” He shifts the bag in his arms. Tenya offered to carry it, but Todoroki insisted. He cited the whiskey as Tenya’s form of payment. “I’m not sure what I’m going to do with it.” Todoroki stops in front of his apartment and looks up. There is no poetic wording in Tenya’s extensive vocabulary that could completely capture the look of rapture in his face as he stares up at the shallow clouds. He looks, for once, open. “It’s a work in progress.”

“I think it’s rather noble.” Tenya says, and lowers his cautious edge. “With that, you have my permission. If you choose to include it, I would appreciate a chance to read it myself.”

Todoroki swears, “You’ll get the first copy. You’ll have to share it with a few people, but you’ll get one.” He says it like a promise. Like a pact. “And if you ever change your mind, I can always omit something.”

Tenya’s response is belated. He opens his mouth only after following Todoroki into the elevator. “I am honored, but I don’t believe that will be necessary.” He watches Todoroki struggle with opening the door to his apartment while holding his food, but restrains his polite urge to assist at Todoroki’s request.

A bell chime; Todoroki’s personal phone. He tucks it away. “Uraraka should be here soon. Thanks for taking a walk with me.”

Tenya inclines his head politely. “It is truly nothing, Todoroki-kun.”

“Well.” He sets the bag on the counter and drops his shoulders. “I needed a walk to clear my head.” Gesturing to the paper bag Tenya retrieved from his car, Todoroki gathers a set of mismatched glasses from his cabinet. “And I’m going to need a glass of that before I say anything about Midoriya and I.”
HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
That’s our new #1 Hero! #HeroSpots #Deku
[Photo attached: Full uniform (alt. white cape model “Costume: Theta”) Hero Deku smiling next to fans. His stiffness from earlier photos is gone, back with a full and open smile. He has his hands on the shoulders of two young fans dressed as Pro Heroes, a miniature Ingenium (left) and miniature Deku (right). Deku is crouched with his head resting between the two of them, the hand on Fan Deku’s shoulder raised and forming a thumbs up.]
2,683 retweets | 8,004 favorites
4:18 PM - 21 March X1
Liked by INGENIUM, Uravity, Earphone Jack, and 8,001 more

INGENIUM ✔ @t_ingenium
As honored as I am to rise to No. 16, I cannot take this place without acknowledging and honoring the tireless efforts of the 55 other sidekicks and staff at Idaten who are as responsible for the decrease in crime and safety of the citizens of Japan. To them, I say with utmost pride and sincerity: #ThankYouHeroes
492 retweets | 5,107 favorites
4:49 PM - 21 March X1
Liked by Uravity, Red Riot!, and 5,105 more

INGENIUM ✔ @t_ingenium
Replying to @teemid09 Yes, I was occupied with other activities. Unfortunately, I must retire from the event and make my way back as I have other urgent matters to attend to. The work of a hero never stops, even on days like this!
156 retweets | 2,200 favorites
5:07 PM - 21 March X1

INGENIUM ✔ @t_ingenium
And, of course, congratulations to @herodeku - Well earned, my friend! I am incredibly proud and blessed to have stood beside you all these years and have the privilege of knowing you. I look forward to the future you will build and continuing to serve as a fellow Pro Hero and your good friend.
173 retweets | 2,561 favorites
5:15 PM - 21 March X1

Uravity ✔ @uravity
#12, here I am! Super big congrats to #Deku :’o) I’m off for now, thank you for inviting me and thank you to everyone who came to cheer me on today! xx
472 retweets | 5,116 favorites
5:23 PM - 21 March X1
Liked by INGENIUM, Creati #10, and 5,114 more

Red Riot! #8 ✔ @redriot
Replying to @yuei_ha Dynamite is taking an extended vacation away from social media for a while. also I stole his phone. If this gets 50000 rts ill post one of his workout selfies that he swears he doesnt take but I have proof he totally does
21,928 retweets | 29,581 favorites
5:38 PM - 21 March X1
Liked by Uravity, Earphone Jack, Froppy ＆, Creati #10, Alien Queen, Blindside, PRESENT MIC!!!, and 26,97 more
DYNAMITE ✔ @iamdynamite
@rredriot DIE
682 retweets | 4,116 favorites
5:53 PM - 21 March X1

Red Riot! #8 ✔ @rredriot
@iamdynamite ★~(manın
889 retweets | 5,116 favorites
5:56 PM - 21 March X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
Our new #1 Hero on the move: after goodbyes to fans, board, media - and he’s gone! Not sure where he’s off to next…
[Photo attached: A blur of green in the sky, Hero Deku takes off with an immense leap.]
445 retweets | 3,162 favorites
6:19 PM - 21 March X1

Iida arrives ahead of everyone, but Ochaco and Jirou are not far behind him. Momo appears last. Ochaco imagines the scene that greets her is quite spectacular.

Iida is spread like a starfish across the couch, with Jirou resting on his ankles. The couch is too small for one adult, let alone three, but they’re not claiming defeat so easily. Iida abandoned drinking after he spilled his whiskey over himself during an eccentric hand gesture. He also abandoned his shirt. (Todoroki is using Iida’s stained shirt as a personal tent, hiding his face from the rest of the group.) Ochaco, tilting dangerously off the other end, clutches Iida’s shoulder and avoids kneeling him in the stomach by climbing over the other cushion. Jirou waves her glass and laughs with more energy than anyone else in the group. Todoroki is the only one not sitting on the couch. Originally, he claimed the far right corner of the cushion as his safe haven; but after two glasses of whiskey he decided the floor looked comfortable and decided to sprawl out across the rug in front of the tv.

“Deku-kun you’re such a fucking idiot…” Ochaco groans, pressing her face into Todoroki’s couch cushion. “I can’t believe he did that. You’re both idiots. This is awful.” Jirou snorts and rolls over. She has the foresight to move her glass and Iida’s before she kicks them over with her other foot.


Jirou picks up her hand and waves at Momo. She drains her glass and slaps Iida’s calf before she stands. “Babe, you really don’t wanna hear this. It’s really dramatic. You hate those tv dramas, right? This is worse. So much worse. At this rate, I’ll never win my bet.” Momo refuses. Jirou relays the tale Todoroki spilled out after a glass of whiskey -- before he decided to hide from the rest of the world under Iida’s shirt. As Jirou speaks, Todoroki’s head shifts under the shirt canopy and sinks lower and lower into the floor.

“That is…” Momo starts, when Jirou finishes the story, and shakes her head. “That is so...I can’t believe this.” She puts a hand over her temple and sighs. “I need a drink.”

Ochaco hands her a glass and the remainder of Iida’s whiskey bottle. She toasts her half-empty glass to Momo. “Welcome to the pity party.” Ochaco knew Deku and Todoroki were not good at
communicating with each other, but this was a million times worse than she imagined.

After a glass of whiskey, Momo regains her vigor. “This is beyond ridiculous at this point.” Momo says into her glass. “This is more like -- tragic.”

“You can say that again.” Ochaco huffs.

Momo isn’t finished. “This is so stupid! You’re both stupid! Especially you, Shouto-kun. He kissed you back! You’re an idiot! Deku is an idiot! I am absolutely -- I am floored as to how you both managed to take a step forward and somehow take ten steps back. You’re both idiots.” Under the shirt, Todoroki groans, “I know” and smacks his forehead against the floor.

Iida rises from the couch. Ochaco grunts as he shifts his weight, pushing her deeper into the cushion before he stands. “I’m going to call and check up on…” He glances at Todoroki’s miserable form on the floor and theatrically mouths “Midoriya-kun” before he walks out of the room.

“Uraraka...” Todoroki says, his voice slightly muffled through the fabric. She knows he’s hiding the third glass of whiskey under the shield of Iida’s shirt. “I don’t know what I did wrong. What was I supposed to do?” Uraraka knows how to handle Regular Drunk Philosophical Todoroki. Morose Drunk Philosophical Todoroki is a completely different type of Todoroki.

Ochaco leans over and pats his head. “No. Boys are just stupid. Deku-kun is no exception.” Todoroki makes a low noise of agreement. “You should call me Ochaco-san. We’ve bonded over Deku-kun’s terrible decision making skills tonight. We’re bonded for life now.”

“Call me Shouto, then.” Todoroki whines as Momo rips Iida’s shirt off his head. He wraps his arms around the whiskey glass like he’s protecting it. “Momo, please.”

Mercilessly, Momo lifts him up under his elbows and raises him off the floor. She takes his glass and slides it away with her foot. “No more moping. We’re going to figure this out. You will talk to Deku-kun and fix this...” Her confidence falters. “...somehow.”

After she releases him, Shouto flops onto the couch beside Ochaco. “I don’t want to.” He grumbles, stiffly pulling his phone out of his pocket. He squints at the screen. “Oh. Midoriya left me a message.”

Ochaco snatches it out his hand. “Do you want me to read it first?” Shouto mumbles his response into the cushion. Ochaco interprets it as go ahead, and opens the message.

From Midoriya Izuku:

Hey

Not coming back tonight - don’t worry about me.
Went to visit AM. Nothing’s wrong.
I left you some leftover rice & pork.
We need to talk when I get back.
Tomorrow.

Shouto shakes his head as Ochaco reads the texts aloud. “No. I don’t wanna talk to him right now.”

Ochaco sighs. “I know you’re hurt right now, but there’s -- there’s a perfectly reasonable explanation for all of this.” She has a thousand questions to ask, but she knows she’s unlikely to get any answers. If Deku went to the hospital, then he’s visiting All Might -- after today’s events, it would make a lot of sense for him to stop in and say hello.
Unfortunately, it also means Deku is putting off this conversation with Shouto; and their situation right now is especially unbalanced. She pushes on. “You two need to sit down and have a long talk. A really good long talk to sort this out.” Shouto groans. He wrestles his phone back from Uraraka and stares at the message, like glaring at it will change the contents inside.

Iida returns, gratefully accepting a new shirt from Momo. He sits on the couch and pats Shouto’s shoulders. Shouto presses a hand to his temple like he has a headache. “Todoroki-kun, she makes an excellent point. As I mentioned earlier, if you --”

“You should call me Shouto, too.” Shouto interrupts.

Iida falters. “...Ah. Alright. Shouto-kun, I believe, as Ochaco-san and myself attempted to explain: this is the culmination of months of poor communication and misunderstandings between you and Midoriya-kun. If you talk to him, I am confident you can --”

“Oh, come on.” Jirou complains. “We’ve given them almost a year and the two of them still haven’t talked it out. I say we give it one more shot, then I’m going to lock the two of them in the training room. They’re too stupid to figure out they’re both in --”

Momo whips out her work phone, slapping her free hand over Jirou’s mouth. “Oh no, babe, we’ve gotta run! There’s a big villain attack downtown!”

Muffled under Momo’s palm, Jirou protests “No there isn’t! You’re making that up! You’re just don’t want me to --!” Momo drags her from the room and out the entrance of Shouto’s apartment. “I’ll text you later!” Momo waves cheerily and slams the door behind her. Ochaco looks at Iida. Iida glances between her and Shouto, rubs his eyes, and picks up his discarded glasses on the coffee table.

Shouto grunts, redirecting her attention. He frowns at his phone. “I got...I got another message. Ah. That is...bad timing.” Ochaco leans over and reads the screen over his shoulder.

UNREGISTERED PRIVATE NUMBER [+81 0X-XXXX-XXXX]:
TODOROKI SHOUTO -
36.XXXXX
138.XXXXX
RED DOOR
930 TOMORROW
COME ALONE.

“What was --?” Ochaco asks. Shouto draws back, locking his phone screen and composing a neutral expression. The looseness in his limbs falls away. His face is set, serious. Like the face he would wear before he entered a battle. The face he wore when he was a hero. Hardened and prepared for a fight. Ochaco gapes at him.

“What did it say?” Iida asks, bewildered at Ochaco’s horror.

Ochaco’s voice rises, incredulousness bleeding through her tone. “‘Come alone’? GPS coordinates? Shouto-kun, what exactly are you getting into?”

Shouto shakes his head. “You shouldn’t have read that.” he murmurs. “It’s my -- it’s for my new job. The coordinates are for my meeting.”

“That looks sketchy.” Ochaco replies uneasily. Iida twists in his seat, concern tightening his face.
“Like, really sketchy. Are you -- are you sure that’s...?”

Another head shake. “It’s not what you’re thinking.” Shouto says, standing. He walks to the window and leans his forehead against the glass. At night, the view from his apartment is stunning; city lights, buildings and billboards alight as far as the horizon stretches. Ochaco doubts he walked to the window for the view. “Midoriya knows about it. We received the same offer, but I declined. I trust you both, and that’s why I’m telling you this -- but please trust me when I say that I really can’t say anymore. The less people that know about it, the better.”

“We trust you,” Iida says. Ochaco blinks in surprise at the sudden serious shift in the atmosphere. Iida appears similarly bewildered. “But I find I am at a loss for words. I thought you retired from Pro Hero work, Shouto-kun.”

“I am.” Shouto turns, smiling slightly. “It’s not about being a hero. It’s not vigilante work either, if that’s what you’re thinking.” That relieves only some of Ochaco’s concerns. “I planned to retire for a few years, and this offer came at the right time. Midoriya said I should take it. He thought it would be a good change for me. I could still do something good without being a Pro Hero.”

“Oh.” Ochaco says, deflating. Iida relaxes the tension in his jaw. “That’s -- good?”

“Yes.” Shouto says, and doesn’t elaborate from there.

“Wow.” Ochaco whispers. She fumbles to find the appropriate thing to say and decides on: “Big secrets, huh? And super top secret messages? Are you gonna be a super spy -- like in those movies! Do you get like a codename?”

Shouto laughs, quiet. “I don’t know think so. Maybe.” His smile slides away. “This is the first time they’ve sent anything. I’ve tried calling, but it’s like a ghost organ -- organ -- organization.” Thankfully, he’s not as demolished as their last outing. She didn’t want to repeat the night at the restaurant. She’s glad she cut him off after three drunks. She doubts Shouto wishes to wake up with a blinding hangover for his important meetings.

Ochaco turns to Iida with a bright smile. “You hear that? Shouto-kun is gonna be a spy!”

Iida returns the smile for a moment, before adopting a more serious, collected, Iida-like gaze. “You mentioned when you received the text that the ‘timing was bad.’ What did you mean by that?”

“Oh.” Shouto says dropping back on the couch. He fishes inside the cushion crease for the remote and flips on the tv. “Tomorrow is the first meeting. I’ll be gone for the whole day, and this isn’t an opportunity I can afford to miss.” The statement sinks in, tipping the scales back into the heavy and sour feeling at the bottom of her stomach. Iida looks at her, worry etched into his brow.

She asks, knowing it’s unlikely he has an answer prepared or wishes to hear the question said aloud, “But what about you and Deku-kun?”

Shouto shakes his head and stumbles. Iida leaps into action, wrapping Shouto’s arm over his shoulders and planting a firm hand on his waist. “I believe this is a decision to make in the morning.” Iida says diplomatically. “Although I believe it is in your best interests if the two of you speak as soon as possible.” He glances at Ochaco like he’s looking for support.

“Get some rest, sleep on it. Talk to him tomorrow.” Ochaco suggests. “Are you going to be fine on your own?”

Shouto nods slowly, slumping against Iida’s shoulder. “Yes. I should be...alright.”
Ochaco latches onto the other side, wrapping Shouto’s other arm over her own shoulders. Iida bears most of the weight as they stumble in an awkward six-legged race upstairs. At the door, Shouto regains his balance and stops at the door. “Here’s fine. You didn’t have to do that. And...thanks for coming tonight.”

Iida straightens. “Of course we came! We were very concerned about you.” Ochaco nods vigorously. “I shall call you in the morning, if that is quite alright with you.”

Shouto blinks slowly, like a dozing cat. “That’s fine. I’ll...I’m going to bed. Goodnight...Iida. Ochaco.”

In the elevator, Ochaco turns to Iida. “He’s not going to do anything stupid, right?”

Iida adjusts his glasses. He frowns. “Reasonably, if Midoriya-kun arrives on time, they should have a moment of opportunity to speak with one another and resolve their...situation. However, given their steadily growing track record of failed conversation attempts…” His glasses glint under the light. “...I fear their timing may work against them as easily as it could work for them. If he arrives too late, Shouto-kun will leave and Midoriya-kun will take his absence as an answer on it’s own.”

“We better hope Deku-kun isn’t late, then.” Ochaco groans. “I’ll text him and tell him to get over to the apartment first thing in the morning.”

Iida nods grimly. “That is the best we can do for now, I suppose.”

Thumbnail image: Divided by four boxes: Pro Hero Creati and Earphone Jack sitting together with matching grins and (top left), Ingenium and Uravity with Ingenium flexing for the camera (top right), Red Riot and Dynamite while Red Riot beams and Dynamite pouts (bottom left), Deku sitting by himself with his signature smile and wave (bottom right). They are all dressed casually, seated comfortably.]

Posted 2 weeks ago by BuzzfeedCeleb ✔ | Subscribe
9.3M views

Thank you to LGBTJP and ForwardJapan for organizing and sponsoring this video. Learn more about their groups and community work here: https://lgbtjpo.jp.co & https://frwrdjpn.jp.org
Here’s some personal messages to all their LGBT fans from LGBT Top Heroes. #2 Hero Deku also answers some questions from fans about being a bisexual Pro Hero...with a surprise guest. Bonus: we got some clips from the ForwardJapanCon panel in February of the best bits - stick around until the end. The full panel video is available for ForwardJapan sponsors, and you can become a sponsor through the link above!
English, French, and Spanish subtitles provided through WORLDSPEAK https://worldspeak.wrd

Comments 3.8k

MelissaSabry - 1 week ago
ENTROPY IS GAY????????????????????????????
View 12 replies
> be_be - i KNEW my gaydar was right all along! Ha!

Ethererndoc - 2 weeks ago
!!!--SPOILER ALERT--!!!
...
entropy is the surprise guest. he. crashes dekus part of the video. Its very gay.

And dare i say….Flirting? o:
View 16 replies
> mono crhoma - #entrodekuconfirmed =_= 
>> Re G - there is no heterosexual explanation for any part of this video

HeroAhoy - 4 days ago
e: some of these are really forward
d: (reads the same one) I AM DEFINITELY NOT ANSWERING THAT
e: answer the question your fans really want to know
d: no you answer it
e: (with the most loving expression and sassiest eye roll ever) whatever GAY!!!!!!THEY!!!!!!!!!THAT IS GAY!!!!!!!!!!THE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!GAY
View 2 replies

emilere - 2 days ago (edited)
INGENIUM AND URAVITY TEASING EACH OTHER BC THEY R BEST BI BUDS AND INGENIUM FLEXING!!!!!!!! THOSE BIG MUSCLES!!!!! I DIED AND NOW IM IN HEAVEN REST IN PEACE
View 5 replies
> tu Sn Nai - moOD
>> K_n09 - speaking of muscles: Deku.

the bible says Stan Loona - 5 days ago
future historians writing the greatest heroes of modern history textbook probably: “the great hero Deku never married, dedicating himself to a life of heroic service and defeating criminal organizations. notably he was only involved in short lived flings with women. he was beloved by many, especially one of his close friends, a retired pro hero by the name of “entropy” whom he lived with while spending time in tokyo at the Creati agency. he was often seen kissing and spending much of his free time with this retired hero, including nightly dining rituals at fancy restaurants and alluding to his deeper feelings in archived letters. what incredible friends they were.”
all of us: he has a boyfriend, steve
View 22 replies
> jo jo - fljwelkkjslfjkwfjkwfkwefksflskfjkwjksldljfsjw;lsfjsdfloowiurwoiwelef tru
>> Suzuki Ani - ill never forget that live news cast where the host asked deku when he was going to settle down and find a wife and deku said “or a husband” and the host said “what” and deku said “I’m bisexual. I could also find a husband.” and the host was so fuckign confused jajaj
>> 4Renji - hes bisexual, Marvin

Mei Hanata - 1 week ago
all the ppl laughing and whispering “thats gay” in the background while entrodeku is flirting!!
mood
View 8 replies

all might’s real son - 1 week ago
as the people have demanded for my truths i shall preach again: entropy and deku are not in a relationship, engaged, or otherwise romantically involved. however. i have looked into my crystal ball and i have seen this: there is change upon us. physical proof, you ask? watch this video. i sought more answers, greedy knowledge hoarder as i am. upon beholding my tarot cards, the edges smoldered and burned. i attempted to scry the answers and my skin blistered under the intense heat of the water, although it healed within moments. i know not the answers you seek.
unfortunately, i know not when the winds of change shall craft a new course. for now, we wait and
He leaves his apartment early. Iida calls him before he boards the first train, as promised, but Shouto evades any discussion about Midoriya. “I really wish you would wait another hour.” Iida says. “You will miss your window of opportunity to talk to him.”

“We can talk later.” Shouto replies. “I’m not going anywhere.”

“Yes, however,” Iida concedes. “You also haven’t spoken to Midoriya since yesterday. How do you think he will react if he finds your apartment empty? Did you make any attempts to text him? Did you leave a note for him?”

“We can talk later, Iida.” Shouto repeats. He knows, by Iida’s sigh, that Iida is frustrated with him but too polite to say so. Iida hangs up to start his early patrol shift after a very thorough reminder.
about the Team Idaten Agency Festival.

Midoriya texts him again on the train, but Shouto stares at the first line and is unable to bring himself to open the full message. Phone tucked away, head against the window, he settles into uneasy rest. His head aches, and he knows his hangover isn’t the source of his misery.

The night after he returns from the meeting he finds Midoriya’s bags packed and waiting outside the door to the guest room. The sight strikes him as hard as the memory of Midoriya’s last encounter. He pushes the bags back into Midoriya’s room and leaves them. The next morning he returns from a jog and peers into Midoriya’s room. The bags are gone. Midoriya’s bed is made and as undisturbed as he left it.

He hops on the next train to Iida’s agency and spends the evening at the Team Idaten Agency Festival. Like earlier, he dodges Iida’s questions and pointed stares. Despite Midoriya being one of the guests of honor, he doesn’t appear.

“I’m sure Midoriya-kun is very busy.” Iida offers, in an attempt to pacify the physical tension in the room.

“We both know he’s not.” Shouto replies peevishly. Iida looks away. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t be taking it out on you either. I’m...” A thousand words come to mind. Confused is the best summary of the tangled cobweb of emotions in Shouto’s body. Confused, hurt, uncertain...and very confused.

“You are both frustrated with each other.” Iida shifts in his chair, turning back to face Shouto. He shifts his glasses with his free hand. “It’s understandable, given your lack of communication.” He raises his hand to interrupt Shouto’s interjection. “It did not help either of you that when he went to visit and talk, you weren’t anywhere near your apartment. I understand your reasons as to why, but he did not know why you were absent.”

“I had a meeting.” Shouto defends himself.

“And yet you couldn’t text him back?” Shouto crosses his arms over him chest and doesn’t reply. “I know you had a meeting, but he did not. That is the issue at hand.” Shouto picks up his water and drains it instead of replying with a clever answer. Iida is unimpressed with his spiteful silence, as evidenced through his heavy sighing. “I shouldn’t be saying this at all, but Midoriya-kun is under the impression you never wish to speak with him again. Given the...reaction at your last meeting. He was unable to recognize his affection was not one sided. You should convince him otherwise. He is a hard man to convince one he has his mind set in one direction.”

Iida stands and pushes his chair out of the way. “As your friend -- as his friend, it pains me to see you both on unpleasant terms. However, Momo’s phrasing is apt in your situation: you are both being ridiculous.”

Putting down his glass on the table leaves a new ring of condensation. Shouto stares at it and digests Iida’s words, slowly. Iida places his hand on his warm shoulder and finishes, softer; “Please talk to him. For his sake, and yours.”

Shouto settles into his own bed that night and wrestles with pervasive insomnia late into the morning. Midoriya’s absence weighs heavy on one half of his mind. The offer and the meeting from the day before weight heavy on the other, like his mind is as divided as the color divided through his hair. Sleep does not come easy the next night. Or the night after that.

If Shouto was confused as to where they stood before, now he’s absolutely perplexed. Midoriya
hasn’t returned to his apartment in at least three days. His last text for Midoriya remains in his drafts.

From Midoriya Izuku:
[21:04 PM]
We need to talk when I get back.
Tomorrow.
[7:43 AM]
I’m here where are you
Shouto?
Did you leave
Nevermind
Forget about it

To Midoriya Izuku: (Draft)
i’m sorry i had a meeting
i’m here now
where are you?

Guilt and shame stir in his stomach. He hadn’t known Midoriya visited his apartment during his meeting. He missed Midoriya by an hour at most, and Midoriya hasn’t made any signs of return since then. If only he -- no. He’s not going to think about Midoriya right now. He can’t think about Midoriya right now...or the lack of Midoriya.

Instead, he thinks of his meeting. He passes the choice back and forth across his mind. Four days time to accept or reject the offer. Three days since he attended the most nerve-wracking meeting of his life. Four days since he last saw Midoriya. Four days until he has to make a decision that could put his whole life on the back of a blind coin toss.

It’s times like this where part of him will miss the simplicity of hero work. Selfishly, he misses the rush of adrenaline and sense of accomplishment. When he left sidekick work behind and moved into the middle of Tokyo to work with Momo, part of him knew it would be a temporary job. Part of him knew he would never be satisfied with the Pro Hero life; he knew his future for Hero Work would never end in happiness. How could he ever be happy in a place that was modelled for him against his wishes from the day he was born? How could he ever grow from a place that was determined for him before he even learned what it meant to have a choice?

I had a feeling that’s what you were going to say, Midoriya said, the night Shouto told him he planned to retire.

Why? Shouto asked.

Midoriya smiled. No judgement. You always had this look on your face like you knew you were meant for something else. Something greater.

What is greater than being a hero?

I don’t know, Midoriya said. I don’t think it’s about something greater. I meant something for yourself. Something greater for you. As to what that is, well, I think that’s up for you to find out.

Shouto did not trust the man with the suit or the briefcase. He could not see the man’s face, and something about his voice raised the hair on the back of his neck. Midoriya said he could be trusted, and All Might and Gran Torino vouched for his position given the authenticity of the seal, but...the man unnerved him. The secret you know now, the man with the suitcase said, is enough to
shake the world of heroes to its core. The secrets you could learn are enough to make it crumble.

What is the price of a secret that size? Shouto wonders. This question is the one he wrestles with throughout the day and into the night as he watches the minutes pass by.

Even more selfishly, he hates himself for seriously considering not taking it at all. He could escape. He could leave his hero past behind him. He could hop on the next train to the other end of Japan and spend the rest of his life hiding out in the mountains. He could relieve himself from the uncomfortable tension between himself and Midoriya. *Stop being dramatic,* Momo’s voice rings through his concentration. This awkwardness between him and Midoriya will pass with time. He will talk to Midoriya and sort this out, as Ochaco and Iida promised. He isn’t going to flee to the countryside.

Yet, as he looks at the empty sink and the blinking cursor next to Midoriya’s contact name, the idea seems more and more appealing.

The phone sitting on the cushion beside him vibrates. Shouto startles at the sound and flips it over. Sickening relief crushes his lungs when he sees the name belongs to Momo. He accepts the call and greets her: “Hello, Momo. Everything alright?”

“*Deko-kun is on his way over.*” Momo replies bluntly.

“Wh --” Shouto starts, but Momo cuts him off.

“He’s going back to your apartment and the two of you are going to talk.” Her tone gives no room for argument. Momo might not be physically present in the room, but he sees the exasperated expression on her face. “He’s an idiot. You’re an idiot. Both of you are idiots. Kyouka was right. I should’ve locked you two in the training room.”

Shouto makes a noise of disagreement. Momo ignores him. “*He’ll be there in twenty minutes. That should give you enough time to figure out what it is you want to say. I asked Kyouka to tail him. She’ll text you when he’s in the lobby.*”

Shouto opens his mouth, closes it, and pulls the phone away from his ear. Momo’s voice rings out clear and sharp through the receiver, even at a distance. “*Deko-kun is off duty for the rest of the week. I don’t want to see either of you until this is over. Goodbye.*”

Shouto stares at the dark screen after the call drops. His phone buzzes again but the message isn’t from Momo.

From Iida Tenya:

* Momo-san informed me he is on his way back.
* I hope you remember what I said the other night.
* Do call me if something comes up. I worry for you, but I am certain you will resolve this and benefit from the results.
* I must head out for patrol. Enjoy the rest of your evening!

Numbly, he rises from the couch and trudges upstairs. He spares Midoriya’s dark and empty room a lingering glance before he enters his own room and stops at the doorway. He takes in the cluttered, unorganized orchestra of items inside. The bed is unmade. The furniture is sparse; isolated pieces cobbled together in a dissonant collection of makeshift items. The rest of his apartment is the same: like he prepared the decoration with the intent everything inside was meant to be temporary. Like his terrible couch downstairs. Everything in his apartment is ill-fitting and
uncomfortable. Besides the few alterations between his kitchen and the new chairs Midoriya purchased, nothing in the apartment really feels like his.

With Midoriya in his apartment, the feelings disappeared. With Midoriya, his apartment felt like more. Even in the safety of his own room, miles from Midoriya, he can’t escape any of Midoriya’s echoes in his apartment. The bright All Might cap on his bedside table is one such item; the brightest spot of color in his otherwise unmemorable room. He should give the hat back to Midoriya. But he kept the hat because Midoriya always smiled when he wore it, and Shouto loved to see his smile. He remembers: *You’re allowed to have things that make you happy.*

There is no logical, well-reasoned excuse for this *situation* between Midoriya and himself. There is no reason for him to demand more time from Midoriya than he deserves. There is no reason for Shouto to be selfish. There is no reason to want more than he has. He accepted Midoriya’s feelings towards him were nothing beyond the bond of friendship tried through fire.

The memory of Iida’s odd comment floods an entirely new wave of warm confusion through his body: *He was unable to recognize his affection was not one sided.* Shouto knew Midoriya didn’t return his feelings...but could he?

There was no reason for Midoriya to kiss him, and he did it anyway. There was no explanation for Midoriya’s reaction. The brief moment he felt Midoriya’s lips twitch and smile in their kiss. There was no reason for Midoriya to lean in. No reason at all.

Shouto made the decision to do nothing, but Midoriya moved. Midoriya leaned in. Shouto didn’t move. Midoriya was the one who played the ill-fated gamble and believed he lost without checking the other cards on the table. He walked away without a backwards glance. A mistake, Midoriya explained.

Midoriya kissed him. As long as he’s known Midoriya, he knows Midoriya would not do something unless he wanted to. Midoriya wanted to kiss him, and he did.

A mistake.

...it was a lie. He sighs. Momo is right. Iida is right. He really is an idiot.

---

JIROKAN @jirro3kun
Almost a week of radio silence since making no1...wonder if its because he’s so busy #dekulurking
36 retweets | 302 favorites
4:53 PM - 25 March X1

JIROKAN @jirro3kun
I love how this tag is full of conspiracies too lmao #dekulurking
12 retweets | 187 favorites
4:54 PM - 25 March X1

JIROKAN @jirro3kun
#dekulurking BUT also.........entropy is usually pretty quiet on social media. But he always likes posts his friends make. yet he hasnt liked or retweeted anything from the billboard event. incher of esting..
15 retweets | 242 favorites
4:56 PM - 25 March X1

荣誉 @LidUE
@HERODEKU WHERE DID YOU GO?????????? #dekulurking
15 retweets | 124 favorites
4:57 PM - 25 March X1

Marchi pand | 18 years Of yikes @bmaringban
SPOTTED!!!!! #DekuLurking
[Photo attached: Screenshot of a tweet from Creati about making the most of opportunities, with DEKU listed in the name of accounts liked.]
78 retweets | 112 favorites
4:58 PM - 25 March X1

DEKUI!!!!!!!!!!!!!! @_dekuotaku
#EntroDekuConspiracy theory 104: last week entropy left the bbevent looking very upset. In pictures, we see deku wasnt as energetic as usual around fans. Theres a ton of photos of him either frowning and videos where he looks...worried. I wonder if they broke up?? And now he’s being super quiet on twitter and insta which is so weird bc he usually posts something once a day…but all he’s done this week is like a few posts #DekuLurking
129 retweets | 1829 favorites
5:04 PM - 24 March X1

RIP ME #entrodeku @softdeku
#Entrodekuconspiracy DID THEY BREAK UP??? WHATS GOING ONNNNN #dekulurking
65 retweets | 292 favorites
5:10 PM - 24 March X1

All Might is a gay ally @gaysforallmight
#dekulurking I’m sure he's just busy but….we miss him :'( 
14 retweets | 129 favorites
5:13 PM - 24 March X1

The elevator rises and falls, blinking the numbers to each floor as it ascends and falls. Each time the doors slide open Shouto’s heart thunders in his ears. His confrontation with Midoriya is inevitable. Standing outside his apartment like he is, he’s removed all chances of Midoriya planning an escape route. He presses his cold hand against his warm cheeks and wills his body temperature to remain under control.

His phone vibrates against his side. He unlocks it and reads the message at the top.

From Jirou Kyouka:

dekus heading up rn
take my advice for once- sometimes u just gotta just say it
hw do u think i ended up dating momo
altho u r pretty bad at talking
actions speak louder than words or whatever
i kno u say that all the time so listen 2 ur own damn advice
i believe in u. good luck.

To Jirou Kyouka:

thank you jirou

From Jirou Kyouka:

go get that boy!!!!!!! B-)
“Shouto.”

His head snaps up. Midoriya stands in the middle of the hallway, hands shoved into his pockets. He’s not smiling. There’s no emotion on his face at all. Midoriya’s gaze passes over his face and quickly settles onto the space behind Shouto’s shoulder. He won’t meet Shouto’s eyes. Shouto’s confidence falters for a moment.

“Midoriya.” he returns, neutrally. “You wanted to talk, if I recall.”

Midoriya takes an uncertain step forward. His voice is harder than usual. The tone he uses when he’s talking to someone as Deku, the Number One Hero, and not Midoriya. “Yeah. You didn’t show up, if I recall.”

Shouto holds back a wince. “Yes -- and I’m sorry. I left early in the morning to meet with the...you know. They finally reached out to me. I...I didn’t have a chance to let you know. I’m sorry.”

“Ah. That was bad timing.” Midoriya turns slightly. “Well. If you need anything, I’m going out for --”

“No.” Shouto cuts in, before Midoriya has a chance to run. “We’re -- we’re talking right now. I’m sorry I didn’t show up, but I didn’t know what time you would be coming.” A slow nod from Midoriya. “I wasn’t avoiding you. I wasn’t upset with you. But then you avoided me.”

Midoriya bites his lip. Shouto knows him well enough to recognize he’s anxious. “Yes, well... That’s -- that’s just...I was avoiding us -- avoiding you. I don’t have an excuse. I’m sorry, I was...busy. Let’s -- let’s talk about that later. How was your meeting?”

He’s trying to redirect the conversation, Shouto notes. Poorly. “It was...interesting. I have to contact them by Saturday and tell them if I accepted their offer or not.” It doesn’t matter if Midoriya pretends he can avoid the blatant tension since their last meeting. Shouto isn’t leaving until he gets an answer.

“Oh.” Midoriya says, edging towards the door to the elevator, like he’s planning to escape through it. “What’d they offer?”

Shouto hesitates. “Ah...Yes. It’s very dangerous, as you predicted. It’s bigger than anything you or I thought.”

Midoriya’s reaction is not what he expects. He ducks his head, relieving his hands from his pockets to play with them. “Dangerous, huh?” he says, rubbing the scarred skin across his hand. Shouto soaks in these little details and reminds himself: this isn’t a gamble. The answer is in front of him. Midoriya, oblivious to his internal debate, murmurs: “You’re really thinking about taking it?”

“I don’t know yet.” Shouto moves this time. Midoriya startles and looks up. His feet turn like he plans to step back, but he doesn’t. Shouto takes another step forward. “It could still be a trap of some kind. What do you think?”

Midoriya’s jaw tightens. "It’s not up to me. It’s your choice.”

“It is.” Shouto agrees. “But I was asking for your opinion.”

“I don’t know what you want, Shouto.” Midoriya says. He raises his gaze and meets Shouto’s eyes. Shouto knows Midoriya isn’t talking about the job offer. “All I can say is: do what you want. Make the choice for yourself.”
Midoriya’s eyes are unreadable, but his lip twitches. Shouto senses pride in his voice when he says: “Then take it.”

“I will.” Midoriya’s shoulders relax; he lets down his guard. No more metaphors. No more hints. No more double-edged meanings. If miscommunication brought them here, there is only one sure way out. He needs -- they both need -- to say what needs to be said. He knows, this time, he’s not standing alone on the precipice of change. Shouto sees his opportunity and leaps. “I have another question for you, Midoriya. About that day -- about the last time we spoke. Why did you say it was a mistake?”

Midoriya stills. “What do you mean?”

Shouto presses on. “You know exactly what I mean.” Midoriya steps to the side, but Shouto follows him. He plants himself directly in front of Midoriya and asks again: “We need to talk about what happened. Why did you say that?”

“I’d -- I’d rather not!” Midoriya’s voice jumps up a whole octave. He makes for the elevator in a brisk spin on his heel. “Now, if you excuse me, I’m gonna head out, so...”

Gritting his teeth, Shouto chases after him and catches his shoulder. Midoriya’s entire body stiffens. “Turn around, Midoriya. We’re not done talking.”

Midoriya turns, expression carefully blank. If it weren’t for the alarm in his eyes, he could pass for indifferent. “There’s nothing to talk about. We’re fine. I’m not -- I’m not upset. It was a misunderstanding. So we’re fine. Everything’s fine.”

“No,” Shouto says. “Answer the question. When you -- after you -- you kissed me.” Midoriya’s entire face undergoes a series of color changes. Pale, then pink cheeked, followed by a slowly rising pink hue spreading down his neck and to his ears. “Why did you say it was a mistake?”

“It’s not -- it doesn’t matter.” Midoriya bites out, which is a bizarre display of aggression considering how red his face is. “It was -- it was a mistake.”

“Really.” Shouto says flatly, ignoring the push-pull of pain in his chest at that word. “Is that all it was?”

“Shouto.” Midoriya swallows. “It doesn’t matter.” He lifts his gaze -- finally -- and meets Shouto’s eyes. Shouto braces himself. The moment where the tangled webs fall apart and all the fear and hope and wishes come spilling out. Midoriya breathes in deeply, like he’s preparing for a fight.

“Tell me.” Shouto says, and takes another step. “It does matter. It’s important to me.” Midoriya bites his lip and flickers his gaze to the wall. Shouto’s throat tightens; painful, sharp. “Please.”

“I-I --” Midoriya’s breath catches, shaking his head. He takes a step back. Then another. Arms crossed over his chest, like he’s protecting himself. Shouto doesn’t reach out his hand to stop him.

Midoriya’s expression crumples. “Shouto, I -- I don’t want to talk about it. If we could -- if we could forget about it, and move on, I think that’s...for the best. And I’m sorry -- I shouldn’t have done that. I just -- I want us to forget it happened.”

“Izuku,” Shouto says, quietly. “Is that what you really want me to do? Forget about it?” Shouto lays out his truth, even if Midoriya’s answer is not the one he hoped for. He tears it from himself.
and releases it. “I thought I understood, but I suppose I was foolish for thinking…” He shakes his head, averting his gaze from Midoriya. “I know you don’t feel the same --” His words falter momentarily, but he forces out the rest of his sentence. “-- I know my feelings for you are different. But I wanted you to know.”

Midoriya’s expression, for once, is completely foreign to him. The seconds that pass between them without words lasts an entire lifetime. Shouto has never experienced this kind of deeply unsettling tension with Midoriya before. All their tension from the past pales in comparison. This is...this is not how Shouto imagined this conversation going. This is agonizing.

Shouto bites back the burn in the back of his throat. “Well, I’m sorry I...overstepped.” His truth is out. Shouto doesn’t feel relief. He feels overexposed; raw. Turning away from Midoriya, he walks to the door without looking back. “I...I think I’ll turn in early. Goodnight, Midoriya.” He closes the door behind him with a note of finality. Bracing his hand on the wall, he staggers out of the entrance and sits down on the step where his apartment floor drops.

Letting out his confusion and frustration in a cool exhale, he straightens. He stands. Sitting down on the ground and feeling sorry for himself isn’t how he operates. For now, he needs time. He needs space. He needs a chance to rethink everything his mother said. And everything Iida, Momo, Urakaka, and Jirou said about...

Whatever train of thought he had is scattered like dust in a windstorm as Midoriya storms in. He kicks the door out of the way with so much force it swings back and nearly flies off the hinges.

The sound pulls him back to himself. He turns. He stares at Midoriya, who stares back with an intense focus that raises the hair on the back of his neck. “Uh. Midoriya.” Shouto says, although it sounds more like a question. His mind feels like an ancient set of machinery with gum stuck in the gears. Midoriya ignores him, marching forward with an intensity that could burn through an entire city. “What are you --?”

“You’re right. We’re not done talking.” Midoriya declares.

Shouto stares at him, dumbly. He glances at the stairs and calculates how long it would take to dash upstairs and hide in his room like a coward in the face of his humiliation. “Ah -- no, I think I’ve --”

“Listen to me.” Midoriya begs. The desire to flee must be written on his face because Midoriya steps in front of Shouto’s only escape route. A hand -- Midoriya’s -- grabs his collar and pushes him until Shouto’s back hits the wall. Shouto could push him away, but every muscle in his body locks up.

Midoriya’s eyes scan his face; searching, desperate. Glimmering under the low light from the hall, he blinks quickly and sucks in a sharp breath. “When you said ‘I know my feelings for you are different’ -- what did you mean?”

“It’s not important --” Shouto protests. Midoriya stares at him, waiting, and his resolve crumbles again. He tries and fails to form a coherent sentence. Midoriya’s warm hand against his skin somehow grounds him even while he feels like his head is floating away from his body. “-- I’m -- really, Midoriya, I thought it was obvious how I…” The force of the look Midoriya gives him stuns him into silence. His last word trails off, an aching, unfinished note. Midoriya’s hand trembles, loosening the grip around his shirt. His hand moves from the shirt to Shouto’s jaw, and the other hand to his neck.

Midoriya’s lips tremble, but voice is firm. “Shouto.” Midoriya says his name like it’s a precious
thing. A complete thought all on it’s own. Shouto stares at him. His shoulder is definitely smoking. Midoriya doesn’t appear concerned. He leans in, giving Shouto plenty of time and space to defend himself. To tell him off. To let him make a choice. And then Midoriya leans in a little more.

“I’m going to kiss you, now.” Midoriya announces, and does exactly that. Shouto decides to abandon words for the time being. His mouth is occupied with other things, after all.

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HeroWatch ✔️ @HeroWatch
Replies to @maixis_ Not sure! Deku could be taking a break from social media as he transitions into his new role. (1/2)
573 retweets | 3,602 favorites
8:44 PM - 24 March X1

HeroWatch ✔️ @HeroWatch
That being said, it’s possible he is very busy - during his first few years he rarely posted on social media because his work schedule was INTENSE. He started his own agency and he was taking in as many cases as his body could physically handle. Gotta admire that dedicated work effort, but we hope this time he’s off the social sharing because he’s taking a break.
607 retweets | 3,787 favorites
8:47 PM - 24 March X1

HeroWatch ✔️ @HeroWatch
Replies to @JumboSe While Deku is close with other heroes like Ingenium or Uravity, I don’t know if they would answer you if you asked. Maybe if you asked nicely they could shed some light on Deku’s sudden social media absence? Or why he’s rarely appeared in news updates or televised fights this week? Is he taking a break from the media attention?
573 retweets | 3,111 favorites
8:52 PM - 24 March X1

Like by INGENIUM and 3,110 more

INGENIUM ✔️ @t_ingenium
@HeroWatch He is in good health, and the rest is not up to me to say!
892 retweets | 5,285 favorites
9:04 PM - 24 March X1

HeroWatch ✔️ @HeroWatch
@t_ingenium Thank you! We send our support and hope he returns soon.
391 retweets | 2,761 favorites
9:12 PM - 24 March X1

Like by INGENIUM, Uravity, and 2,759 more

HeroWatch ✔️ @HeroWatch
If you missed it, Froppy’s incredible rescue and battle are up on our site for the Weekly Battle Breakdown. Go check it out! #ActionHero
[Photo attached: Pro Hero Froppy swinging between the arms of a villain with a Gorilla body, weaving out of reach from the massive hairy arms and swings.]
573 retweets | 3,111 favorites
9:32 PM - 24 March X1

Creati | #10 ✔️ @icreati
Take a guess at who is hosting this year’s #RisingHero conference here in Tokyo City? One guess only.
“This couch really sucks.” Midoriya complains, with his face pressed into Shouto’s shoulder at an uncomfortable angle. Midoriya decided Shouto was more comfortable than the couch, but Shouto isn’t about to raise a complaint of his own. Midoriya’s weight is warm and welcome, even though one of Shouto’s arms tingles with numbness.

After their emotional conflict resolution at the entranceway, they microwaved a bowl of leftovers and passed the plate between them. Dishes washed, and tv on low, Midoriya guided them to the couch and made a determined route for Shouto’s mouth.

“Tomorrow --” Midoriya yawns, rubbing his jaw. “Tomorrow, I’ve got the day off. We should buy you some new furniture. I’m going to buy the nicest couch I can find.”

Shouto senses a heavy conversation on the horizon. If Midoriya wants to talk about something, Shouto isn’t going to stop him; he doesn’t want to take a step back. The levity in his voice is soothing, but the crease in Midoriya’s brow suggests otherwise.
“That’s rather presumptuous of you.” Shouto murmurs. “Buying furniture for me. This isn’t your apartment.” Midoriya snorts and leans back. He smiles, and Shouto’s heart aches at the sight, wishing to kiss the smile right off him. He remembers; he can do that now. So he does.

“Mmm, yeah, okay,” Midoriya pushes him off with a gentle tap on the jaw. “We still need to talk.” Shouto hums, kissing him again to avoid answering. Midoriya indulges him for a moment, before he laughs and pushes Shouto away. “No, stop, we’re talking now. First question, I guess: are we -- are we a thing? Like...a dating thing.”

“I would hope so.” Shouto says, and presses a kiss to Midoriya’s palm. Midoriya’s expression melts. “I would like to.”

“Good, th-that’s --” Midoriya stutters when he presses another kiss to his wrist, right beneath his pulse. “-- that’s -- that’s good. I-I would also like that. To date you, I mean. Stop distracting me.” He tugs his hand out of Shouto’s reach.

“I don’t know what you mean.” Shouto says, and fights back a smile.

Midoriya pouts, but he is unable to hold back his own smile. “Sure you don’t. Okay, new question. Are we going to tell anyone?”

That answer takes more time to parse into words. “Maybe not...right now. Soon. It might be selfish, of me...” he steals Midoriya’s hand back and threads their fingers together. “I’m not sure I’m ready to deal with that kind of attention.”

Midoriya gently squeezes his hand. “That’s not a bad idea.” He frowns. “We should probably tell some people. I feel like I owe it to my mom, and you can decide to tell your mother. And some of our friends. I know they’re worried about us.” His frown deepens into a hard scowl. “Ochaco-san is going to be so smug.”

Shouto wrinkles his nose. “Momo and Jirou are going to be insufferable. Jirou especially.” Midoriya huffs, laughter spilling out of him. His elbow bruises Shouto’s kidney, but Shouto doesn’t make any noise of complaint. “We can probably tell Iida.” Shouto muses. “He’ll be the least…”

“...obnoxious.” Midoriya finishes, and giggles at the face he makes. “Alright, one more question.” He leads on at Shouto’s brow raise. “How did it take us this long to...you know?”

Shouto murmurs. “You certainly weren’t helping. You can be a hard person to read, sometimes.”

“Me? If anything, you’re the hard one to read.” Midoriya sighs. “This is ridiculous. I kissed you, and somehow you thought I still didn’t like you.”

“In my own defense, you did run away after you did that.”

“...Fair point.”

Shouto adds, “I think we were both too focused on ourselves. We were only seeing half the picture.”

“That’s an awfully philosophical take on it.”

“It shows we should listen to our friends more.”

“Shows we’re idiots, maybe.” Midoriya says, frowning. “We could’ve saved ourselves a lot of time
if we talked it out, y’know. I mean we’ve -- we could’ve solved so many problems if we talked. We could’ve...we’ve done it all backwards. I moved into your apartment before we even started dating. Most people are already convinced we were dating. Ochaco-san thought were -- well, she thought I’d confessed to you and you were acting like a jerk about it.” His frown deepens. “We could’ve started actually dating months ago.” Shouto grunts. “And had I known you weren’t -- I-I wouldn’t have run away. And I wouldn’t have lied at the door. I was trying to salvage our friendship, believing it was for the best -- and almost ruined everything.” He sighs again. “I’m an idiot. We’re idiots.”

“Hindsight is 20/20, and all that.” Shouto says. He blinks, and shifts his head to address Midoriya directly. “Why did you kiss me, then? The day of the rankings, I mean.”

Midoriya bites his lip. “I - I looked at you and...I moved without thinking.” He flinches and giggles at Shouto’s hard poke. “Hey! Stop! I know that’s cheesy, but it’s like…” This time, Midoriya moves and braces both arms on either side of Shouto’s head. He smiles, warmly, lovingly, and slowly closes the distance. “I was pretty emotional at the time, but then everything else spilled out all at once. Not in a good way.” His nose wrinkles. “It was a pretty bad first kiss.”

“I don’t know about that.” Shouto says. “I wouldn’t have missed it for anything.” Midoriya laughs, and presses an off-centered kiss at the corner of his mouth.

“Who’s cheesy now?” Midoriya teases. Shouto leans up to kiss the smile off his face, but Midoriya pulls away. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his phone. “Uh, sorry -- my phone.” He distangles his legs from Shouto and drops onto the couch with his feet tucked under one another. “Oh, I missed...a lot of texts. And Iida called me. A lot.” The phone screen lights up again, displaying a new call from Iida.

“We’ve been rather occupied.” Shouto says. Midoriya hums. Shouto reaches over and loops an arm around his neck. “You should answer it. Iida was very worried about us. I think he deserves a chance to know we’re fine.”

Midoriya makes a thoughtful noise, and accepts the call. He swipes up for a video call and even before Iida’s image appears on screen, Iida begins with an explosive greeting. “Midoriya-kun! You promised you would reply more often, and -- ah, is that Shouto-kun?” Despite Iida’s box remaining dark, Midoriya’s video is working for Iida’s side. Shouto shifts on the couch to slide further into frame.

“He calls you Shouto now, too?” Midoriya whispers.

Shouto raises a brow. “I can tell you about it later. We talked at my apartment the night after the billboard in the aftermath of...your little stunt.” Midoriya bites his lip and says, “ah,” and leaves it at that.

“Is...everything alright between you two?” Iida asks. Midoriya’s screen flickers, and Iida’s face focuses. “You don’t appear to be upset.” Iida frowns, his hair momentarily vanishing into the dark background behind him before the video corrects itself. Warily, he continues, “But Midoriya, if you would like for us to have this conversation in private for --”

“It’s okay.” Midoriya says. “He knows. We were, uh, actually going to call you and talk to you about that.”

“Oh. He...knows?” Iida blinks. He pulls the phone back, widening their view of his room. He looks like he’s wearing night clothes. Shouto doesn’t remember too much of his last visit at Iida’s apartment, but he’s fairly certain Iida is in bed. “What happened? What did you wish to speak
“You were right, Iida.” Shouto says. He turns away from Iida to look at Midoriya, the soft angle of his profile. “We’re both very dense. I should’ve taken your advice from the start.”

Iida’s face lights up. “Does that mean the both of you finally --?” Midoriya grins, nodding with excitement.

Shouto returns his gaze to Iida. “If anybody deserves to know first, it’s you.” Iida breaks out the waterworks at that response. Midoriya isn’t far behind him. While Midoriya continues talking to Iida, Shouto broaches the issue with his own collection of missed messages. Midoriya and Iida sniffle in the background as he types out a reply to Momo.

To Yaoyorozu Momo:

everything is fine. we are fine
better than fine.
and thank you
tell jirou she lost her bet

From Yaoyorozu Momo:
!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
I’m so happy for you :’)
Also how did you know about the bet

to Yaoyorozu Momo:
did she really make a bet

From Yaoyorozu Momo:
That was a joke I promise
I’m so happy for you two !!!!
but I was serious
I don’t want to see either of you until next week
Go on a date or something
Let us hold down the fort

“Hey,” Midoriya swings his legs into Shouto’s lap. “What’s that smile for?”

“Momo is insufferable.” Shouto replies. Midoriya reaches his hands out and makes a come here gesture. Shouto takes his hand, but Midoriya pulls himself into Shouto’s lap instead. He knees Shouto in the stomach as he settles in. “Ah. Midoriya…’’

“We’ve still got a lot to talk about.” Midoriya ignores him. He exhales deeply, remorseful. “And we need to...set down some ground rules. I don’t know about you, though, but I’m pretty exhausted. Raincheck for tomorrow?”

“Tomorrow.” Shouto agrees lightly. Midoriya grins into their next kiss. “We need to talk about the other thing too.’’

“Tomorrow.” Midoriya repeats, and kisses him again.
After Midoriya performs a top to bottom search of the apartment and declares it safe from snooping cameras, shapeshifting reporters, and other pests, they sit on Shouto’s bed and discuss The Other Thing. With a notebook in one hand and a pen in the other, Midoriya drills him for details. He gives Shouto his full and thorough attention to every sentence and description. “What was his name?”

A small shrug. “He didn’t give one.”

The lackluster response doesn’t dim Midoriya’s energy. He fires off another question; “What was his quirk? Did he have one? Did he look like anything we’ve seen before? Did you get to see his face?”

“I don’t know. He wore the mask and hood like the last time.”

“Hm.” Midoriya taps his chin with his pen. He scribbles something down and looks up. “He didn’t say anything else?”

“Besides acting very mysterious and unhelpful, no. But he promised the source is legitimate, which is better than anything I’ve dug up so far.”

“Hm.” Midoriya repeats. “You’re not worried about the legitimacy aspect though, are you.” He says it like a fact, not a question.

Midoriya’s probably analyzed every response or possible response Shouto has, because he’s one step ahead...as usual. “No. If it’s fake, I can always keep digging.”

“You’re worried about what he wants in return.” Shouto’s mouth twitches as he nods. Midoriya really could possess a mind reading quirk. “Big secrets like that don’t come without a pretty hefty price tag. Nothing in life is free, after all.”

“Yes. Which is why I should be investigating on my own. The danger for your career if you’re --” Midoriya waves him off. His leg bounces up and down with excitement. “Midoriya. I’m serious. There’s a reason I’m the one investigating. I don’t have a hero career to worry about. I don’t want
“This is the closest lead we’ve had to taking down the Board of Heroes in years.” Midoriya’s eyes shine. He abandons the notepad and putting his hand on his chin. “You can’t blame me for being excited. It’s all like -- it’s like the start to a mystery novel.” Only Midoriya could find the romance in peeling back the layers of a volatile political scandal. “First, a strange figure approaches me in an alley and says he can give me every dirty skeleton in the Board’s closet. I refuse because that’s ridiculous. The same figure approaches you months later and says the exact same thing. Except this time he gives you a letter. The seal on it is from the same organization once operated under Nana Shimura’s control and Gran Torino said it was the exact same seal for --”

“...Midoriya.”

“-- Sh, not right now.” Shouto lets out a small sigh. When Midoriya is excited, it’s hard to pull him back to reality. “The letter is encrypted, obviously, but Hatsume-san’s code breaker deciphers a pattern for a phone number. You reach out and never get a response. Until last week. They give you encrypted coordinates for a first meeting. Four missing characters at the end. A name, maybe?”

Shouto leans back in his bed and stares up at the ceiling. Midoriya continues on, faster, words sliding together into one. “At your meeting the strange figure promises to give you a notebook from a deceased previous Board member that holds every secret the Board’s kept under wraps during their time there. He says you have a week to decide if you want it because it comes with ‘great personal risk’ which I assume has to mean it’s either securely guarded or somebody else wants that notebook. Now, of course, assuming he’s telling us the truth, the notebook could have any number of details in it. It could also be useless. But assuming the notebook is legit -- after we get our hands on it -- we don’t know the repercussions. Where would we even hide something like that? What kind of info is inside? Is the notebook also in code? Will we have to encode an entire diary of dirty secrets from a dead politician?”

“Midoriya.” Shouto repeats.

Midoriya leans back and falls onto the bed beside him. He lets out a deep exhale. “That’s also assuming it’s not a trap. But why go through all the effort of the code? Why tell the two of us, and only the two of us? Why did they target you out of all the other heroes? I can understand why they’d go to me first because I’m, well, me. But with your connection to Endeavor and without knowing your history, how would they know you’re someone interested in this sort of scandal? Do they know that you know about the truth of One For All? And again, why code? Why the bizarre message? Why go through the effort of hiding it? Why now? Why is the next meeting prepared the day of the gala? Is it coincidence, or is there something planned for the gala too? The seal is also a mystery, because if they’re related to Nana -- why not come out and make themselves known? Is there some other danger we aren’t aware of? Are they hiding something so terrible they can’t even show their face?” At the last question, Midoriya runs out of steam and deflates.

“People who act like they’ve got something to hide usually have a good reason for it.” Shouto says. “And they’ve usually got their own closets full of skeletons.”

“I suppose.” Midoriya huffs. “Everything about this is bizarre! He warned you not to tell anybody about the letter and the offer because it would endanger everyone. Which is...like I said, bizarre. You haven’t even told Momo-san, right?” Shouto shakes his head. “And Iida-kun and Ochaco-san saw your text, so they know you’re up to something. We’ll have to be more careful in the future. The restaurant was a really close call as it is, we can’t afford something like that again. If this really is as dangerous as this...shadow figure said, I’d hate to think what it would mean for their
careers. Or their lives, if the notebook is as dangerous as he claims.”

Shouto taps his arm, pulling Midoriya from his darker musing. Midoriya smiles, but it fades from his face like a cloud passing in front of the sun. “I don’t like that you have to go alone.” Midoriya scowls. “I don’t like that part at all.”

Shouto turns his head. “I went alone last time. It won’t be any different.”

“It is. It’s different.” Midoriya insists. He pops up, like he’s struck with a lightning bolt of inspiration. “It’s a puzzle.”

Shouto sits up much slower than him. “A puzzle?”

“Mystery novel.” Midoriya says, like he’s answered his own question. “Lots of clues. Little secrets. And there’s a puzzle in here somewhere. The code is part of the puzzle, I’m sure of it. I just have to find the right key and put all the pieces together.”

“...Right.”


“We have three days to put together a plan.” Shouto reminds him. “And we can prepare for the worst case scenario.”

Midoriya shakes his head. “I don’t even want to go there.”

“I figured you wouldn’t.” The room settles into silence. “Let’s...discuss a lighter topic.”

“Like the dating thing?”

“That’s not really a lighter -- well. Yes. We should talk about that.”

Midoriya smiles. “I don’t know where to begin.”

The honesty brings a smile to his own face. “Neither do I.”

“I guess we’ll figure it out as we go, then. Like everything else we do.” Midoriya holds out his hand to Shouto and rubs the soft skin on the back of his hand. “I think...as long as we promise to talk to each other, we’ll be fine. No more jumping to conclusions.”


Midoriya hums thoughtfully. “I feel like there’s some things we need to clear up first.” Shouto prompts him with a curious noise. Midoriya smiles so wide the corners of his eyes wrinkle. “I guess I can start small: like...when I knew I fell in love with you.”

“Ah.” Shouto says, and clears his throat. “Love.”

“Is that not --?” Midoriya’s expression somersaults between anxious and uncertain.

“No.” Shouto says quickly, and hopes Midoriya doesn’t pick up on his own embarrassment. “I think that’s fine. Let’s start there.”

Midoriya continues on with an air of confidence despite the slow forming blush down his neck. He rubs the hair at the back of his neck. His hair is long; he needs a haircut. “I’m not exactly sure
when, but I had...this feeling. I think it started the night of the gala, when we danced. Before I came to Tokyo City. That’s when I knew.”

“That’s…” A long time, Shouto thinks. “I didn’t think the gala was so important to you.”

“What about you?” Midoriya asks. “When -- when did you know?”

Shouto’s sits up on his elbows. “I’m...not sure.” He says slowly. “I know I recognized I felt...something. I think the point of realization for me was the night I found you outside. Before I asked you to move in.”

“Oh.”

“I have to say, neither of us made it easy for the other. That night we stayed in the hotel, when you said you preferred our friendship --” Midoriya pulls his shoulders up to his neck. “-- I thought it was over for me.”


“Yes.” Shouto takes some humor out of Midoriya’s alarm. “You did.”

“I think you jumped to conclusions.” Midoriya nudges him. “Was that before or after the night at your apartment when you almost kissed me?”

“I didn’t -- no, you almost kissed me.” Shouto corrects.

“I panicked, okay!”

“And then you ran off to chase an emergency call, and spent the next few days ignoring me because you thought I was upset.”

“I was -- I was freaked out a little bit.”

“Because you almost kissed me.”

Midoriya slaps his forehead. “We’re such -- we’re both so stupid.” He groans. “Like you said: if we talked --”

“-- or if one of us listened --”

“-- we wouldn’t have spent so much time backtracking. Or running away.” Midoriya sighs. “For that I really -- I’m sorry. I never apologized for that.”

Shouto pushes off his elbows and sits up straight. “Apologized for what?”

“After the speech, the -- you know. The kiss. When I ran away.”

“Midoriya,” Shouto says carefully. “I’m very sure there’s nothing to blame you for. It’s in the past now.”

A light hum of agreement. Shouto isn’t prepared for Midoriya to lean over and press a new kiss into his hair. “You’re right. It is in the past. It feels like it’s been so much longer than a week, huh?” He smiles. “Since we were talking about puzzles, I have one for you.” Shouto doesn’t groan, but the expression on his face forces a laugh out of Midoriya. “Why do you call me that?”

Why do you call me --? Shouto pulls up short at the question. “What?”
“Midoriya.” Midoriya explains. He picks up his hand and plays with the strings on his sweatpants. “You only say Izuku when you’re...when you have something important to say. I don’t know. You’re used to Shouto now, because I started calling you that forever ago. I know I offered ages ago, and you said you’d think about it. But if we’re dating, I guess --”

“Izuku.” Shouto says. Midoriya’s head pops up. “Do you want me to call you that now?”

“Oh.” Midoriya says. The blush from his neck crawls up to his forehead. “Y-You know what? Stick with Midoriya. For now.”

“Sure. For now.”

“...Why do I get the feeling you’re teasing me.”

Dry, like the swell of city heat in summer. “Why would I ever tease you?”

“Ha. Funny.” Midoriya frowns, tone light. “I’ve had enough talking for one day.” He jumps off the bed, offering his other hand. “Let’s go get lunch. I’m hungry. And yes, this counts as a lunch date. Starting now.”

[Photo 1: Pro Hero Deku, out of uniform, grinning and making a peace sign at the camera. He’s wearing a shirt with Ingenium’s helmet in minimalist style and a pink hat with Uravity’s logo on the front. He appears to be in front of a frozen yogurt shop. His hair is shorter, although curls still pop out from the side and front under the hat.

Photo 2: Todoroki Shouto, in a plain white shirt with the kanji for “Hero Deku” on the front and a loose bun with his hair pulled over the right side of his face. The rest of his head is hidden under a red cap with a Red Riot inspired gear logo on the side. He is focused on the bowl of frozen yogurt in his lap, with the bowl in his right hand while he uses the spoon with his left. He seems oblivious to the camera.

Photo 3: Second photo taken moments or minutes after Photo 2, with the same position and lighting. Todoroki stares at the camera holder with a soft smile and a hand outstretched as if to push the camera out of reach.]

Liked by tshouto, uravity, iida.t, icreati, radio.jack, rredriot, rainfroppy, and 16,022 others

herodeku: 好き

View all 2,081 comments
> uravity - ! ^~^!
> radio.jack - B-)
> iida.t - Very nice

> Reidotpng - HELLO???? GAY????? DATING????
View 14 replies
>> takkenaha - #entrodeku

> yuuimi94 - the caption literally says “love” im gonna DIE
View 6 replies
>> ctanachan - Not to be that guy but it Could mean friendship love tho
>>>> yuuimi94 - dam u right
>>>>> jj0923nr - #entrodekuconfirmed
Their disguises don’t last long. Even with Midoriya’s new haircut, he’s still the Number One Hero in Japan. Somehow, Shouto is less noticeable next to Midoriya. The table across the restaurant is filled with kids, and one of them shouts Midoriya’s hero name across the restaurant. After that, everyone else in the restaurant appears hyper aware of Midoriya’s presence.

“There’s gonna be paparazzi here soon.” Midoriya grumbles. “I should’ve worn a mask.”

Shouto nudges his foot under the table. “We did well, all things considered. Nobody spotted you at the yogurt place.” Midoriya nudges back, wiping the frown from his face.

“Yeah, because I hid outside and made you order.”

“A bold move from Japan’s top hero.” Shouto comments. “How kind of him, making his boyfriend do all the work.”

Midoriya blushes all the way up to the roots of his hair. “Y-You’re such a -- stop saying it like that.”

Shouto clicks his chopsticks together. Midoriya makes a face at the rude gesture. “Like what?”

“You know.” Midoriya gestures vaguely. His leg bounces under the table. Earlier, Shouto tried putting his hand over Midoriya’s knee to calm some of his nervous energy -- but Midoriya turned bright red and wouldn’t talk to him in intelligible sentences until he removed it. “Like you’re…”

A camera light flashes outside. He catches the sign of a crowd in front of the restaurant out of the corner of his eye. Shouto catches the hostess and says, “We’ll take this to go.” Fleeing from the paparazzi isn’t a new experience for either of them. Fleeing from the paparazzi on a date is.

Dashing into an alley and huddling under a shop awning isn’t an action taken with pride. Midoriya wraps his arms around his waist and leans his head into Shouto’s shoulder like he plans to stay there. “You should be careful.” Shouto says into his hair. “Your agent already tore into you for posting that picture. They might have an aneurysm if the paparazzi catch a photo of us like this.”

Midoriya laughs. “My agent is always mad. They already suspended my account controls for the week. The caption was the last straw, I think.”

Shouto presses a light kiss to his forehead. “I thought we promised we’d be a little more discreet.”

“It was vague enough. I’ll leave it up to interpretation. I’m happy, you know. I want everyone to know that.” He can feel Midoriya’s laugh against his chest. With the bag of leftovers in his other hand, he raises the other and settles it on the back of Midoriya’s neck. He pulls loosely at the trimmed hair there, and Midoriya teases, “You like my haircut?”

“I already told you what I --” Midoriya tilts up his head and rises on his toes, kissing the side of Shouto’s jaw. “-- Midoriya.”

“You’re too tall.” Midoriya complains. “I’m doing my best.”

Shouto drops the bag of food. Everything is neatly boxed; it won’t be too disturbed. He winds his hands into Midoriya’s hair and lowers his head. “Better?”

“Almost.” Midoriya says, and lets Shouto leans in to close the last few inches. He feels Midoriya’s smile against his lips. “Mhm, yeah. Much better.”

“The height thing is going to be a problem.” Midoriya says later as they walk into the elevator to
the apartment.

“Hm?” Shouto says, not really listening. Midoriya took him furniture shopping, as promised, and he’d like to collapse onto his bed and not move for the next eight to ten hours. The salesperson in the store was not amused at Midoriya’s insistence on finding “the perfect couch” and walked around the store for two hours and left without purchasing anything. Shouto napped on a king-sized comforter in the beds area while he left Midoriya to shopping.

“You...” Midoriya repeats, yawning. “...are too tall.”

“I’m not that tall.” Shouto says. He adds, in his defense, “Iida is taller than me.”

“He’s very tall.” Midoriya agrees. He yawns again and shuffles next to Shouto’s left side, leaning into his warmth. His eyes slip close, and in a moment he’s snoring lightly into Shouto’s neck. Standing up. Midoriya is capable of such odd physical feats, even while dead asleep.

Shouto nudges him. “Midoriya. This is our floor.” He coaxes Midoriya back into the apartment. Midoriya kisses him goodnight while he’s still half asleep, and passes out on the couch. Shouto rubs his forehead and makes himself a cup of iced tea. With the cup in his hand, he settles into the couch beside Midoriya and opens up his notepad. He writes until his tea is long past cool and settles into lukewarm.

The next morning, he hands Midoriya his notebook. Midoriya takes in his proposal with a tight frown, but he nods.

“If you think it’s worth the risk.” Midoriya says, although he sounds like he’d rather convince Shouto otherwise. “I...I support you. Just -- be safe. Please. I know we haven’t -- but even as your friend, I worry about you. I want you safe. As do all our friends. You’re retired, Shouto. Anything could happen.”

“I’ll be safe.” Shouto promises.

Midoriya says “I know you will be.” and he sounds certain of it. As if speaking the words aloud will make them real. As if he could see the future in front of him and, like he had before, bend it in his hands until it became the one he wanted.

DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
#AskDeku is back again for however long the rest of this boring movie lasts
1,086 retweets | 6,202 favorites
7:54 PM - 26 March X1

can’t really go anywhere, I was taking a break. All good now :-)
DEKUデク✔️@herodeku
@maitaiarts I’m fond of my all might hat...but my @radio_jack headphones are pretty cool too
1,242 retweets | 8,121 favorites
8:09 PM - 26 March X1
Liked by Creati | #10 and 8,120 more

Earphone Jack✔️@radio_jack
@herodeku no flirting w me im in a committed relationship alrdy B-///
1,399 retweets | 5,603 favorites
8:13 PM - 26 March X1

DEKUデク✔️@herodeku
@radio_jack ;-))
1,095 retweets | 4,008 favorites
8:15 PM - 26 March X1
Liked by Earphone Jack, Creati | #10, and 4,006 more

Red Riot!✔️@rredriot
#AskDeku Why did you break our streak? 97 days man. Not cool.
1,897 retweets | 4,311 favorites
8:16 PM - 26 March X1
Liked by Uravity and 4,310 more

DEKUデク✔️@herodeku
@rredriot OH NO )))
1,592 retweets | 4,967 favorites
8:18 PM - 26 March X1

Uravity✔️@uravity
@rredriot deku is bad at streaks v( ‘.’ )v
544 retweets | 2,581 favorites
8:22 PM - 26 March X1

DEKUデク✔️@herodeku
@uravity :-/
513 retweets | 3,388 favorites
8:24 PM - 26 March X1

JENSUN@jennuuy
#AskDeku y did you take that contract with creatis agency? I thought heroes could work anywhere remotely and have offices elsewhere
431 retweets | 2,490 favorites
8:25 PM - 26 March X1

DEKUデク✔️@herodeku
@jennuuy yes if I was called in for a quick job. But I planned to stay in this part of Tokyo city for a while. Agencies are territorial + I need a place to do paperwork &my office in Datomatsu was a little too far for that to work out. My agency still exists physically but it’s not in use but I never really used that office too much - I was always called away to other parts of Japan. Hope that clears things up!
1,779 retweets | 5,058 favorites
8:29 PM - 26 March X1

notice me senpai @mj_yung
When did you get a haircut?? #askdeku
17 retweets | 283 favorites
8:29 PM - 26 March X1

DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
@mj_yung Today! Wanted to switch things up...save on shampoo!
1,897 retweets | 4,811 favorites
8:32 PM - 26 March X1

暑い@n92812k
お腹が空いていますか。#askdeku
146 retweets | 921 favorites
8:33 PM - 26 March X1

DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
@n92812k はい、おなかすいた。∩（¬¬）∩
982 retweets | 4,065 favorites
8:36 PM - 26 March X1

Bad kawaii @_riototaku
#Askdeku favorite food?? Besides katsudon
58 retweets | 943 favorites
8:36 PM - 26 March X1

DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
 @_riototaku my mom’s sweet steamed buns!!! Now I’m MORE hungry :-(
1,383 retweets | 3,273 favorites
8:38 PM - 26 March X1

Yuki (ah moon) ✓ @yum099
i have a question… #askdeku are you dating anyone rn? >:O
467 retweets | 3,222 favorites
8:39 PM - 26 March X1

DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
@yum099 verb present participle: dating 1. establish or ascertain the date of (an object or event). 2. indicate or expose as being old-fashioned.
1,263 retweets | 6,906 favorites
8:42 PM - 26 March X1

Yuki (ah moon) ✓ @yum099
@herodeku Oml
201 retweets | 2,885 favorites
8:43 PM - 26 March X1

NamuriLO @nooou290
@herodeku YWH DO U ALWAYS PULL OUT A DICTIONARY WHEN U DONT WANT 2 ANSWER?????? ARE YOU DATING SOMEONE??? WHAT????????????
94 retweets | 848 favorites
(_MUX_X) @risaka_0
#Askdeku how tall are you??
118 retweets | 1,209 favorites
8:47 PM - 26 March X1

DEKUデク @herodeku
@risaka_0 My least favorite question…ليف(فت (((
1,206 retweets | 6,968 favorites
8:50 PM - 26 March X1

GKHZO @beingQUIRKY
#ASKDEKU PLEASE SUGGEST A NAME FOR MY IGUANA
421 retweets | 2,936 favorites
8:54 PM - 26 March X1

DEKUデク @herodeku
@beingQUIRKY Tokage
1,105 retweets | 4,449 favorites
8:58 PM - 26 March X1

GKHZO @beingQUIRKY
@herodeku i knew i shouldnt leave the naming choice up to the hero who sells merch with the words “Green Suit” on a plain white shirt >;c
183 retweets | 652 favorites
8:59 PM - 26 March X1
Likes by DEKUデク and 651 more

Creati | #10 ✔ @icreati
@herodeku Don’t be rude!

[Screenshot: A text conversation between Creati and Todoroki Shouto.

Shouto: (((((

Momo: What’s wrong?

Shouto: he’s ignoring me

Momo: ??????

Shouto: we’re watching a movie
and he’s on twitter

(()

Momo: Shouto oh myl]
1,589 retweets | 5,046 favorites
9:04 PM - 26 March X1

DEKUデク @herodeku
@icreati in my defense IT’S VERY BORING
1,198 retweets | 4,843 favorites
9:08 PM - 26 March X1
Creati | #10 ✔ @icreati
@herodeku he says “Then pick something else”
1,128 retweets | 4,692 favorites
9:08 PM - 26 March X1

Creati | #10 ✔ @icreati
@herodeku @heroentropy You’re literally sitting next to each other. Leave me out of this
1,098 retweets | 4,429 favorites
9:10 PM - 26 March X1

PROUD #2 INGENIUM STAN @ilyingenium
#ASKDEKU ARE YOU WITH ENTROPY RIGHT NOW??? WATCHING A MOVIE????
19 retweets | 1283 favorites
9:10 PM - 26 March X1

MAJGIC @k_hero91_
#askDeku i am taller than u but i could never fight like u. U r strong af. how
8 retweets | 181 favorites
9:12 PM - 26 March X1

froppy is a lesbian frog star @olivyyry
#askdeku WHY IS YOUR QUIRK LISTED AS “SUPERPOWER” IN THE HERO RECORDS. WHAT THE FUCK DOES THAT MEAN???
15 retweets | 277 favorites
9:12 PM - 26 March X1

froppy is a lesbian frog star @olivyyry
#askdeku you still doing these??
57 retweets | 381 favorites
9:15 PM - 26 March X1

MAJGIC @k_hero91_
#askDeku WHERE DID YOU GO
14 retweets | 107 favorites
9:15 PM - 26 March X1

fayte @f019_nw
#askDeku ?????? HELLO ???? U GOOD
11 retweets | 93 favorites
9:15 PM - 26 March X1

DECEASED #entrodeku @softdeku
#askdeku did entropy take you down after he realized u werent paying attention
64 retweets | 762 favorites
9:18 PM - 26 March X1

■■■■■&■■■■■ @_m291oN
#ASKDEKU WHAT HAPPENED
7 retweets | 58 favorites
9:20 PM - 26 March X1

轟焦凍 Todoroki Shōto ✔ @heroentropy
#askdeku is over. i have his phone now. have a good night
1,576 retweets | 5,147 favorites
Midoriya creates a minor disturbance on their way from the train stop. The cameras and media leeches tail them for six blocks, while Midoriya slides his hand in and out of Shouto’s reach. Midoriya is an odd creature when it comes to personal space; when Shouto leans in he blushes so brightly and flails like a man caught witnessing an indecent act. And then a moment later he’ll return the action and worm his way into Shouto’s arms like he has no intention to leave.

He seems very insistent on holding hands, and Shouto would never deny him anything. He doesn’t mind at all. Midoriya’s hands are strong, and fit into his own like they were meant to be there.

“There’s too many paparazzi here.” Midoriya complains. Shouto glares at the horde of nosy media fanatics and considers the consequences of telling them off. “We’re never going to get away from them at this rate.” Before Shouto replies, he sweeps Shouto off his feet and launches them into the sky.

He lands on the roof to Yukiko Todoroki’s apartment and slides down with ease. Shouto releases his death grip on Midoriya’s arm and drops both feet onto the ground. Midoriya laughs and bounces up the stairs ahead of him, knocking on the door. Shouto trails after Midoriya, scolding, “A little warning would be appreciated in the future, Midoriya.”

“What?” Midoriya replies innocently. “You said you liked it when I would sweep you off your feet --”

“That is not what I --”

Fuyumi opens the door and lets out an excited cry. “Deku-kun! Shouto! I didn’t expect -- Shouto, is your hair smoking?”

“No.” Shouto says. Midoriya laughs, loudly. “Can we come inside?”

“Of course.” Fuyumi ushers them in. She frets over Midoriya’s messy windswept hair, before she
congratulates him on his new ranking. After she finishes stripping them of their coats and shoes, she leads them inside, all while prodding Shouto about any new updates regarding The Endeavor Situation (or, now that three of four Todoroki siblings were legally separated from their father what it meant for their financial and personal records).

“Have you seen...*him* at all?” Fuyumi lowers her voice. Midoriya takes an intense sudden interest in the balcony garden from the window.

“Not since the last time.” Shouto says. Fuyumi purses her lips. “Why? Has he done anything?”

Fuyumi hesitates, which Shouto translates as *Yes*. “Nothing too bad.” Fuyumi replies slowly. “But...he’s been talking to mother recently.” The temperature in the room significantly drops. “I’ll...leave that to mother to explain.”

Shouto is grateful for Midoriya’s interruption. “I like the new color.” Midoriya gestures to the walls. “It’s very...cozy.”

“Mother picked it out.” Fuyumi answers Midoriya’s unspoken question. “She’s out picking up groceries right now, but she should be back any minute.” A short knock on the door rips their attention away. “I think that’s her, actually. Are you two staying for dinner?”

“For a little while.” Midoriya says. He glances at Shouto. “I was supposed to see my mom today. I don’t want to be out too late.”

“Why don’t you invite her over?” Fuyumi offers. “I’m sure my mother would like to see Midoriya-san again. If she doesn’t have any other plans.”

“I’ll ask her.” Midoriya says. He pats Shouto’s knee and walks out to make a call. Fuyumi looks at him curiously, but she rushes out to invite their mother back inside. She comes back with her arms full of groceries, while Shouto rises from the table to help her with the rest at the door.

Mother greets him with her warm smile, and the tension melts away. “Oh, Shouto...your hair.” His mother tucks a loose strand behind his ear. The paper bag in her arm proves troublesome, so Shouto takes the bag from her. “You’ve become such a handsome young man.” She pats his cheek. “I didn’t know you were coming today.”

“Midoriya and I had business in Musutafu.” Shouto doesn’t lie to his mother when he can help it, but a small white lie won’t worry his mother and won’t do any harm. For now. “He’s inviting his mother over for lunch.”

His mother nods. “That sounds perfect. We should get the food started then -- why don’t you bring that bag in?” She slips off her shoes and lines them up among the others at the door. Shouto follows her into the kitchen.

Fuyumi is at the counter putting groceries in the fridge, and Midoriya is nowhere in sight. After he places the grocery items in their respectable housing, he ducks his head into the room off the kitchen with the couch and tv and finds the same. Fuyumi notices his questioning glance around the room and offers; “He went outside.” She tilts her head and gestures for the door. “Mother just went out after him.”

“Ah,” Shouto says.

“I think she wants to show off her garden.” Fuyumi brushes up against him. “And probably ask his intentions toward you, since you’re --”
“Fuyumi --”


According to her, mother’s garden had overgrown the balcony and she moved all her kitchen herbs to her bedroom windowsill. She leaves Shouto in the kitchen, alone, for a long while. Midoriya and his mother are outside for an even longer while.

Shouto is the one to answer the door while Fuyumi prepares lunch. He opens it to the wide arms and smile of Midoriya Inko, as he expected. The tall figure beside her is unexpected, but just as familiar.

“Todoroki-kun!” Midoriya’s mother overwhelms him with a tight squeeze. “You look well! Izuku’s been telling me all about Tokyo and --”

“Give him a moment to breathe, Inko.” All Might, the once great Symbol of Peace, and Shouto’s high school teacher, hovers with an air of uncertainty in the doorway of his mother’s apartment. After he is released, All Might barks out a laugh. “It is good to see you, young man! Very sorry for the surprise.”

“Yukiko-san is always talking about All Might.” Midoriya’s mother explains. “I thought today would be a wonderful chance for them to meet!”

After their shoes are off, Midoriya’s mother crowds him with compliments. “Oh, you’ve grown up so handsome! I saw you sometimes on the news, but that’s hardly the same as, well, you know. And Izuku’s told me so much about you. In fact, sometimes he doesn’t stop talking about you. He must really like you, haha!”

“Ah -- Thank you, Midoriya...san.” The honorific is tacked on awkwardly. He’s never addressed Midoriya’s mother before, and he can’t refer to her by the same name. And, as Midoriya’s boyfriend, he should attempt to be more respectful to Midoriya’s mother.

“Inko-san is fine!” Inko reassures him. All Might offers him a smile, and settles his hand on Inko’s waist. Shouto watches the action carefully and settles on a neutral expression. “Where is Izuku?”

Grateful for Inko’s interruption, he leads them out of the entrance and into the kitchen. “Midoriya is talking outside with my mother.” Fuyumi enters behind them, having retrieved her herbs. She startles at the tall thin figure standing in the middle of their kitchen. All Might stoops to avoid the low hanging light.

“All Might.” Fuyumi says, bewildered and awed and wide-eyed at the former living symbol of peace, who decides to take a seat at the head of the table. “Uh. Nice to -- nice to meet you?” All Might offers a casual wave. “Um. Shouto. Come help me with the rice.”

Midoriya returns from the balcony. His mother gathers him up into a hug like the one Shouto received, all while laughing and squealing as he picks her up and twirls her. “Hey, mom.” Midoriya grins. He seems unsurprised to see All Might at the table. Inko leaves the kitchen to hunt down his mother in the balcony garden.

“My boy!” All Might stands, and avoids a near fatal collision with the light over the table. “It’s so good to see you again.”

“You just saw me. I visited you less than a week ago.” Midoriya laughs, but he welcomes All
Might into a sweeping hug. “Spending the day with mom?”

“She’s lovely company, as always.” All Might says. Shouto looks at Midoriya with a blank expression and the burning question in his eyes: when did that happen? Midoriya’s ears turn as pink as his mother’s flowers.

Inko returns with his mother, who is as bewildered at All Might’s presence as Fuyumi. All Might, former teacher and Number One Hero, bows awkwardly and exchanges greetings with his mother. “Todoroki-san,” All Might bows his head respectfully. “Thank you for having us.”

“It’s no trouble.” His mother, given her quirk, is immune to blushing. But Shouto thinks she might be. “It’s nice meeting you.”

Lunch is an unusual affair. Midoriya eats double the amount of anyone else at the table, which surprises no-one. Fuyumi is delighted to have a conversation about Shouto’s early high school days with All Might, which is an incredibly surreal experience. Shouto tunes out the rest of their conversation for the sake of his own sanity.

Midoriya sneaks his hand under the table and sets it on Shouto’s knee. Suddenly aware of the warmth of his palm, he remembers Midoriya’s embarrassment at his own subtle display of affection and understands Midoriya’s reaction. His skin burns where Midoriya’s hand applies pressure. “Everyone seems to be getting along.” Midoriya comments quietly.

“Did you already tell your mother about us? What did you talk about with my mother?” Shouto asks, voice low.

Midoriya shakes his head, and pats his knee before removing his hand. “No, I didn’t. And I’ll tell you later.” he promises. “You should talk to her first.”

All Might overtakes the conversation with a proud exclamation about Midoriya’s new placement. Inko engages Shouto in a new conversation about his apartment, while making polite inquiries about Momo and Jirou’s agency. Her attention seems oddly fixated on his apartment. Shouto has a theory as to why, but he won’t share that theory until he’s back home and only in Midoriya’s company.

Midoriya overhears Shouto’s comment about furniture shopping and interrupts: “Mom, his apartment is so sad. I keep telling him to pick out new furniture, but he won’t listen. He wouldn’t even let me buy a new couch!”

“The couch is fine.” Shouto says. He nudges Midoriya’s foot under the table. “You already replaced my chairs. And most of my plates.”

“Well,” Midoriya considers. “I broke most of your plates, so I had to replace them. It’d be rude of me to leave you to pay for all the stuff I break in your apartment.” His expression morphs into one of realization. Shouto senses the life of his couch may be cut shorter than expected.

Inko, on the other side of the table, observes their exchange and laughs. “You two are too much.” She puts both hands on her cheeks and sighs wistfully. “Look at you. You’re so cute together.” Midoriya sputters and shoves an entire serving of noodles in his mouth. Shouto takes an intense interest in the food on his plate and stares into the depths of his rice. “I shouldn’t tease them yet, should I?” Inko stage whispers to Shouto’s mother. His mother giggles. Fuyumi snorts into her water. Shouto is hit with the realization that even his lovely mother and sister, and even Midoriya’s kind mother, are capable of tremendous betrayal. Midoriya takes a very long drink from his water and avoids eye contact with everyone at the table.
All Might stands, breaking the tension. “I am sorry to interrupt, but where can I find your restroom?”

“Down the hall, dear.” Inko pats his arm. All Might glances down at her with a loving, doting expression, so filled with adoration it glows from his thin frame. Shouto stares harder at Midoriya’s profile and nudges his foot under the table again. Midoriya nudges back with childish spite.

Redirecting the conversation, Inko redeems herself from her earlier comment. “The food is delicious, as always, Todoroki-san.”

“Mother likes her garden, and mother likes cooking.” Fuyumi says sagely. “I think it’s magic.”

“Not magic!” Inko corrects. “She puts her love into the garden, and into her food, and that’s why everything tastes so good. You can’t capture a flavor like that unless there’s love behind it.”

“You’re too kind, Inko-san.” Shouto’s mother reaches across the table and pats her hand. “I’m so glad you came. It feels like a big family dinner, doesn’t it?”

All Might returns at the tail end of the conversation. He taps Inko’s shoulder before he sits down, so he doesn’t bump into her. “Family dinner, yes! It does!” All Might picks up his glass like he’s prepared to make a toast. “To family!”

“To family.” his mother repeats, and smiles. Inko mirrors her with a watery smile.

“To found family!” All Might proclaims. “To my wife-to-be, to my son, and to all of us here today.” He adds an exaggerated wink in Midoriya’s direction. “And I suppose Young Todoroki is more or less my son-in-law now, isn’t he? Ha!” Midoriya makes a strangled squeaking noise beside him. Shouto, unable to form a reply, puts a hand on his chin and turns to Midoriya for aid.

Midoriya, unfortunately, has no such reply prepared. He rubs the back of his neck and laughs. The laugh turns into a cough. All Might reaches over and thumps him on the back. His entire face is red, and Shouto knows it’s not from his coughing fit. Fuyumi, Shouto’s next call for aid, offers a very unsympathetic shrug. Running low on options, Shouto eyes his glass of water and downs it to avoid responding.

“That might’ve been too much, dear.” Inko tells All Might, like Shouto and Midoriya aren’t sitting next to them. Too much, Shouto thinks, considering we’ve been dating for less than a week.

His mother collects the plates, while Inko and Midoriya fight over her with the dishes. His mother loses the argument, unsurprisingly; Midoriyas have a stubborn gene when it comes to helping others. All Might attempts to aid them with dishwashing, but Inko banishes him from the sink after he smacks his head into the low drop in the ceiling. Fuyumi retrieves an ice pack for him, so he returns to the table and sits down to prevent further injury.

Instead of joining All Might and Shouto at the table, his mother retreats to her garden. Despite her joy at dinner, he senses her need for solitude and quiet company in the wake of guests. Shouto understands that need for time alone. He leaves her for a while before he follows her out.

His mother is waiting for him, as always. For once, she isn’t bent down watering or weeding her plants. She sits on the bench in the middle of her balcony among the flowers and vegetables and waits for Shouto to sit beside her. Once seated, he follows her gaze into the horizon and absorbs the smell of the flowers and the soft spring air.

She speaks first. “Thank you for bringing Inko-san and Midoriya-kun tonight.”

“I am happy.” His mother turns. “You look happy, too.”

“I am.” Shouto says. He adds, “You always say that when I visit.”

“Because I want you to be happy, and it makes me happy to see you happy.” She explains. “And...I know you’re not the only happy person here tonight. I had a very nice conversation with your boyfriend.” Shouto’s cheeks burn under her heavy gaze.

“Mother,” he says, although it sounds like more of a whine.

His mother laughs; not cruelly, but lightly and filled with genuine glee. “You never brought any boyfriends over before, Shouto. Let your mother enjoy herself while she can.” Shouto puts his hands over his face. A cool hand wraps around his shoulders and rubs his back. “I’m sorry for teasing you.”

“It’s fine.” Shouto says, and wipes his hands down his face. “I don’t mind. It’s just that...” Steady breaths. “It’s...new.” Even that explanation feels incomplete. “We’re still figuring it out.”

“I’m happy for you.” His mother says. “And I could tell; you held yourself differently. You both did. Like you were more comfortable with one another.” The observation is sweet, if only mildly mortifying to hear from his mother. “You really love him, don’t you.” Shouto opens his mouth, closes it, and looks back at the setting sun. “It’s okay. I know he does too, and that is why I’m happy. I won’t worry about you anymore.”

“I don’t think you’ll ever stop worrying.” Shouto says.

Her laugh rings out across the balcony. “Maybe I won’t. But not about this. I’m so proud of you, I hope you know that. You’ve made a new life for yourself all on your own.” Her words carry weight; bittersweet. “We are bravest when we choose to be happy for ourselves.”

Ducking his head, Shouto allows her words to wash over him. He absorbs them like the sun and the trickle of sweet smelling air. “I don’t think I feel any braver.” Shouto begins. “In a lot of ways, it’s almost harder to talk to him now. I feel like there’s so much I need to say, but at the same time there’s so many things I don’t know how to put into words.”

She curls her hand around his and squeezes. “That’s what it’s like to be in love, Shouto. There aren’t words.” Some words, Shouto thinks, because wordless communication only suited him for fighting. Not so much for relationships.

Mother’s deep inhale brings him back into the present. “Fuyumi probably told you already, but I’ve been talking to...Him.” Like before, the air around them drops ten degrees. “I promise, it’s nothing bad.”

Shouto’s scowl settles back into place. “I find that hard to believe, considering who you’re talking to.”

“I didn’t want you to worry.” A gentle head shake from his mother. “I think, for my own sake, I didn’t want to say too much. I was afraid of getting my hopes up.” She hesitates. Shouto waits.

Finally, after she clears whatever mental roadblock in her path, she squeezes his hand again. “I didn’t want to get my hopes up because it’s a chance for me to start over.” While she doesn’t smile, there’s a confident note in her voice. “I’m getting a divorce.” His mother says. “At the end of the year.”
There are no words necessary for his response. He leans into his mother’s arms and hugs her; somewhere deep in the cavern of his chest where he carried the burden of worry labelled for his mother is released. His mother strokes his hair and says nothing. He breathes in the air and drinks in the sunlight, the arrangement of greenery all around him. He thinks: there is no scene as beautiful in a moment for healing.

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“This is a very bad idea.” Midoriya says as he straightens his collar. Expression pained in his reflection, he turns around and straightens Shouto’s tie. “I’ve said that already, but I think it needs repeating.”

Midoriya cycled through a series of near panic-attacks four times earlier. Shouto rehearses his answer from before: “Momo gave me the tracker. If anything goes wrong, I’ll press the emergency button. Trust me, Midoriya. I will be fine.”

“I trust you plenty.” Midoriya grumbles. “I don’t trust anybody else involved in this, though. There’s too many unknowns. What if he isn’t working alone? What if this is a trap, and you’ve
walked right into it? What the hell are we getting into?”

“I’ve got you as backup.” Shouto releases his hand and accepts Midoriya’s frantic kiss. “I’ll see you in an hour. If all goes well, we might make the gala dinner.”

“Forget the stupid dinner. I don’t think they’ll really care if I miss it.” Midoriya says, like he’s not wearing a full suit picked out exactly for this precise event. Like he isn’t the most highly anticipated guest this year at the head of the Rising Heroes Gala. Midoriya sighs at his disbelieving expression. “Fine. I’m just -- I’m just worried. Let’s just get this over with.”

Midoriya abandons him three blocks from the meeting site, as promised. He doesn’t approach for another block, far enough to be considered out of range but close enough to run in at a split second notice.

The man with the suitcase and jacket does not reappear. In the middle of the abandoned hideaway Shouto met him last, a ring of light becons him. Front and center on the stone pedestal, like a magic book waiting for a mage at the start of an epic fantasy: a worn red leather notebook. Shouto does not hesitate to open it or read the contents inside. He grabs the notebook, tucks it into his suit jacket, and runs.

Midoriya picks him up two blocks down. He doesn’t land until they’re twenty, twenty-five minutes out of the area. The tension heightens after they land if anything. Midoriya nods his head and gives him the go ahead. Shouto pries open the notebook and reads the first page.

“It’s in code.” Shouto wasn’t expecting much less, given the circumstances. “As you predicted.”

Midoriya holds out his hand and waits for Shouto to pass it to him. “Damn. One puzzle after another.”

“I’ll hold onto it for now.” Shouto says. “We’ll find someplace for it later.” He remembers the oddness of the scene, and the feeling of surreal weight in the air. Like the room held it’s breath as he approached the book. “There wasn’t anybody at the dropsite.” Midoriya straightens, jaw tight. “For now...I think it’s best if we keep it close.”

“That’s a problem for another day.” Midoriya mutters. “Let’s get to the gala. I need a drink.” Shouto allows the tightness in his shoulder to drop a degree. The journal, for better or worse, is part of his story now. All the consequences -- and the price -- are items to be determined at a later date.

“This year’s gala should be better.” Midoriya says to himself, before they enter. “Better security. I heard good things about the food, too. And I don’t have to make a speech. Just gotta...go out there and dance. Take some photos. We’re good.”

“Endeavor won’t be here.” Shouto scans the room at a glance. “That’s almost a shame. I would’ve loved to see his face after they greeted you as the guest of honor.”

Midoriya replies with a laugh and a gentle shove. “You’re not my date for tonight, so you can’t stand with me on stage. Go find Iida-kun. He’s your actual date, isn’t he?”

“I’ll see you on the floor, then.” Shouto takes his dismissal with a backwards glance. Iida is a graceful dancer, as always. If he takes notice of Shouto’s thoughtful silence, or delayed responses, he doesn’t comment. He does cast a few concerned glances in Shouto’s direction as Shouto’s distraction becomes more and more prevalent.

The journal in his pocket pulls on him heavier as the night drags on; a physical reminder of the weight of his actions.
I have no good excuse for making this. I'm sorry mom and dad

Comments 108

Lee youl - 2 weeks ago
Nani the FUCK
View 14 replies
> J Ejx - mood

Yougurty - 1 week ago
This is so well edited im…. im actually kind of upset
View 5 replies
> MishianiSP - Im so sorry
>> Yougurty - your talents...years of academy training.......WASTED!

TangerineChar - 3 days ago
He eats so much food og my hod
View 8 replies
> animika123 - i read somewhere his metabolism has to be like 8x faster than the average human.
Either that or he’s got so much muscle mass at this point he can just...Do That
>> TangerineChar - omfg

kusuri - 8 days ago
How many clips are in here o_o
View 11 replies
> MishianiSP - over 150
>> kusuri - JFC

Naya Ahava - 4 days ago
THAT CLIP OF ENTROPY FEEDING HIM CAKE WHERE!! IS!! IT!! FROM!!
View 18 replies
> MishianiSP - rising heroes gala dinner from 2 weeks ago
>> TajIn - omg
>>> tbotaku - #entrodekuconfirmed :O

Shouto texts Jirou in the lobby. She responds before he selects the number for his floor in the elevator. At the eleventh floor, he exits and reads her new text. Her messages are, as usual, cryptic and unamusing. Phone in hand he walks into the center of Creati Agency, does a double take at the massive statue of sticky notes in the shape of Kirishima with his hero outfit, and walks towards Momo’s office.

He’s stopped before he lays a hand on the door. “Hey, grumpy!” Jirou yells across the bullpen. Shouto acknowledges her uncreative nickname with the same enthusiasm he displayed all her nicknames from the time they worked together. “I wouldn’t go in there, unless you’re looking to hang out by yourself. Momo’s out right now!”
“Where did she go?” Shouto treads through a haphazard set-up of desks in the center of the room. They appear to be in some pattern, if the pattern is nonsensical and ridiculous. This is what Momo pays her sidekicks to do in their downtime: build fan shrines of top heroes and organize desks like an obstacle course.

Jirou dances by the door to her office and waves him over. “I don’t know!”

“Did she say when she’d be --?”

“She’s out doing...stuff!”

Shouto frowns. “You’re acting very odd.”

“I’m told that’s part of my natural charm. Come in here, I have a radio show starting in two and Iida-kun’s running late so I need you to be my new guest. Oh, I just realized how funny that sounds. Running late. I should put that in the script.” Shouto isn’t given an opportunity to reject her invitation. She grabs his arm and drags him into the Radio Jack Hero and Live Radio lounge.

He spots Midoriya before Midoriya turns around. Jirou makes a kissing face at him after he releases himself and heads straight for Midoriya, who is in the throes of a heated debate with Jirou’s sound technician.

“Oh, Shouto.” Midoriya greets, belatedly, after Shouto nudges him. “I didn’t know you were coming. I’ve got to start a radio show with Jirou-san, actually, but. Uh. Where’s Iida-kun?”

“Jirou said he’s coming in late. I think she may have replaced him.”


Ten minutes later in the soundbooth, headphones on and microphones in place, Jirou rallies her audience with a rousing introduction. “Good afternoon, listeners! This is Radio Jack, Japan’s best hero-hosted entertainment radio show in the area, hosted by yours truly -- Earphone Jack. We’re broadcasting live from Creati Agency, here in the heart of Tokyo City. Today I’ve got two special guests, as most of you saw on Twitter. Unfortunately, due to some scheduling issues, we had to change a few things up. Ingenium will be back for a different show next week, I promise. Now. Today’s show is going to be a little different, but first we’re gonna talk about our guests. I’ll let them introduce themselves.”

“Do I get a script?” Midoriya asks.

Jirou shakes her head viciously. She picks up the stack of script paper in front of her and tosses it on the ground. “Pro Hero Deku, Number One Hero, asks me for a script. You’re letting me down, Deku-kun! You’re letting the audience down! Haven’t you ever done a radio show? There are no scripts! No scripts! We slap our balls and die!”


“You heard the man!”

Shouto leans into the mic (which is exactly what Jirou instructed him not to do because it ‘fucked with the audio levels’). “This is the most unprofessional radio show I’ve ever been on.”

Jirou -- evidently pulling a page from Momo’s book -- throws a pencil eraser at him. “This is the only radio show you’ve been on! Therefore it is also the most professional radio show you’ve ever been on.”
“By that logic --”

Jirou interrupts in a louder, announcer-like voice. “My guests today are the highly regarded and esteemed Midoriya Izuku -- better known as hero Deku -- and Todoroki Shouto, better known as the bastard who still hasn’t replaced my broken shower door. The rest of you, however, would probably know him as hero Entropy, who retired earlier this year. Surprise!”

“I didn’t break your shower door,” Shouto corrects. “You broke your own door and blamed me.”

“He’s also a professional liar! Moving on to today’s show. Our topic today is: audience choice! We’re going to take questions from Twitter and our web page from all of you, our wonderful listeners. Our studio will be fielding calls as well if you’d like to steal some air time. Now, boogie to some smooth jukebox picks that I, Earphone Jack, selected here for you today. Enjoy the greatest hits of…”

Midoriya pushes his mic out of the way. “Is this how all your shows are?”

Jirou shakes her headphones off her head. “What do you mean? This is an entertainment show. We don’t actually discuss topics of value, Deku-kun. Guest shows are always kind of weird, but it depends on the guest. I didn’t know if I’d get to bring out grumpy’s sense of humor, but even he’s capable of surprising me sometimes. Thanks, for that. Now some people might believe me when I say you’ve actually got one.”

Shouto slides off his headphones. “Got what?”

“A sense of humor! Obviously!”

The intern behind the glass puts her hand up. Jirou slips her headphones back on and fiddles with her equipment. “We’re live again in ten. Don’t worry too much about the show, guys. It’s just for fun. No script.”

“No script.” Midoriya repeats.

“And we’re back!” Jirou sets her elbows on the desk. “Now that we’ve had a chance to collect some of our audience’s questions, we’ll start fresh. First question is from a fan on our page from Brazil. He wants to know why Deku-kun doesn’t like wearing a cape.”

“Capes are fine for parties.” Midoriya sighs. “I do a lot of moves with kicks, and I’d rather not think about what might happen if I tripped.”

“You’re worried about the tripping hazard.” Jirou repeats. “Alright. That’s the only reason.”

“They’re also easily torn, and someone might use it against me in a fight. I’ve had this whole discussion with my designer before, okay? I can see you’re laughing at me. Your shoulders are moving.” Jirou ducks her entire body under the desk to mask her laughter. “I feel like she’s only going to laugh more when I say this, but that the day before my billboard speech I kept having a nightmare I tripped on the steps. It’s dumb, I know.”

“Deku-kun.” Crawling back into her chair, she places a firm hand on his shoulder and faces him. “I want you to know I never want you to change. Ever.” Jirou says seriously.

“Midoriya makes a valid point.” Shouto agrees. “In our hero courses, they discussed the dangers of capes.”

“The class was called ‘Watch Out For Capes: The Unsuspecting Villains In Your Life’ if I
remember.” Jirou agrees. “It was really lame. But Present Mic put on a giant cape and got his ass handed to him by Aizawa-san. Now that was awesome.”

“I don’t think that’s what the class was called.” Jirou throws another eraser at him.

Midoriya, thankfully, offers, “Maybe we should answer another question.”

“Great idea!” Jirou exclaims, and opens up the phone line. “Caller number four, you’re up!”

“Oh. Am I really on?” the voice from the speaker says. “Uh, good afternoon, ladies, bottoms and gamers! Oh my -- why did I say that.” Jirou tilts the mic away from her body so her laughter doesn’t blow out the audio. “That wasn’t my question, I swear. I’m so sorry.”

Midoriya snorts into his hand. “With an opener like that, we definitely have to hear the rest. Ask away.”

“Ah! Oh, okay! Um, Deku-san, can you sing happy birthday to my sister?”

“That’s not what I thought she was going to ask.” Shouto says. Jirou unleashes another gale of laughter.

Midoriya locks up at the request. “Eh...do I really have to sing?”

“Yes you do!” Jirou crows. “Listener, what’s your name?”

“You can call me H-Haia. My sister’s name is Hatsuko.”

“Nice to meet you, Haia-san! Older or younger?”

“She’s older, as you could guess by her name.”

“I see, I see. Is she listening right now?”

“I think so! She uhm, she really loves your show. I don’t think she’s missed a single one since she started.”

Jirou fiddles with her soundboard. “I think we can definitely do that for you, Haia-san. To Hatsuko-san, if you’re listening: we at Radio Jack wish you a very happy birthday! Deku-kun, from the top!” Midoriya sings happy birthday, in all, to a total of four other listeners. Shouto hums along at times and watches the clock.

“We’ve finally got a question for Todoroki-kun. He’s been looking really lonely over there, without any questions.” Shouto shakes his head. “He says yes, I’ve been very lonely! Thank you for remembering me, listeners!”

“You can give my question to Midoriya.”

“This question is addressed for you, no take backs! A fan from Kyushu asks: Are you single? And if so, he needs a date for his senior school dance. How do you feel about making some high school boy’s entire year?”

Jirou looks far too delighted for this question to come up by coincidence. “No promises.” Shouto says. “That sounds complicated. How would we communicate with his parents and school? And I doubt they want a retired Pro Hero hanging out at a kid’s dance.”

Jirou leans in very close to the mic. “The answer is absolutely yes because I am dating the hottest
and smartest hero in Tokyo and she will find a way to make this work. Oshin-kun -- wow, that’s a
famous name there -- you are going to dance with a fleet of Pro Heroes. That is a promise, from
me, Earphone Jack.”

“As long as you’re single.” Midoriya pipes in. “Otherwise the dance is off. Oshin-kun, you might
have to share Shouto.” Shouto pokes his arm. “I’m just saying! You didn’t answer the question.”

“Oh, he didn’t.” Jirou moves her mic in front of Shouto’s own mic. “Hey, why don’t you answer
that question?” Shouto splits his glare between them. “You been on any dates recently? Hm?”

“Yeah, Shouto.” Midoriya leans in. “Been on any good dates recently?”

“I was on a rather nice date the other day.” Shouto says, while making direct eye contact at
Midoriya. “He even paid the bill, which was very nice of him.”

Jirou claps dramatically. “I think he’s a keeper. You found your soulmate.”

“I don’t know. Recently he’s --” He prods Midoriya's thigh under the table with his finger. “-- been
making some rather strange decisions --” Another nudge. “ -- without consulting me beforehand.”

“Best of luck to you, then!” After cutting to commercial, Jirou bends over and laughs until she’s
gasping for air. “You two are doing great. The whole secret relationship act is really working.”

Midoriya shrugs innocently. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.” Shouto prods him again,
this time with his foot. “Shouto, did you have something to say?”

“No.”

“Cool.” Jirou says, and replaces her headset. “I’ve got to do a commercial, and then we’ll wrap up.
Thanks again for volunteering to help out today, you little high profile celebrity commodities!”

Shouto blinks. Midoriya mouths “what” and Jirou calls the countdown to air. At the end of the
show, Jirou drags them out of the recording booth and asks one of the interns to take a photo for
the shows Instagram account. Midoriya decides the perfect pose includes picking Jirou up on one
shoulder and carrying Shouto on the other.

Shouto is unsurprised to see the picture blows up on their page. He’s also unsurprised to see the
number of people commenting on Midoriya’s odd statements from the broadcast.

“Midoriya,” Shouto says, as he walks into the kitchen of his own apartment. Out of the sensitive
hearing of staff, Jirou’s radio crew, or the prying public, he is free to say what he wants. Midoriya
looks up guiltily from his stew and waves with his spoon. Shouto sets the red journal on the
counter by the sink, freeing his hands for the moment. He turns to Midoriya. “When I said you
could drop some hints, that wasn’t what I meant.”

“Oops?” Midoriya says, not at all apologetic. “Hey, you’re not -- you’re not actually mad. Right?”

Shouto takes the spoon from him. Midoriya chases after it, and startles when he leans down for a
kiss. “Next time, tell me what you’re planning.”

“Right.” Midoriya repeats, a little dazed. “I can do that.”

[Photo: Todoroki Shouto, posed with his arms crossed and an expression of disinterest. He’s
wearing a black and white vest with black pants, sleeves rolled up. Behind him, a lone stool acting
as his support. He isn’t sitting on the stool, but he’s not standing on both legs either.]
While he doesn’t remember the details of how or why Momo booked him a guest slot for a live television show, Shouto determines blackmail was likely involved. There is no other explanation as to how she convinced him to go along with this. She’s too powerful, Shouto thinks. The only person responsible for keeping her in check is Jirou; who also, unfortunately, takes pride in making Shouto’s life miserable.

The universe, in particular, enjoys making him miserable, which is why Midoriya won’t even be joining him. Hero work doesn’t let heroes take breaks, even if they’re slotted for a celebrity appearance on a popular tv show. Midoriya was half-changed into his suit when he got the call, and with physical regret evident in his guilty shuffle, he changed it out for a different suit.

“You’ll be fine out there.” Midoriya assures, glancing over his shoulder for a moment to check for any nosy stagehands. “You’ve heard my agent’s advice, and Momo-san’s. Don’t go off script, and you’ll be golden. I’ll -- I’ll try and get back before the show is over.” Shouto nods, turning to exit from the guest room, stopping when Midoriya catches his hand. “What? No good luck kiss?” Midoriya teases, rising on his toes and comically puckering his lips. The black guard under his chin drops to his collarbone.

A slow, patient blink. “You don’t need luck. You’re the Number One Hero.”

Midoriya rolls his eyes. “I meant for you, but fine. After the show.”

Shouto opens the door. “After the show.” he agrees. “See you then.” Midoriya grins, salutes, and vanishes in a blur of green.

The stagehand in charge of tracking Shouto’s location grabs him the moment he’s outside the door. “Rehearsal is over, we’re setting up for ten.” They talk rapid-fire, spitting out words as quickly between breaths. Their legs are shaped like wheels -- like a segway fusion. The director and stagehands on this set are nothing like the crew from the Forward Japan set. They’re on a tighter schedule. A finely oiled machine on the clock for a live show.
Shouto waits by the side entrance to the stage. He pulls the curtain back to take a look at the crowd. There’s a lot of people. He doesn’t know how Midoriya does this on a daily basis at press events, let alone act like he actually enjoys it. The stagehand with the clipboard manhandles him into a microphone and straps a mic box to the back of his pants without any fanfare. Shouto accepts the rough treatment -- like he has any other option -- without complaint.

The Night in Tokyo host, Hidaki Akihiko, clears his throat beside Shouto. Shouto, somehow, didn’t notice him even though the stage is loud and filled with motion. Hidaki’s hair is bright purple. His hair glows under the stage lights; in addition to the distracting disco ball atop his head. Shouto is really off his game if he missed something like that. “Ah, Todoroki-san. Thank you for coming to our show tonight!”

Shouto inclines his head respectfully. “Thank you for having me.” Hidaki grins and waves him off.

“We’ll have to do our greeting all over again on stage,” he provides. “I’ll have plenty of time to get to know you then. And where is -- eh? Is Deku-san not joining you tonight?”

“He’s technically on duty.” Shouto answers. “There was an emergency call. He said he was very sorry, but he would try to come to your next show to make up for it.”

“Ah.” Hidaki nods. “Number One Hero, a busy man he is indeed! We’ll do our best. And if he arrives a few minutes late, we may have a chance to squeeze him in before your bit.” That’s unlikely, Shouto knows, but he nods in return. Midoriya might be the Number One Hero, but even he has limits. He’s not all-powerful. And being in two places at once is not something Midoriya is capable of.

The Night in Tokyo director collects the remaining stagehands. A makeup artist brushes a flurry of powder over Hidaki’s face, and extends the same treatment to Shouto. Shouto sneezes. The makeup artist coos, blushes, and flees. Hidaki chuckles. “You’ve got a lot of fans here tonight, Todoroki-san.”

The director calls for the countdown before Shouto replies. At the director’s cue, the show is live. The lights are blinding. The smoke is unnecessary. The noise from the crowd is overwhelming. Shouto isn’t someone who chokes up before a speech. He doesn’t get nervous talking in front of crowds; but even he takes a second to collect himself. The energy in the room is overpowering.

Hidaki, in fairness, attempts to make the interview less of an interrogation and more like a conversation. Some interviews, in his past, had been more of the former. “So! Todoroki Shouto. Retired, living life to the fullest, and finally coming out of your shell. The public’s had eyes on you since you were young, yes? And yet, besides a few reports from your early career and hero crews, you’ve rarely appeared on tv. Why is that?”

“I didn’t think it was important.” Shouto replies, which is one of the Approved Responses greenlit by Midoriya’s agent. “I had other responsibilities I was more concerned about.”

“Fair enough, fair enough...well, I’m sure tons of people are very excited to see you more active and engaging with the very vocal fan base here in Tokyo, and online.”

“Very vocal, yes.” Shouto thinks of his constant notification thread. He doesn’t know how people like Momo or Iida handle being constantly bombarded with messages.

Scattered laughter from the audience. “So, we reached out to you because of your work with Forward Japan a few months ago. Who remembers that?” Hidaki’s question is not for Shouto. “You remember that, don’t you? Very popular video. Very popular, yes.” Leaning over his desk,
he lowers his voice to a whisper (the effect of which, is ruined as his mic still picks up his sentence). “Now, rumor is you weren’t on the original, but you joined in last minute. From what I understand.”

The truth, Shouto finds, is easier than attempting to develop a disguise. “Midoriya invited me. I hadn’t done any charity events like that before, and he asked if I was interested.”

“Right!” Leaning back, the host wiggles his hands oddly. “So, you join their charity campaign last minute. That’s exciting. Woo!” Shouto doesn’t understand celebrities -- especially tv personality celebrities. “In that video, now, correct me if I’m wrong -- you came out to the public in that video, yes?”

“Yes.” Unlike Hidaki, Shouto is not a friendly talk show host. He’s not one to offer material without prompting. He wishes Midoriya was in the chair beside him, if only to fill the awkward beats.

“...and how was that?”

“It wasn’t bad. It’s very easy to come out to a camera and thirty strangers.” More laughter from the audience.

“I’m sure it is! It’s still very brave, and your willingness to open up to so many young LGBT fans is commendable. Bravo.” While the audience reacts with full applause, Hidaki drinks from his tea mug on his desk. “Mm, delicious. Tastes like prop tea.” Applause is interrupted with laughter. “The world becomes a better place when brave people like you are out there.”

“There are plenty of people like that.” Shouto says. Again, the host laughs it off as Shouto showing humility. This is why Shouto hates doing tv spots.

“On a more serious note -- that video was an incredible hit with your audience. You’ve endeared yourself to fans, old and new.” The lights on stage dim a level or two, because this is a television show. No moment is wasted for effect. “That is actually very remarkable, and I say this with utmost sincerity: you should be proud. The people of Japan love you and your honesty.”

Shouto isn’t sure how to respond to a statement like that. He nods and ducks his head. Hidaki is undeterred by his nonverbal reply, and laughs it off with an exclamation about being “shy.” Shouto thinks, hardly.

“Speaking of love -- you’re a handsome young man, and I’m sure you get asked this a lot. But how’s your romantic, ah, side of things? Any special man in Tokyo caught your attention?”

Midoriya would enjoy answering this question a lot more than himself. “You could say that.”

“Oh?” Hidaki puts his hands on his chin and flutters his lashes, like the way Midoriya does when he’s in a teasing mood. Which Midoriya picked up from Momo; who picked it up from Jirou. He wonders if Jirou picked it up from watching too much tv. “Any chance you’d be willing to share some juicy details with me about him tonight?”

“Not in the slightest.” Hidaki, the audience, and even a few people in the camera crew collapse with laughter. It’s odd, he notes, that even his ruder replies are received as humor.

“While we’re almost out of time, we’ve got one last question before I’m afraid...” a low groan of disagreement from the crowd. “Yes, I know, it’s very sad. Todoroki-san will be leaving us, but I’m sure he would love to come back and visit again. Won’t you?” Unlikely. “Before you go, your audience would love to hear if you have any last words for them. Many of your peers in that video
shared a personal memory or a bit of advice; do you have anything for us? Maybe something you would tell your younger self?"

Gazing out into the crowds, almost invisible to him with the lights in his eyes, Shouto imagines a sea of expectant faces. He thinks about the words Midoriya’s agent fed him and makes a decision.

“I don’t know what kind of advice I could offer any of you. We all lead very different lives.” The silence between his breath is louder than before; the stage is silent. As is the audience. “So if I could tell myself something in the past. I would tell myself that there is a future where I will be happy.” These are his own words. His mother’s remain at the back of his mind, but he knows these words are his alone. “I would tell myself that the future is whatever I want it to become. And I would tell myself that someday, I will be happy. I can say the people that love me now have made me happier than I’ve ever been.” The applause, after a beat, is as loud as ever. He might be imagining it, but this applause is louder than the ones from before.

The remainder of the show is a blur. The host thanks him for joining, performs an outro, and Shouto is free to leave the stage. Stepping out of the sight of cameras is a treasured moment of relief. The moment his feet are off, he embarks on a mission to hunt down the only other familiar face in the building.

Midoriya, as promised, is waiting for him and delivers on his parting request. “You were incredible, Shouto.” Midoriya says, eyes shining. He rubs his eyes and sniffles. Shouto is not surprised in the slightest. That’s just part of Midoriya.

“You didn’t even watch it.” Shouto retorts, even though the praise makes him feel...warm.

Midoriya’s head shake says otherwise. “I caught the last part. You’re incredible, I hope you know that. I’m so proud of you.” He presses the next words between their lips; “I love you.”

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
LATEST FROM @PHJnews - #2 HERO ENDEAVOR UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR ETHICAL MISCONDUCT AND INDEFINITELY SUSPENDED FROM HERO WORK? Read the full story here: https://t.co/1ksmI0Me3Fgj
6,644 retweets | 16,858 favorites
12:01 PM - 16 May X1

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
While the investigation is far from complete, verified claims support alleged child abuse with 2/4 of his children agreeing to testify. His wife, Todoroki Yukiko, was released from the hospital last year and recently filed a divorce suit against the #2 Hero. Sources confirm she is the one who requested the investigation be reopened. Along with spousal abuse, Endeavor was accused of child neglect & arrangement of a quirk marriage.
5,844 retweets | 11,858 favorites
12:06 PM - 16 May X1
Retweeted by Creati | #10 and 5,843 more

ズル ✔ @zuzuusclub
https://t.co/1ksmI0Me3Fgj read the whole article. I am disgusted the board knew this shit was happening for YEARS and they STILL LET HIM GET AWAY WITH IT. absolutely disgusting. Fuck #Endeavor
3,921 retweets | 9,882 favorites
12:35 PM - 16 May X1
Makl @mrk09
@zuzuusclub Not to be that guy but shes trying to rip off half his money in court or whtever. there’s no way this is true or if parts are then it’s exaggerated
8 retweets | 45 favorites
12:37 PM - 16 May X1

akaii’s cooking show @gay_food_central
@mrk09 cool nobody asked and endeavor belongs in jail :)
38 retweets | 302 favorites
12:43 PM - 16 May X1

ingenium stans unite @in_genium
Holy shit… #fuckEndeavor
192 retweets | 597 favorites
12:43 PM - 16 May X1

Brennan @gridelinCarver
Redemption? For this flaming fuck? I think the fuck not, you trick-ass bitch (upload endoucheor.png) #FuckEndeavor
[Photo attached: A badly photoshopped image of Endeavor in full costume with the words ‘Fuck you’ scribbled over his body and a drawn on green mustache with an MS Paint program.]
32 retweets | 108 favorites
12:54 PM - 16 May X1

Ro ❤ @_lunaro1960
#FUCKENDEAVOR !!!!!!!!!!!!
12 retweets | 35 favorites
1:19 PM - 16 May X1
maely @maely9563
fuck #endeavor
17 retweets | 39 favorites
1:26 PM - 16 May X1

◆Andriiiii◆ @daimoralesstan
hope that ugly bitch #Endeavor goes to jail where he belongs :)
9 retweets | 83 favorites
1:48 PM - 16 May X1

GON!!!!! @endeavorphobe
#FUCKENDEAVOR
[Photo attached: A badly photoshopped image of Endeavor’s face with the words ‘FUCK YOU!’ typed over his head and a drawn on green mustache with an MS Paint program.]

45 retweets | 1271 favorites
1:52 PM - 16 May X1

#1 Gale Stan @heebee91
Poll: If you saw Endeavor getting jumped by 27 people, WWYD?
8% - Call the police
92% - Make it 28
673 votes - Final results
85 retweets | 1893 favorites
1:56 PM - 16 May X1

??? #ENTRODEKUISREAL ??? @softdeku
while i totally agree with the #fuckendeavor movement i think its important to remember that the boh KNEW all of this was happening for YEARS and did nothing about it. endeavor certainly deserves getting dragged for what hes done but dont forget tptb also played a huge hand in this
1,821 retweets | 6,296 favorites
2:02 PM - 16 May X1

While their mother sits at the counter in his kitchen, Fuyumi examines the contents of Shouto’s fridge and cabinets. Fuyumi visited his apartment only once in the all the years he rented from this building. From what she can make out, most of the apartment is still bare. The few decorative pieces are nice, but even at a glance she knows they were not items Shouto purchased for himself.

She’s glad, at the very least, Deku took initiative in decorating the rest of the apartment. The new couch is royal blue, and very comfortable. The terrible bar stools are gone. She didn’t ask for a full
apartment tour, but she’s sure if she walked upstairs she would find more of Deku’s subtle decorative alterations.

Shouto stands by the window, alone, deep in thought. Their mother broke the news to Shouto early in the morning, after the article was released online. Deku answered the door wearing boxers and a pajama shirt, much to his clear embarrassment and Fuyumi’s amusement. He retreated upstairs to put on pants and woke up Shouto, who returned fully dressed.

Fuyumi let their mother handle explaining her plan to Shouto. Deku asked if she wanted breakfast, and left to hunt down the salt in the pantry. She hasn’t seen him since.

Fuyumi opens another door and stares at the arrangement of unorganized dishes and sighs. The problems with two grown men sharing one apartment are, if nothing else, consistent. Their other utensils are in similar disarray. This mess, she knows, solely belongs to Deku. Shouto doesn’t cook for himself, let alone touch anything in the kitchen. Fuyumi wonders if the reason Shouto came over for dinner so often at her house is because he couldn’t cook for himself, and didn’t want to order takeout. After mother moved into her new apartment, he went over very often to eat with here there too. Mother’s cooking is remarkable, so Fuyumi won’t fault him for that. At least he would help clean up the table. Unlike Natsuo, who would eat his way into a food coma and refuse to pick up the plates.

She startles at the sound of Shouto’s voice. “It might be best if I arrange a meeting with you and Midoriya’s agent.” Shouto muses from the window. “That way, if you are approached by someone in the news --”

“I don’t have anything to say to those people.” Mother shifts in her chair. “I appreciate you looking out for me, Shouto, but I’m not worried about the media.”

“You should be.” Shouto mutters. Fuyumi catches the circles under his eyes from his reflection. “You can’t trust them to mind their own business.”

“I found salt!” Deku exclaims, popping out from behind the closet. “Uh, Shouto, why don’t you come help me cook? You’re doing that, um, deep thinking face. I think you need a break.” Fuyumi, in the end, physically drags her brother back into the kitchen.

Even with food in front of him, Shouto seems...far away. Mother hovers over him worriedly, but Deku shakes his head. “He’s been like this since last night, before the story broke. It’s some, um, complicated work stuff.”

“He’s retired?” Fuyumi says, but it sounds like more of a question.

“It’s…” Deku grimaces like the answer pains him. “He’s been...uh...reading. A lot. At night.”

“It’s a very frustrating book.” Shouto agrees, poking at his eggs. “Nothing to worry about.” His answer is far from convincing, which leads Fuyumi to think there is, in fact, something to worry about.

Deku seems eager to change topics rather quickly. “You two are welcome to stay longer but, um, Shouto and I have to, uh, do some hero business. Or, I do. But Shouto has to be there for...reasons.”

“Reasons.” Mother repeats, with an air of humor.

“Yes! Important reasons. You’re ah, welcome to come along? If you want. We have to stop by Creati Agency, so you’ll get a chance to meet Momo-san. I know you said you’d like to see her someday.”
“I would like to meet Momo-san, yes.” Fuyumi glances at her mother’s neutral expression -- a mirror of Shouto’s. Their focus eye contact would imply a silent conversation passes between them, but Fuyumi knows not what of or why.

Fuyumi stirs her tea. “I have a date this afternoon, but I’d like to see her agency before I go.”

“Oh?” Mother asks. “Is this the dragon girl?”

“Dragon girl.” Shouto repeats. He abandons his solemn meditation, and his eyes glow with new energy. “Do tell. I’d love to hear more.” Fuyumi’s three decades of life flash before her eyes. This is her punishment, at last, for teasing Shouto about his boyfriend. She knew he would exact vengeance upon her someday, but she did not expect it to come so soon. Deku, across from her, appears lost in the face of the great betrayal he is bearing witness to. “It wouldn’t be Ryukyu, the Great Dragon hero? Ryukyu, who you spent an entire weekend describing, in detail, her wings and --”

If Fuyumi kicks him under the table, that’s only because her little brother is a lovable bastard -- but he’s still a bastard.

In the end, Fuyumi leaves for her date and her mother tells her all about the agency on the ride home. “I like that girl.” Mother says, without prompting. She smiles. “Shouto’s surrounded by loving people, isn’t he.”

“Deku-kun is a good influence on him.” Fuyumi agrees. “He’s got some good people looking out for him, too. You remember Iida-kun?”

Mother smiles. “Of course.”

“He texts me sometimes and asks about Shouto. He’s like the mom-friend.”

“Mom-friend...?”

“Oh, he’s really concerned about Shouto’s wellbeing and checks in on him. I don’t even remember when I got his number. Maybe at the gala a few years ago? Shouto took me once.” That was also the gala where she met Ryuku, but that’s not relevant to the discussion at hand. “He’ll be fine. He took the news about the article well. I think.”

“He was quiet.” Mother corrects. “I sense he’s not telling me something -- but you don’t know anything about that, do you Fuyumi?”

Fuyumi knew Shouto had a secret from the day he brought Midoriya and introduce him as his boyfriend for the first time. He had a different look in his eye, as he watched Mother’s face, like he thought it might be the last time. Her brother might be retired from Pro Hero work -- but Deku made it sound as though Pro Hero work had not forgotten Shouto. Her consolation, Fuyumi knows, is that Shouto’s boyfriend will keep him from getting into too much trouble. Dating the Number One Hero is probably the safest and most well-protected he can be.

“No, mom.” she says. “But I’m sure it’s important. Shouto gets like that sometimes, when he’s worried. He’ll tell us when he’s ready.”

“I haven’t dated anyone in a while but sometimes I forget that you always discover the weirdest things about your partner at two or three in the morning. Like that their leg hair is really patchy, or that they really hate your new mustache.” - the official translated transcript from Deku on yesterday’s broadcast of Radio Jack’s show. Thought you should know. - Anonymous
gaydeku: there’s so much to unpack here i don’t even know where to begin so instead im going to open up this suitcase, jump inside, and launch myself into the nearest sun

todoshots: EXCUSE ME FUCKGIN WHAT

gaydeku: Deku posted on his instagram it’s true….he has a mustache………………

it’s so ugly and his boyfriend/girlfriend is absolutely correct that thing needs to die asap

lesbianiconcreati:

[Image]

gaydeku: MOOD

Posted 5 hours ago via prostarbust source gaydeku
972 notes
Tags: #entrodeku, #what, #in, #fresh, #fucking, #hell, #??????????

On days where Midoriya is too busy on patrol, Shouto spends hours decrypting the journal in the safety of his room. (Or trying to, given the journal is as unforgiving as every other piece of this “puzzle.”) Midoriya set a very strict timer each day dedicated to scanning every page and character, searching for a pattern or an inconsistency. The timer is set in place so as to limit their time and prevent either of them from losing their sanity. Their labor, thus far, has proven to be very unsuccessful. It’s more frustrating than anything.

Before him, the characters swirl into a chaotic pool of black and white. One character reads true, the next is indecipherable, while the third reads half. Gibberish, Shouto said. Code, Midoriya replied fervently. Shouto is still convinced (despite Midoriya’s confidence) that the journal is actually useless. They could be wasting their time trying to decrypt a journal that has no valuable information at all.

His phone buzzes beside him, pulling him from his spiralling cycle of aggravation.

From Iida Tenya:

I was told you might be engrossed in your work, so this is your reminder to eat!

To Iida Tenya:
From Iida Tenya:

How is the writing coming along?

To Iida Tenya:

slow

haven’t heard back from any of the press offices

From Iida Tenya:

Self publishing is always a valid alternative!

To Iida Tenya:

iida i can’t create my own newspaper

From Iida Tenya:

Publish through the Yuuei circulation. I’m sure you can work something out with them, they are very willing to work with and support Alumnus!

To Iida Tenya:

worth a try. thanks

From Iida Tenya:

You are welcome. Now go eat! I know you certainly aren’t doing that if you’re replying so quickly. You can return to your project at a later time.

Sighing, he pushes his chair from the desk and tucks the journal into the inside of his jacket. Iida’s advice is sound: he can’t think clearly on an empty stomach. And, while his food cooks, he can take another look at the journal…

The apartment below holds no unusual sights upon his entrance. Midoriya’s sweatpants are still laying on the couch from his morning run. He changed into his uniform in the middle of the living room before he dashed off to help with a street brawl in downtown.

He pours himself a glass of water and opens the fridge, thumbing through container after container of leftovers. Dissatisfied with the contents inside, he abandons his hunt for food and sits down at the counter. The urge to re-open the journal is strong, but Shouto has remarkable self control. It’s there at the counter he encounters the first oddity: a plain white envelope. There is no name, and no sign of an address. Midoriya is not one to leave notes, unless he leaves out a slip of paper with scratchy writing before he heads out for a run.

He slides open the crease in the envelope, shaking it upside down. An odd dark thread spills out of the top, but he tilts the sheet back before it falls. He peers inside and frowns at the dark thread. There’s no note. He shakes the envelope, and out of the corner of his eye he spots another thread -- white. Hidden in the crease at the bottom, he finds another: red. It takes him another moment of careful inspection to realize it’s not thread at all. It’s hair. Only a few strands wrapped together, no thicker than his nail.

There’s nothing else in the envelope, but every muscle in his body seizes. He sets the envelope back on the counter. Out of the corner of his eye he sees it -- hanging off his fridge is a note on the whiteboard in handwriting that he knows does not belong to himself or Midoriya.

THE ANSWERS YOU SEEK ARE NOT YOURS TO OWN. YOU WERE MISLEAD.

I SWORE I WON’T HARM A HAIR ON YOUR HEAD
THE OTHER I SEEK I MAKE NO SUCH OATH. BLOOD WILL BE SHED.

The ominous message sends alarms through every cell in his body. A retired Pro Hero or not, he has the instinct to know he is not safe. Someone was in his apartment. Someone might still be in his apartment. He breathes out, slow, and reigns in the sudden drop in temperature in the room. The sensation of ice in his veins has nothing to do with his quirk. Alarm swells through every cell in his body. Swallowing back the nervous anticipation in his stomach, he reaches a steady hand into his pocket and takes out his phone. He takes measured, easy, unaffected steps out of the kitchen and towards the window. He doesn’t look at the phone as he dials.

If somebody is here -- if there is somebody here in his apartment, he can’t use his quirk. He knows basic physical self defense but he’s at a disadvantage. The other person can use their quirk and will use their quirk regardless of the law. Shouto cannot.

“Hey, Shouto.” Midoriya picks up before the third ring. The sound of his voice is a relief. Midoriya talks while Shouto mentally pieces together a plan. “I just got back from patrol, so I’ll have to make this quick. I don’t know if you caught the news but there was a huge mess downtown. My costume is so dirty! I can’t wait to take a shower...I’ll have to let you go so I can change. I’m sure you don’t miss this part of hero work, I’m absolutely covered in -- you don’t even wanna know. Oh, I’m rambling. Sorry, you called me for something. Are you hungry? Momo-san she’s bringing lunch into the office, I’m sure she’ll bring extras if you want --”

“I’m not hungry.” Shouto says carefully. “Thank you for offering. I think I’ll stay in the apartment today. You’re welcome to come back and eat with me, though.”

Midoriya laughs. While that sound would normally bring a smile to his own face, Shouto has none of the energy or willpower to smile at the moment. “Can’t, sorry. I’m a little busy, but I’ll try and convince Jirou-san to take my paperwork so I can head out earlier. You wanna head someplace for dinner?”

Ignoring the question, Shouto inhales quietly and says, “I heard it was going to rain here today.” He puts more emphasis on the word rain, keeping his tone light. He fails. He knows he sounds off, but there’s not much he can do about that. “I think the storm is supposed to pass through Musutafu. A lot of rain, I think. My mother would like that, for her garden. What do you think, Izuku?”

Midoriya’s breath catches on the other end of the phone. “Shouto?”

Shouto keeps the phone pressed against his ear as he walks to the window, glancing warily at the ceiling and across the beams. Any sign of reflection, or a hint of metal. “I heard it’s supposed to rain pretty hard.”

He imagines Midoriya’s expression shifts at the same time as voice. Harder. Confident. The commanding voice of the Number One Hero. “Are you in trouble? Are you alone?”

Shouto raises his jaw and watches his reflection in the glass. “Clear skies for right now, but you know how the weather is.”

“Is your apartment compromised?”

“Maybe. I haven’t seen any clouds yet.”

Midoriya hums. “Five minutes. I’m on my way. Stay on the phone.”

Shouto returns to the counter, deliberately steering clear of the note and the contents inside. “That’s a good idea. About dinner, I mean. I was thinking we could eat out tonight. I saw a new tempura
place open, we should check it out.” Midoriya doesn’t reply, but Shouto didn’t expect him to. He hears Midoriya’s soft grunting on the other end; the sharp sound of air snapping and pulling.

Intense wind. Midoriya is moving fast -- too fast for his phone speakers to pick up.

Shouto keeps talking. Keeping up a facade of calm is a necessity in the event there is someone else -- camera or otherwise -- watching him in his apartment. He needs to leave the apartment as soon as possible without raising alarm. Jirou and the technicians at Momo’s agency can return later and search for mics or bugs. Midoriya is on his way. He’s fine. All he has to do is remain calm and think of a way out.

Unfortunately, it’s taking all of his mental willpower to remain his cool exterior. Midoriya will need to create his escape plan. He doesn’t trust himself to move. “Iida said he wanted to visit us soon, I think it would be nice to see him. Maybe we can arrange something for next week. I’m sure I can convince Momo to let you take a few days off.” Silence on the other end, interrupted with short huffs. “You’ve both been working very hard, I think some time off would be good. You’ve missed our last three date nights. You know I miss taking you out to dinner…”

Midoriya cuts him off before he launches into another tangent. “I’m outside your building. Where are you in the apartment? Can you walk to the window?” Shouto’s heart pounds as he walks over to the glass. He doesn’t trust himself to speak; he hums a tone of agreement. “Alright. I think I see you. Take a few steps to the other window by the fire escape. Open it.”

He hesitates. That’s likely to draw more attention. The door would be less conspicuous. He clears his throat and, as vague as his warning sounds, he hopes Midoriya understands his hesitation. “It’s a little windy out.”

“Trust me.” Midoriya says. “I’m hanging up now. I’ll see you in a minute.” The window by the fire escape is one of the older windows in his apartment. He glances behind him. If there was a camera or -- someone in the other room -- he’s out of their line of sight. The wall hides him from the rest of the apartment. This is why Midoriya is in charge of making plans.

The paint sticks to the windowsill. He successfully wrenches it free after a good push and unclasps the screen. He steps out onto the fire escape. Without a moment to spare a thought for the rest of Midoriya’s plan, he finds himself lifted up and flying through the air in the span of one breath and another.

Midoriya drops onto the roof of a building three blocks down. Shouto puts his hands on his knees and crouches to catch his breath. “Sorry about that. I wanted to get out as quick as I could.” Midoriya says. Shouto straightens and presses his hand to his chest. His heart is pounding against his ribcage -- shock is setting in, or the impromptu flight rattled his nerves.

A gentle hand winds around Shouto’s neck. “You alright?” Midoriya scans Shouto’s face, then his arms and chest and legs. When he’s satisfied, he peers up at Shouto. Softly, he asks, “Can you tell me what’s going on?”

Heart rate slowly returning to normal, he nods. “We need to get to Momo’s agency. Do you remember the ransom note you received before you came to Tokyo?” Midoriya’s expression hardens. “There’s one in my apartment.”

“I’ll carry you.” Midoriya says, and it doesn’t sound like a request. “We’ll get there faster if I run.” Shouto nods, a beat too late. “Here. Get on my back. Hold on tight.” Shouto obeys. His whole body thrums with energy -- or perhaps that’s Midoriya, beneath him, radiating raw power.

The blur between landing in Momo’s office and entering the safe room slips past him. One moment
he blinks, and the next he’s sitting down at a semi-council of other Pro Heroes. Momo relays everything, verbatim, from Shouto’s account. Midoriya takes his hand and guides him into the hallway.

“One day off.” Midoriya says, breaking the silence. “I’d like just one day off.”

Shouto clears his throat. “I don’t think heroes get days off, Midoriya.” Midoriya snorts, and pulls him in by his waist. Shouto falls into the hold willingly.

“You’re lucky I remembered that codeword.” Midoriya grumbles into his neck. “I forgot we made those.”

“How could you forget them?” Shouto asks. The lesson came in one of their last courses before graduation, and class 3-A went wild with possibilities. Ochaco made one about a dog she didn’t actually own, while Iida’s codeword was cranberry juice. Midoriya’s codeword was There’s a spider in my room because he was uncreative and voiced complaints in class about the useless exercise. It was (in retrospect) a rather silly lesson to fill the remaining time between classes and graduation. Today it possibly saved his life.

“I’m pretty sure that was the week I broke my wrist. The painkillers I was on wiped me out.” Midoriya huffs. “And of all things -- why rain in Musutafu?”

Instead of answering right away, Shouto raises his arms and wraps himself as close to Midoriya as he can. He breathes in; sweat, Midoriya’s shampoo, and exhales. “I like the rain.” he says.

[Video: Top 15 Entropy Retirement Theories (Updated)
Thumbnail image: Todoroki Shouto, posed in light grey suit with black tie, half-turned away from the viewer. In the background, a faded grey still of the former Pro Hero in his old uniform. The text over the image reads the same as the title, excluding the updated note.]

Here are the TOP FIFTEEN Entropy Retirement Theories. Make sure to subscribe for weekly hero related content!

Comments 4.7k

Yvaris - 2 weeks ago
theory #1 - he got abducted by aliens
theory #2 - old entropy was an alien but new entropy returned to earth and destroyed his doppleganger
View 14 replies

Ghost of Midwinter - 1 month ago
I love this list! #9 was really good and well developed. The story about his almost-suspension is really interesting too - the theory he was forced to retire because of the board is so good and realistic. Love your content thanks
View 3 replies

jnsouls - 3 days ago
my friend and i have a twitter thread where we keep adding to theories
#1 he has an injury that he didn’t reveal
#2 he developed complications due to the dual sides of his quirk and it became unstable
#3 he's going undercover like hero gale and trying to disappear for a while
#4 he quit hero work to become an astronaut
#5 uhhhhh he’s getting married and his partner didn’t want him to get hurt anymore???
#6 uhhhhhh
#7 he was devastated after getting the no 7 hottest hero result and decided his career wasn’t worth keeping
#8 uuuuuuhhh
#9 has a secret evil twin who kidnapped real entropy and is covering it up by saying he retired
#10 decided his job sucked and didn’t wanna work anymore. valid

View 12 replies

Nieji Sosekii - 2 days ago
Theory number 13 is so bad why would he be quitting to go undercover?? What’s he gonna do, investigate the board of heroes now that he’s unlicensed and fire the current team? How would he even do that???

View 4 replies

> Ania - you're acting like that's the wildest theory there is. Have you seen the thread on Reddit about the government making genetically modified humans to become the next generation of heroes and that all the top 10 heroes are AI controlled by the government. It's some wild shit

6Ummon - 1 day ago
Anyone else ever think entropy just wanted to be left alone? Didn’t want to be the hero in the news? That life isn’t cut out for everyone.

View 1 reply

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Tenya follows Midoriya and Shouto to Midoriya’s office after their meeting in the briefing room. Momo and Midoriya are leading the strike, while Jirou is in command of support and surveillance. Eight sidekicks were selected for the mission, three of which reside in Momo’s agency and two from Team Idaten. Tenya selected Takaki and Kurusu from the speed division in his team, and two of his best captains. Tenya is entrusted with Shouto’s care. The threat is clearly for Midoriya, based on the detail in the note, but the villain’s strange attention to Shouto is troublesome. Momo arranged a safe house for them to spend the next two days. *Laying low*, Momo explained, *is the only way to ensure everyone comes out of this unharmed.*

Midoriya requested Tenya remain with Shouto during the strike. Tenya accepted, readily, as Shouto’s safety is a top priority of his own. With Midoriya at the front lines, there were few others that could be trusted with a task as enormous as this. Tenya knows Midoriya trusts him deeply, yet -- Midoriya paces the expanse of his office with tangible nervous energy.

“There is absolutely no need to fret, Midoriya-kun!” Tenya assures him. “I will be vigilant and remain beside Shouto-kun at all times. He will not leave my sight, not even for a moment. Not even to excuse ourselves to the restroom.”

“Iida.” Shouto says wearily. “I can handle using the bathroom by myself.”

Midoriya bites his lip. He glances between Tenya and Shouto, and settles on Tenya. His spine straightens. “I -- I’m going to be worried no matter what -- but I’m glad you’re here, Iida-kun.” Shouto sighs and exits the office to talk with Momo and Jirou at the door. With Shouto out of earshot, he leans in. “Are you sure you’re up for this? I have -- I have a bad feeling something’s going to happen. You two should be fine at the safe house, but…”

“We’ve taken every precaution available.” Tenya says. “He will be safe with me. I promise you that.” It is perhaps a futile effort to console Midoriya, but Tenya must attempt the endeavor as his
friend.

Midoriya sets his jaw. He blinks quickly, a clear indication of his distress. Tenya isn’t given an opportunity to react to his oncoming tears because he pulls Tenya in by the shoulders and hugs him. “Thank you.” The words are muffled into his arm, but Tenya hears them all the same. “And please -- please stay safe. Shouto wouldn’t want you to get hurt, and -- and neither do I.”

Tenya pats his shoulder. “I will ensure his safety, and my own. Do not worry about us, you have a far more important mission to focus on. Don’t distract yourself. We will be fine, Midoriya-kun!”

Midoriya pulls back and wipes his eyes with a small laugh. “Izuku.” Midoriya corrects. “I think we’ve been friends long enough. Call me Izuku.”

Tenya presses a hand to his own chest and nods sharply. “Of course, Izuku-kun.” Izuku offers him a pleased smile and rubs the back of his neck. Shouto returns and hovers behind Izuku for the remainder of the conversation. Tenya understands - as Shouto leans further and further into Izuku’s personal space - that he wishes to speak privately with Izuku. Tenya acknowledges partners often need the time and consideration to discuss personal matters without an audience, and makes a hasty exit.

“Ah!” Tenya announces. “I must go check on my sidekicks and discuss...their new assignment. I will return in a moment!” Despite his best efforts, he is unable to escape the room. Momo corners him at the door and engages him in a fierce discussion about the status of their police escort and drills him about the security protocol and safety precautions in their safe house. The thought of Shouto in danger unnerves her as much as Izuku. Momo breaks off into a new argument with the sidekick from Jirou’s department, and Tenya allows his gaze to return to Shouto and Izuku.

Izuku’s office -- the same office that once belonged solely to Shouto -- is not large by any means, but as he watches them at a distance the office seems larger. It is large enough to swallow the two of them; Shouto, head bowed, and Izuku with his arms wrapped around Shouto in such a way that allowed no space between them.

Jirou calls for the surveillance crew. Momo tells the strike team to gather their remaining supplies and move out in the next five minutes. She glances at Shouto and returns her heavy focused attention to Tenya. “Please let Deku-kun know we’re ready to go. I’m sure it goes without saying but -- be safe. We’ll send for you after the mission’s over.”

Tenya nods and ducks his head under her weighty gaze. She is an intimidating woman, and an astonishing hero. There is no question in his mind as to how she received the honor of number ten hero in all of Japan. “Thank you, Momo-san. I will retrieve Shouto-kun for the escort.”

She smiles and pats his arm. “Stay out of trouble. We’ll see you soon.” Tenya leaves her to round up the stragglers and enforce order among the sea of officers and sidekicks. Her sharp voice pierces through the bullpen and every head in the room snaps up to provide her with their full undivided attention. Tenya enters Izuku’s office and closes the door behind him.

Shouto appears to take notice of his entrance, but he makes no move to step away from Izuku. Tenya clears his throat when it becomes apparent Izuku doesn’t plan to abandon Shouto’s side. “Midor -- Izuku-kun, the rest of your team is waiting.” Shouto shakes his head. “I am sorry for interrupting, but Shouto-kun and I must leave as soon as possible.” Tenya finishes apologetically.

Izuku pulls away and acknowledges Tenya with a short nod. “Yeah, I’m -- I’m going.” He lifts a hand to Shouto’s cheek and rubs the skin there before he steps away. “I’ll see you in a few days, alright?”
Shouto smiles, unconcerned. “See you then.” Izuku returns the smile. He stops in front of Tenya and raises a hand to lay a firm hand on his shoulder. No words are said. He drops his hand and walks to the door without turning back. Shoulders straight, confident, unaffected. His unease from before is a faint memory.

Tenya startles slightly when Shouto steps beside him. His smile from earlier is absent, but he appears content. “We should head out.” Nodding, Tenya follows him out the door.

Their police escort meets them at the lobby. Captain Shirane, the head of the strike team, tips her hat with a large green scaled hand. She introduces Shouto and Tenya to their security crew and their patrol officers. After introductions are made, the security staff usher them into a dark unmarked car. Tenya notes the tinted windows and the police radio beside the driver. He is struck, then, by a startling vision of Izuku sitting in Shouto’s position. As Izuku, at one time, sat in a car very much like this one; head pressed against the window, slack jawed and deep lines under his eyes, as they sped off to engage with the original sender. Izuku did not sleep much that week. Tenya did not, either, but Izuku especially...

Shouto raises an eyebrow. “Something wrong?” Tenya shakes himself and scatters the memory, like physically removing the reminder off his person. “You’re looking at me weird.”

“Ah, I was remembering the events of the last time we engaged with the ransom note sender. It is nothing more than déjà vu, I suppose.” A blank stare from Shouto. “Did Izuku not tell you about the first mission?” Shouto’s reaction would suggest he did not.

“No.” Shouto says, sourly. “Midoriya only told me about the note.” How odd of him to do so, Tenya thinks, but he is not privy to the unknown motivations of Izuku’s mind and he does not reply.

The car stops outside a pleasant row of apartments, and their escort leads them into the door. Tenya receives a radio with an emergency alarm. Shouto receives nothing, and his expression portrays his disapproval. Tenya decides the vocal reminder about his civilian status is not worth repeating.

Their safe house is small, even looking upon it from the outside. Square windows, with the shades pulled down. Quaint, Tenya would say, although there are no words said at the door. The officer at the entrance stiffens the moment he walks inside. While Tenya is taller than most of the officers with them on the scene, he is unable to see into the doorway.

A woman in a long dark nightgown steps out. Tenya raises the radio and presses the alarm -- or, he believes he does. His arm does not move. His fingers twitch at his side. “You’re rather early, aren’t you?” she says.

Her eyes glow in the dim shadows, unnaturally so. Perhaps a trick of the light, but Tenya knows better to assume anything natural about any person he encounters in his line of work. He does not trust the woman. Her intentions are clear: she is a villain, and Shouto is in danger. He cannot even glance to his side, but he knows Shouto, too, is frozen beside him.

The nightgown is aged, and wrinkly. An older nightgown, if he were to guess. Her skin waxy, pulled tight on the edges of her bones like it had been stretched and released. If her face was beautiful once, it was beautiful like a face carved from cold marble. Beautiful in a way that fills his mouth with dry ash. Beautiful and terrible. Her smile, too, is not cruel at a glance. And yet Tenya is frozen and struck by the kind of unshakable terror he had only felt once before in his life.

All the while, her eyes fixate upon his face with intent. She does not blink. Her eyes stare forward and look deeply into the depths of his being, as though passing a microscope over his person and
inspecting every flaw and imperfection.

“Why don’t you come inside.” she offers, although the offer is more than a command. Tenya is propelled by a force that controls his limbs. “Oh, don’t look at me like that. You’ve all got such sour faces. Especially you, Ingenium. That is not the face of the brave hero I know! Don’t you recognize me? We’re old friends, after all. Everything is fine. Why don’t you give me a smile?”

There is nothing to worry about. Tenya smiles, although he does not understand why. His tense shoulders relax. The shift in his step releases. He relents the weight upon his toes; like he was prepared for a sprint, but did not hear the gunshot fire to begin his lap. Why was he so filled with worry a moment ago? The woman is smaller than him, and non-intimidating compared to the figures beside him. She poses no threat.

He catches Shouto’s expression out of the corner of his eye, as he files into the room behind their train of officers. Shouto’s smile is wrong, as ill-fitting as the smile upon his own face feels. Not a smile -- a grimace.

“Now, sargeant.” She addresses the captain. Tenya realizes, at that moment, that her feet are bare. It’s an odd observation to make, but Tenya wonders if she was barefoot at the door. He did not see her remove any shoes. “Your service is no longer required here, and I need a little time to chat with the heroes over here. You and your officers should go take a nap -- make it a long one.”

The sargeant’s body crumples to the floor like a toy with their strings cut. The other officers behind him follow in suit; thud, thud, thud. Her razor-like smile fixates on Shouto. “That’s much better, don’t you think?”

Tenya does not reply. Shouto makes no noise beside him. She throws her head back and laughs, unrestrained. Their lack of reply amuses her, somehow, but Tenya does not entertain the logic behind villains and their dark humor. However -- for the first time, her glowing eyes lose contact with his own. Her spell breaks and Tenya’s mind returns to himself. He remembers where he is. He remembers she is the enemy, and he does not hesitate to act. He will not make the same mistake at the door and let her catch him off guard. If her eyes are the limiting factors of her quirk, he will not look at her face. He will protect Shouto. He will win this fight no matter the circumstances.

Engines thrumming with rapid energy, Tenya shifts his stance and prepares to move. Activating Recipro Burst takes only a second, and then Tenya is launching into an attack. The woman in the nightgown hasn’t recovered from her laughing fit by the time Tenya leaps and lands a kick into her midriff, tossing her across the room. She hits the wall with a chuckle.

Tenya makes his mistake then; he looks to Shouto instead of returning to the fight before him. “Shouto-kun --!” Shouto’s expression is foreign to him. Distant, and not the kind of distant he recognizes when Shouto is deep in thought. The woman doesn’t move from where she fell. But it is Shouto who lifts his hand, and it is Shouto who strikes him down. It is not Shouto who performs any of these actions. Tenya sees the glint of light in Shouto’s eyes and knows his mind is not his own.

The woman engages no physical quirk of her own to take him down. Even as he struggles to stand, the woman watches his pathetic attempts with thinly veiled humor. He notes she does not engage in the fight at all. She stalks over to him and lays a hand on his collar. “Shh. Rest now, Ingenium. There’s no need to fight anymore. I’ll see you soon, hero.” Tenya’s world is thrust into darkness.

He wakes to the sound of the low hum of the ancient air conditioning unit by the window. The coffee table in the middle of the room is splintered and broken in two. Tenya lifts his head and stands so quickly he feels light headed. Pressing a hand to his chest, he crouches and steadies his
weight on the chair behind him. His hands tremble as he withdraws his personal phone from his pocket.

Whoever apprehended him removed his phone of his person, but they did not search him for a second phone. A foolish blunder on their part, but the thought provides him with no relief. He scourrs every inch of the apartment in a moment and concludes his stomach churning hypothesis: he is completely alone. The bodies of the officers from their escort are missing. Shouto, too, is nowhere to be found.

Moisture builds behind his glasses. He removes them and rubs at his eyes, blinking in surprise as he pulls away red from his vision. Blood. He hit his head after he went down. If he is injured, are Shouto’s injuries as severe? Could he be --? He interrupts his own dark trail of thoughts: no. He must not operate on worst case scenario outcomes. He must act rationally. There is no trace of blood on the tile or anywhere else in the house. Shouto made it out uninjured, and likely alive. If they wished to kill either of them, they would have done so already. As Momo warned, their self-proclaimed villain wasn’t looking for a fight. Leaving a written threat to Midoriya about Shouto -- and then leaving a second in Shouto’s apartment -- was not an invitation to fight.

It was a message.

Chapter End Notes

if you felt at least one (1) emotion while reading this chapter you are required to comment and describe to me the emotion you felt using only color hex codes.

mobile translations:
ありがとうございました - Thank you, past tense; for something that has been done to you
頑張ります - I’ll make you proud; Literally, ‘I will do my best!’
好き - adjective - to like or love; can be used between partners, sometimes for friends
お腹が空いていますか。- Are you hungry right now / do you want something to eat?
Datomatsu - Like Musutafu, the name is based on a Star Wars planet. I wanted to use Minato in ref to the location (?? in Illegals) of All Might’s old office, but I decided I wanted to steer clear of the idea that Deku is living in All Might’s shadow, so he has an office on the outskirts of Tokyo that let him travel all over japan. In a funny way, despite their offices being relatively close geographically, these two didn’t run into each other a lot on the job
はい、おなかすいた。 - Yeah, I'm hungry
170cm - about 5’7, or five feet seven inches (HE IS SHORT AND BUILT LIKE A BRICK SHIT HOUSE)
Tokage - The Japanese word for lizard. (He’s not very original. But, Todoroki suggested it. >:3c)

Actual Chapter Notes:
- THERE IS ART OF THE CEREAL SCENE HERE BY kazzarole (cries tysm)
- ANOTHER CLIFFHANGER TOO BAD FOR ALL OF YOU >:3c
- *slam dunks endeavor into a deep hole that reaches the center of the earth* eat shit
todoroki's job was revealed as promised!! the "secret job" isn't really a “job” ig, but i
started thinking about nana and gran torino and i wanted to fix the (currently unexplained) reasoning as to why those two were Very Unknown heroes. i decided to run with the idea and came up with this: an underground group of members who work in secret to keep hero society in line / villains in line. they're underground (even more underground than Underground Heroes like aizawa or shinsou). after nana died the organization died out. in MY timeline the remaining members reached out to todoroki and will be handing off Secrets entrusted to him to help bring hero society (esp the people in power) back under decent control. todoroki is a good choice: he's very well connected. he has the #1 hero on speed dial. he's already well acquainted with hero society's problems and he wants to take steps to change it - a perfect candidate for some under the table social change and political espionage. and, his ACTUAL job as a journalist will be a good outlet for leaks / carrying the dark secrets in the closet over into public knowledge.

- tl;dr: todoroki is basically a spy for the hero world and he will help keep the next generation of heroes in line in a way that wasn't possible during endeavor's hero tenure. and the way he goes about fulfilling that is with his actual job as a journalist - he'll get to report on all sorts of scandals and investigate on his own. he planned to retire ages before they came to him with this offer, and although we don't know too much about what todoroki likes to do in his free time besides visit his mother i really like the idea that he's a writer. (he's a pretty quiet guy with a flair for the dramatics which either makes him a writer or a musician jskjssksjk)

- people keep asking how i write so much in such a short span of time and my answer is: it's the mania

- next chapter: todoroki is tired of being the hostage, and being kidnapped is about as lame as he expects. midoriya kicks ass, iida kicks ass, momo kicks ass, uraraka kicks ass, some unexpected faces show up...you get the idea. there's a big villain beat down. and there's plenty of time left for them to have a happy ending.

- there's a discord server for my fic now. join me i am hilarious and sexy also we talk about corn. this is also where people make memes about my fic

https://discord.gg/DFngse7

- if you recognized the tweet ref from the midnight cereal bathroom exchange, congrats you win a prize and your prize is joining my discord server. thx maddie

-bonus: that convo w/ uraraka and iida almost went very differently

    In the elevator, Ochaco turns to iida. “He’s not going to do anything stupid, right?”

    iida adjusts his glasses. He frowns. “Oh, most definitely.”

-Another bonus: sometimes i cant resist the urge to shitpost

    “You’re too tall.” Midoriya complains. “I’m doing my best.”

    Shouto drops the bag of food. Everything is neatly boxed; it won’t be too disturbed. He winds his hands into Midoriya’s hair and lowers his head. “Dub voice: APOLOGIES.”
Chapter Summary

With Todoroki held hostage, more unexpected (unfriendly) visitors, and an excess of other Bad Things Occurring, the hero team decides to pick the Phone A Friend For Help option.

The future is on the way, but Todoroki and Midoriya are ready for whatever comes next.

Chapter Notes

*aggressively tears the my hat off my head and eats it* hey. i lived bitch
- yah, its over a year later since the last update. wah wah wah. i was getting my life together & graduating from uni so i will not apologize! on top of that i was dealing with a lot of Unpleasant Mental Health Garbage so even when i wanted to write my brain went "haha fuck you. i dont think so! now let's watch youtube videos for hours and sink into a depression hole" i confess it didn't help that i would play minecraft during the hours i was supposed to stick to an editing schedule.
- i got my wisdom teeth out last week & worked on finalized this while on pain meds so appreciate my efforts because i STILL managed to upload this if any of the formatting is messed up i s2fg ill SCREAM
- onto chapter related things:
  - **FUCK this chapter in particular. not only did it take forever to write but it's also the longest chapter as of posting this**
  - enjoy this 40,000 word update i fucking GUESS.
  - lots of stuff happened since the last time i updated. one of those being that this series ACTUALLY has a more than one fic inside of it. if you click on the series info you can read "Second Interlude" (highschool era prequel to this fic) right now! more content will be arriving soon, but i wanted to get dwyw finished first.
- here is my favorite meme from last chapter's reactions in my discord (thx chai):
rerrrright let's get to what's important: editing this chapter? Hell. actual hell. this chapter took more time to edit than all other 5 chapters combined. i reread through this chapter so many times while listening to the wicked soundtrack i started typing the lyrics into their dialogue. i am so glad i am released from rewrites & editing hell - i rewrote the intro/first scene for this chapter 8 times. not exaggerating. i kept changing the pov for the intro scene/formal narrator of the climax. iida was the close of last chapter, and i could not for the life of me figure out a way to build off that scene again from his pov. it was not working. it was not working! 6 rewrites later it was an outsider pov and i scrapped that too. i was losing my fucking mind. todoroki became the "start" of the chapter but he wasn't the "main" narrator. the last rewrite landed on uraraka as the formal narrator and it saved this entire chapter. she really is the best character. im so fucking thankful it's over. TL;DR: I Fucking Hate Writing.
- *tosses a random date on the twitter timestamps like im tossing a dart while blindfolded at a dartboard* i really hope this isn't an important character’s birthday or im gonna look like boo boo the fool again
- it was never specified in any of the earlier chapters who i replaced m*neta with but it's SHIOZAKI! if anybody is wondering why she's here, thats why. shinsou is here too but i put him in the 2B hero class.
- thank you to riem for helping me with my Language Adventures this chapter even though it was a very long time ago (i speak absolutely 0 french)
- ENORMOUS HEAPS OF THANKS TO RIAN FOR DOING A FANTASTIC BETA JOB (at very short notice)!!!!
- disclaimer now before anyone asks: this chapter does not feel like The End. i didn't want it to feel like the end. if anything, this chapter should feel like the beginning -- because it is, in a lot of ways. (this chapter also has the most...unique structure out of the other chps)
- for people reading this prior to 20.12.19 - i stand by this, however, as u probably already saw: this chapter isn't the final chapter lol
- me writing midoriya last chapter where he says the title of the fic in his dialogue: all right. this is it folks. *roll credits*
- speaking of roll credits…
- THIS IS THE END? HOLY SHIT? Sike
- here it is. sixth chapter. last chapter. all good things must end. what a ride it's been!
- please enjoy!!! thank you for sticking around & for those of you who lived through
the year hiatus: have a basket of frogs. they are friendly and will grant you 3 wishes.

PRESS F three hours after posting I realized I forgot an entire line of dialogue for
midoriya halfway through the chapter. epic fail. it’s fixed now but I’m still MAD

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“What’s the point of all of this if we live the rest of our lives afraid of the future?”

... 

“As long as you’re in it, I don’t see why I should be afraid. We can do it together.”

... 

[Video: “BE BRAVE, HAVE HOPE” -- DEKU SPEECH AT STAR FESTIVAL 20X1 [FULL HD]
Thumbnail image: Pro Hero Deku, standing beside his partner Todoroki Shouto, on the large
white podium in front of Rising Star Festival. He’s wearing a grey suit jacket, a crisp white
collared shirt, a black tie, and his signature smile aimed directly for the viewer. Todoroki is
smiling slightly, though his attention is not directed at the camera. He is dressed in a plain white
collared shirt and grey tie with a black jacket tucked under his arm.]

Posted 1 month ago by WorldHeroesOnline ✔ | Subscribe

6.8M views

Pro Hero Deku at Star Festival’X1 giving the keynote speech. This speech was one of the most
streamed at the time of airing and one of the top ten most viewed videos of this category within the
first 24 hours of uploading.

English, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese CC available. All other languages provide a completely
translated script on our site: https://worldheroesonline.net/script/deku/bravex2

Comments 4.3k

CONCEDE

Too late, Todoroki comes to two very important conclusions in the few lucid moments he is spared
in the moments following his capture:
1. He massively underestimated the amount of danger he is in

and

2. He is completely, entirely, wholly on his own.

Realization comes in a wave, sudden and overpowering. He can’t move, too uncertain of his next move. Not that he could move if he wanted to, but it takes more than a few attempts to force the terror down. As a hero he pushed aside any sign of panic and focused on protecting as many people as he could around him. He is not a hero anymore. He is the one who needs protection -- and he has none.

Gathering information about his kidnapper is the most natural course of action given his circumstance. He may not have the ability to fight, but he is not defenseless. No matter his choices, he will never erase his history as a hero. What would a hero do, he thinks. In situations where combat was too risky, heroes formed plans to work around it. Adapted to their unique situation, never allowing anything to catch them off guard. If he finds the right opportunity, if he is lucky, he might escape on his own. Assuming she doesn’t kill him before he finds the chance.

Despite her initial confrontation, she is quiet throughout her quick survey of the silent room. She pats down Tenya’s side and withdraws his phone, making a face and crushing it between her palm. Shouto observes her scan each of the officers, reaching down to touch their faces and tug lightly at their heads. Standing, she clenches her fist to her side. Shouto thinks she might be holding something, perhaps something she took off one of the officers, but he can’t see between her fingers.

“Get up,” she tells them. The officers rise, one by one, unblinking through lifeless eyes. “You know what you have to do. Go.”

The officers march out the door, single file, Shouto at the back. The officers take off in the opposite direction, with Shouto and the intruder pushing out into the back and into the adjacent alleys.

Taking him in broad daylight in front of a Pro Hero, an armed guard, and from a secret location only known by a few -- her actions display her boldness and intelligence. Patience, too, if she was waiting for them to arrive. She didn’t strike while they were in transit. She waited for him to separate from the others. She had a plan. She didn’t attack by chance, she didn’t stumble onto their location by coincidence. She didn’t kill him there, either. She has a plan, a strategy. He is part of her plan, somehow, and she needs him alive.

Even though his mind burns with the desire -- run, move -- he can’t move. He’s only encountered one other person with such a power, but it feels different. The only other person he knows with this kind of power held an entirely different approach.

Her eyes burn into him, even without facing her, and he knows he’s trapped where he is. Such control that he had no power over striking Tenya, an action he wouldn’t have thought himself capable of, even under duress.

Slowing her brisk pace, she stops at the end of one alley and pauses. Leads him down the next, head swiveling, alert for any trespassers in their footpath. She doesn’t take the van from their escort. Once the other heroes realize what has happened, it could give away her location. Or she has a location in mind that can’t be reached by vehicle. Deep into the alleys, she will avoid the chances of running into anyone that could become a potential witness.

It’s clever, Shouto admits quietly, as much as he doesn’t want to. It’s very clever, which means he
can’t afford to underestimate her. He wasn’t the only one to underestimate her, clearly. Tenya’s surprise mirrored his own -- as did his fear.

While she doesn’t face him, he feels himself draw closer around the knot of clarity coiled in his chest. What had she said to him? “Especially you, Ingenium. That is not the face of the brave hero I know! Don’t you recognize me? We’re old friends, after all.” She knew Tenya (and presumably Shouto, although she had not addressed him) with a familiarity that does not strike him as forced or less than genuine. There was nothing in her conviction that suggested she was lying, but she had to be.

He thinks of Tenya’s odd comment to him in the escort van: “Did he not tell you about the first case?” Tenya knew more about this than he said, Shouto realizes. Tenya was there. Why would Tenya keep something like that from him? Unless -- unless…

She stops, turns around with her hand pressed to the brick wall on her left. Turning to him, a greeting of sharp teeth and fierce determination. The smile does not provide him comfort. He can’t look away.

He feels himself -- the part of him that is aware, alert, desperate to escape, slipping away. He smiles. Nothing to worry about, no reason to slow his steps. He has to keep up with her, she wouldn’t want him to slip away into the shadows in the alley behind them. The dark alley into the unknown, for some reason, looks more inviting than the street ahead.

He follows her into the open and does not look back.

Sugarman @themanofsugar
"Cooking With All Sugar" my newest recipe book is out the 29th! Preorder now for a chance to win a signed copy #GreatestBakingHero
374 retweets | 2,909 favorites
11:17 AM - 22 May X1

❤\m/(>.<)\m/ ❤️ @O_shin11s
THE PRINTS ARE HERE!!!!!! O!!!! hold on i’m literllly shaking w excitement :-0!!!
1 retweet | 168 favorites
12:17 PM - 22 May X1

❤\m/(>.<)\m/❤️ @O_shin11s
SO a while ago I sent a question to @radio_jack’s show and somehow @herodeku and entropy @tshouto came to my school dance?? i posted some pics but now i have the full res HD pics in all their glory… Im SERIOUSLY dead i cant believe it happened. They are the sweetest ppl ever & deku is #TheBestHero #confirmed :’)
[Photos attached:
1a: Poking through the white and gold balloons and streamers, Pro Hero Deku, Todoroki Shouto, and a student wearing a bright purple bowtie make three very different expressions for the camera (goofy, contempt, joyful).
1b: Todoroki and the student reveal their matching bow ties, gesturing for the viewer with magnificent and regal posture. Hero Deku is in the background, bent over (laughing, assumed from the angle). Their suits match, with purple accents. Todoroki is wearing bright purple shoes. In contrast to Todoroki and the student, Deku is wearing a bright green suit.
Outside the window of their escort vehicle, Ochaco watches the sparrows in the trees dance between branches. The driver whistles a tuneless song in the front seat, tapping his fingers against
the steering wheel. Their stop was unexpected and Ochaco isn’t sure what she should be doing in
the downtime. A mile back, Deku’s phone rang with an urgent tone and he told the driver to stop
the car. From the other window, she watches him pace on the sidewalk. His mouth is moving too
fast for her to pick out any of the words.

“Who do you think he’s talking to?” Momo asks, curiously peering out the window behind her.
She fights the seatbelt in her chair and gives up after pulling at the material.

Deku turns away, but she watches his face transform into an expression of panic that she can’t
unsee. Even with his back turned, she recognizes his anxiety through his tight shoulders. “I think
something happened. It’s probably Tenya-kun.”

Unbuckling the seat belt around her middle Momo rises, her head brushing the ceiling of the van.
“Then we need to turn around. I’ll tell the driver we’re changing sites -- we can meet him
halfway.”

Ochaco hums, unbuckling her seatbelt and opening the passenger door. “I don’t think so. I’d guess
we’re going to pick him up.” Deku lifts his hand to his head, anxiously rubbing his forehead. She
leaves the van and stops a few feet behind, clearing her throat as not to startle him.

Deku doesn’t turn around at first. She taps his shoulder, forcing him to look at her. The look on his
face roots fear into her mind: he isn’t terrified, he’s furious. Terrified, too; jaw clenched tight,
grinding his teeth.

“Is everyone alright?” Ochaco asks. Deku shakes his head and gives her a gesture to communicate
he’s listening to the other end of the phone.

“No, it’s fine, Tenya, you shouldn’t be --” Deku closes his eyes and sighs. “ -- stop saying that. It’s
not your fault. I’m glad you’re okay. I’ll talk to Momo-san, we’ll come get you. Just -- stay there,
don’t do anything until we get there. Can you do that? We’re on our way.”

Deku lowers his hand and drops the phone, slipping through his loose fingers and skidding away
on the pavement. He watches it fall but doesn’t move to pick it up. Meeting Ochaco’s eyes, he lets
out a deep exhale and says, “Fuck.”

“So,” Ochaco replies, forcing lightness into her tone. “Unexpected detour ahead?”

“Fuck,” Deku says again, either unable to say anything else or reluctant to explain. “Fuck.” He
walks back to the van. Ochaco picks up his phone from the ground and dusts off the screen. The
missed call reveals Tenya’s personal number; which is odd, because Tenya usually defaults to his
work phone. The only time he reverts to his other phone is if -- well. Nothing good. Worry clings to
her mind. For Tenya. For Shouto. For Deku’s overboiling stress. The desperation in his face
terrifies her more than anything else.

Momo arranges their driver to drop them off a block from the safehouse. Deku doesn’t say a word
in the van, choosing to mold the safety bar above his head into a malformed piece of junk metal
with his stiff hands. The driver, looking in the rearview every few moments, drives with more
cautions than probably necessary. The tension radiating off Deku plunges the car into
uncomfortable silence.

“Er,” Ochaco tries to ask what exactly happened at the safehouse, but Deku’s expression stops her
before she puts the word anywhere near her mouth. Momo shifts anxiously in her seat, checking
her phone for updates from Jirou and the other half of their team.
Slowing to a stop at their expected landing site, the driver lets out a bark of alarm at Deku’s hasty exit. The van isn’t parked, but Deku’s already halfway down the street. Ochaco is surprised he didn’t actually rip the door off the van. Momo meets her eyes, concern overwhelming her expression. On the street, exiting the door (like normal, collected people), Momo asks the driver to wait for their return and draws a long staff from her thigh. She nods to Ochaco, but Ochaco is already chasing him down on the other end of the street.

She meets Tenya outside the safehouse. Head in his hands, Tenya sits on the steps outside the building. He doesn’t lift his head until she kneels down beside him. Deku must be hunting down Shouto from the inside, given she doesn’t catch any sign of him from the outside. She places a gentle hand on his knee, taking comfort in the sound of his low sigh.

“Tenya,” Ochaco pulls his hand away and grimaces at the bruise and the trail of blood leaking from the top of his head. “What happened?”

Tenya’s jaw tightens, trembles. “We were -- we were ambushed. She was waiting for us.” Ochaco squeezes his hand. “Shouto-kun is gone.”

Now, at least, she understands the expression on Deku’s face when he finished the call. “Er, like missing or like, gone…?”

“She took him with her,” Tenya answers. Ochaco sighs with relief. “Which means he’s alive.” The implication is wordless, but present: for now.

Momo pulls to a stop in front of the safehouse. “What’s our status?”

Ochaco answers for Tenya, “Ambush, looks like. Somebody must’ve leaked our location. Not sure if that was sabotage or just our shitty luck.” Momo huffs. “Shouto-kun’s missing. Sounds like our villain took him and booked it.”

“There’s more,” Momo slides her long staff into a smaller, more compact rod and drops it onto her belt. “The escort is still here, which means --”

“-- they escaped on foot.” Ochaco groans. “I’m gonna check on what’s going on inside. Tenya, we need to get your head looked at.”

Tenya protests immediately. “We need to split up and determine which --” He quiets at the fierce glare Ochaco gives him. He’s not going anywhere if he’s bleeding like that. Inside, she marches into a disaster scene: broken glass everywhere, a body-shaped indent in the wall (Tenya’s, she assumes), Deku kicking a broken table into the opposite wall out of frustration.

She doesn’t try to comfort him. He’s upset, as would anyone in his position be frustrated -- terrified, even. “We’re gonna find him,” Ochaco tells him. Deku clenches his fist, but he nods and allows her to pull him out by the wrist. “Come on. We’ve got work to do.”

Tenya’s head is wrapped in gauze, the clear workings of Momo patching up his injuries. The cuts around his face are covered with froggy-themed band-aids. Like Tsuyu, Ochaco thinks, and it makes her ache thinking of her girlfriend miles away and blissfully unaware of the terrible events occurring on the other side of the country. Watching from the corner of her eye, Deku drops a hand onto Tenya’s shoulder. Comforting Tenya, she knows, will take longer than they have to find Shouto.

Momo walks back to their escort van and asks the driver to pull up outside the abandoned safehouse. Deku helps Tenya into the back of the van, despite his insistence that he doesn’t need it.
“Says the guy who got thrown into a wall and has a concussion,” Ochaco chides gently. Tenya protests that he didn’t get thrown into any walls. “Let us take care of you.” For Deku, it’s a welcome distraction from his worry over Shouto. If he puts his energy into helping Tenya, he’s less likely to run off and do something very stupid and reckless on his own. (So she hopes.)

“Let’s move someplace else,” Momo begins, shifting in her seat to let Tenya squeeze into the back with the others. “With the amount of time we’ve lost ---” she winces at her phone. “-- I highly doubt we would find Shouto-kun or our suspect on foot. It’s too late. They’ve had too much time -- we’ll never find them. We need to be smarter, plan better.”

“And find somewhere else to set up,” Ochaco adds, patting Tenya’s ankle (his legs are crossed over hers in their effort to fit him in). They don’t have a lot of legroom with three people -- Tenya added into the mix makes it a gamble of getting an elbow in the stomach or shoved into the window. “I don’t like our chances of finding out there’s another location that’s compromised. We’ll find somewhere else to set up in the meantime.”

Momo’s eyes glint with rekindled fire. “I’ll take care of that.”

In the quiet moments remaining from their drive, she brushes her hands against Deku’s clasped ones and asks, “What can I do to help?”

For a moment, she wonders if he’s ignoring her. His glare into the side of the seat in front of him is so intense she wouldn’t be surprised if it burst into flame through sheer force of will. A few more hits on his shoulder knock him out of whatever daydream he’s trapped in. Deku blinks quickly, shaking his head. “Sorry, I missed that. Did you say something?”

Ochaco pats his cheek. “Nevermind.” She doesn’t know where his head is, but it’s definitely not where it needs to be.

As promised, Momo finds them a small empty office space at the edge of downtown. It’s abandoned, no sign of life inside or anywhere on the street outside. A large *FOR RENT* sign overhangs the entrance. “Perfect,” Momo declares.


“We should unpack and plan to leave as quickly as possible. I don’t wish to test our luck any further,” Tenya agrees. “Officer, do you mind waiting at the door? We don’t want to find ourselves in the middle of another surprise.” His expression reads: *I’ve had enough of those today.*

Unpacking the van is easy: a few computers, a grid map, and a box filled with drawing board supplies. Between her and Momo they unpack in a single trip. Returning to the car, she finds Deku mid-argument with Tenya. Their voices are lowered, pinging her curiosity at their (very poor) attempt at concealing the contents of their disagreement.

“-- if anything it’s the exact reason for us being in this situation again, so I strongly suggest you tell ---” Tenya’s voice rises half-pitch at her interruption. “-- ah, Ochaco-san. We’re almost done, we will meet you inside.” Deku huffs, mouth twisted in a grimace.

“*Sure,*” Ochaco says, in a tone that tells both of them she knows they’re hiding something. Tenya drops his head, guilty, but Deku drifts his attention elsewhere.

“No, it’s fine. We’ll finish talking later.” Face forward, Deku stomps into the building and leaves her and Tenya at the shallow entrance.

Ochaco pokes Tenya’s arm, half-way through the door. “What were you two talking about?”
Adjusting his glasses (one of the frames, she realizes, is cracked down the side), Tenya shakes off her question. “Nothing! It is not important.” He’s a bad liar. She narrows her eyes at him. Tenya merely coughs and marches forward like their conversation is over.

She is unsurprised to find Momo at the head of the table. Deku pulled out two of the other tables from the other room and arranged them in a wide-three set table in the middle of the room. Momo acquired a whiteboard (either by creating one or stealing it from another room) and is frantically writing a revised strike team mission.

“Her target hasn’t changed,” Momo declares. “As with the earlier note, although Shouto-kun is the expected target, we know who she’s really after. We should operate on the assumption that she will be using a similar strategy. We know she’s after something, but she seems more focused on Midoriya-kun than anything else.” Ochaco looks at her with a blank expression. One glance at Deku and Tenya confirms what she feared: she’s the only one in the room who has no idea what Momo’s talking about. Momo bites her lip, glancing at Deku with a ‘well, it’s your call’ shrug and returns to her board.

Ochaco doesn’t like feeling like the odd one out of their secret meeting. “Alright, does somebody feel like explaining what I’m obviously missing here?” Deku looks at the wall. Tenya takes an interest in organizing the whiteboard markers by size and color. Ochaco considers her options: all of them include screaming and saying a lot of insulting things about their stubborn pride. Instead, she takes a deep breath and goes back to the map grid.

Clearing his throat a few times, Deku slides up beside her. Ochaco ignores him. Deku taps her shoulder. “Ochaco…” She rearranges her features, trying her best to hide her scowl, but Deku slides his hand down to her elbow; a light pull. “I’ll explain everything. I promise.”

“Yeah, you’re good at making promises like that.” Ochaco says. “Let’s hear it, then.”

“Uh,” He begins. “So, last July I got this note in my office...” He’s lucky she doesn’t do anything worse besides curse him out when he’s finished explaining. Deku accepts her “Izuku, you’re really stupid sometimes, I can’t believe you” with a helpless hand gesture.

“So that’s really what you’ve been up to?” Oh, she could kick him. “That’s why you’ve been staying in Tokyo for all this time?” Her mind stumbles across a darker thought. “Is that what made you go there in the first place?”

“No,” Momo interrupts, before Deku has a chance to defend himself. “Originally, yes, I think that was part of the plan. But --” she frowns. “I think I’ll let him explain the rest.” Deku shuffles to the side, clearly not rushing to do so.

She can’t hold back this question, although she’s pretty sure she knows the answer: “And you never told Shouto-kun?” The guilt in the line of his shoulders is as clear as the shame in his face. “Izuku...” He’s going to have more problems than a hero-hating murderer if that is the case.

“I know, I know,” Deku locks his hands together and leans over the table. “I lied. I know. I told him I already caught -- I didn’t want him to worry. I figured, worst case scenario, she’d come after me again. Tenya and I already talked about this. I know I messed up.” If she didn’t hear the strain in his voice, she would know he was telling the truth from the devastation on his face. “Believe me, I know. I need to rely on you -- all of you -- more. You’re my friends. I should’ve trusted you enough to tell you.”

Ochaco doesn’t envy his place in the future conversation he is sure to have with Shouto. “I’m still mad at you -- but you can deal with everything else after. Shouto-kun is going to be -- well, as long
as we find him, I’m sure you’ll be back to making out in your smelly apartment when this is all over.”

“Smelly,” Deku repeats, offended, his mouth twitching like he wants to laugh but is fighting not to. Momo coughs, pretending to trace her characters a second time with a different color marker.

“I think what Ochaco is trying to say,” Tenya cuts in. “Is that we will support you, as we always have. Even though we don’t always agree with your choices --” Deku waves him off with a huffy “yeah, yeah, I get it” and sighs.

Momo picks up the map grid and circles a zone by the left sector outside of Tokyo. “Now that we’re all on the same page -- I think we should put together a different strategy. We can’t let her choose the battles. We have to catch her off guard, remove some of her control. Take the battle to her.”

“First,” Tenya clears his throat. “We would have to find her.”

“Ah, well, yes.” Momo frowns. “There’s a lot of things we have to do, but finding her and Shouto-kun take top priority. We can form an attack plan later.”

“Forming an attack plan...” Deku lowers his head. “...I don’t think we’ll get that far. It’s like -- Shinsou’s quirk is the best comparison, but a different method of activation. I don’t know how we can plan to attack if she’ll be using us against each other.” Deku chews on the inside of his cheek, considering. “The last note was a clue. It said the answers you seek are not yours to own.” Grimly, he pats the side of his supply belt as if checking to make sure it’s there. Ochaco doesn’t wonder for long: whatever else he has hiding, he’s keeping it close. “I think I know exactly what she wants from me.”

The three of them stare at him. He wilts under Tenya’s demanding, “And, what would that be?”

“Another different, very complicated, not at all related problem that I’ve got to deal with. We’re gonna need backup. The four of us won’t be enough to take her on.”

“And who is she, er, exactly?” Ochaco asks. She gets a box of files shoved in her face in response. Deku pulls out a file labelled [TOP SECRET] on the cover and opens it directly in front of her face. “Great, thanks. That really explains everything.” Ochaco tells him, not dampening her sarcasm.

“She’s an unknown and unclassified villain,” Momo explains. “We don’t know much about her, only that she’s crossed paths with a few top heroes. Her target, at least in theory, should be Deku. She hasn’t attacked a civilian -- on record, that is. Which makes kidnapping Shouto-kun rather...unexpected. She’s changed her ideology.”

“But he was a hero, maybe she still sees him as one?” Ochaco suggests.

Deku agrees, worry present again in the crease of his brow. “If this is all about getting revenge on high ranking heroes, it might not matter to her. She’s not a reasonable villain.” As most villains are, Ochaco reflects darkly. “The last time I -- I know she’s motivated over revenge. Whether it’s actual revenge, or she’s using me as a...a surrogate for revenge, I’m not sure.”

“In the meantime,” Tenya locks his fingers together and mirrors Deku, elbows braced on the table as he peers down at the street map. She follows his gaze to the center, circled in red and blue. Shouto’s apartment. The green line leads to the safehouse, marked in a giant red X. “We have to assume that Shouto-kun is alive, but --” His speech comes to a halt. Ochaco returns her attention to him, puzzled, but her confusion transforms into caution as she listens. A knock at the door. Another
knock; louder, firmer.

Ochaco doesn’t have to look around the room to know the others are in motion. Deku takes the door, and Tenya presses his back to the side next to the door. Momo and herself take to the other wall, tensed for battle. Momo meets her eyes, then Deku’s, and nods. Deku nods to Tenya and opens the door.

Ochaco can’t see their guest from behind the wood, but she sees Deku’s shoulders hunch. “Oh great. It’s you,” and the relief in his voice is only less believable from the expression of how displeased he is to see whoever is on the other side of the door. Deku steps back and snaps at their visitor, “You better have a good reason for showing up here.” Tenya doesn’t appear alarmed at the visitor, but he seems wary at Deku’s clear contempt. Perhaps not an enemy, or at least not the enemy they are searching for. Deku opens the door the rest of the way. “Well? Are you going to come in or not?”

“No,” the visitor replies. Ochaco startles at his voice -- the sound of it, she thinks, belongs to someone she’s met before. She can’t think of the name. Not that there’s any physical cues that key her into the name of who it sounds like. Even with the door out of the way, she can’t make out the figure besides a long dark coat and hat. “I’m afraid not.”

Deku’s fist clenches, but releases after a moment. “Fine. Have it your way.”

Tenya leaves the wall, taking slow steps to come to a stop beside Deku. “Ah, is this the backup you referred to?”

Snorting, Deku turns around and looks to Momo and Ochaco. “Not exactly.” Ochaco takes her stand on Deku’s other side, mimicking Tenya’s defensive stance. Deku’s voice isn’t friendly enough with their surprise guest for her to take her guard down. He doesn’t trust this man -- at least not completely -- and neither does she.

“I told you I would come when you needed me.” A shift in his coat as he pulls his hand from his pocket, revealing a dark glove. “I keep my promises. I swore to you I would not tell you another lie.”

“But,” Deku frowns. “You said you were done getting involved with --” he gestures to their half-completed map grid and the rest of their plans on the table. “-- all of this.”

“I answered that already for you.” The man pauses; appraising the three of them. “I have much to tell you, and I’m afraid I won’t have time for it all. This is the last time you and I will meet...for a very long time.” His head lifts a little; not far enough that Ochaco can make out any details of his face. “My first and last meeting with some of you. Uravity. Creati.” He turns to Deku’s right, attention locked onto Tenya. “Except you Ingenium. You and I will meet again.”

Tenya blinks. “How could you know something like that?”

Even with his face hidden, Ochaco senses he’s not amused, but he might be smiling. He doesn’t answer Tenya’s question. Without replying, he slowly withdraws his gloved hand and reaches into his coat. Ochaco watches him -- ready to act should it not be a sign of goodwill. He chuckles, a little, likely sensing the heightened tension in the room.

“I’d almost forgotten how anxious heroes can be,” he says, and there’s a fondness that Ochaco can’t place. His hand retrieves an envelope in one smooth motion, offering it with one hand extended. Ochaco realizes his shoulders are slouched a little, either a sign that he’s attempting to act as intimidating as possible -- or perhaps his posture is lazy. “I have another letter. No puzzles
this time -- I’m afraid you don’t have the time to solve it. You need the answers first.”

Deku scowls and reaches out to take the letter. The man pulls away. He gestures to Tenya, and offers it to him. “I’ve stretched my time with you as far as I can. The rules haven’t changed.”

“What does that even mean?” Deku grumbles, stepping back so Tenya can accept the letter. Tenya takes it, careful -- his expression circles between wariness, bemusement, and uncertainty.

“It is time for me to leave.” It’s not an announcement, but it’s said with a surety that Ochaco knows not to question. “Be careful with Komiya. She is unpredictable by nature, and I wouldn’t put too much faith in your planning. Whatever happens today...let’s say there are arrangements in motion. You won’t have to worry about her after this for a long time.”

Deku leans forward, mouth open like he’s ready to ask more questions, but the man turns away. “Goodbye, heroes.” He makes to leave through the door, the same way he came. Ochaco wonders how he slipped passed their personal guard, but she’s not surprised the officer stationed outside didn’t see him coming. He has an aura that radiates -- not exactly power, but an ease of presence. And she doesn’t know what his quirk is. Whether he used it to slip in, or if his quirk is what makes her feel like he doesn’t belong in the room. Unsettling, she decides; the shape of him, the sound of his voice.

Deku grabs the man’s shoulder before he’s completely out of the door. “Hey. I’ve got one more question for y--” his hand spasms when it makes contact with the man’s coat, and Deku cries out; more surprise than pain. All of the tension building in the room skyrocket. Ochaco hears Tenya’s engines whirring beside her, a sure sign this incident is on it’s way to a major scuffle.

Arm dropped to his side, Deku cradles his hand to his chest. “Fuck, what was that?”

“Did you attack him?” Momo startles her, having been so silent and unmoving on her other side.

“No,” the man says. “That wasn’t -- I’ve already overstayed the time I --” Deku makes another noise, and Ochaco’s body moves faster than her mind. Her hands wind around Deku’s shoulders, pulling him from a sure drop.

“What did you do to him?” Ochaco demands. A moment delayed (either from surprise or hesitation) Tenya moves in and supports Deku’s other shoulder. Momo takes the offensive, pulling a large staff from under her arm and standing in front of them. Deku’s weight increases -- Ochaco realizes he’s unconscious when his sweaty forehead rolls into the curve of her neck. Warm, too -- like he has a fever.

“I told you, I’ve stayed longer than I should. It’s because I --” A short grunt, and it’s the only sign that the man is also affected by whatever their contact activated. He bends in half, like the upper part of his body is too heavy to be supported by his legs. “I told him I had used up all of my time with him.” He looks up at Momo, pulling his hood low over his face. “He’ll only get worse if I stay. We both will.”

Momo taps her staff to the floor. “And what if he doesn’t?”

“I promise,” the man says, and he stumbles. “I -- I really have to leave. Read the letter. Don’t let him fight her on his own.” Tenya looks to her, and Ochaco looks to Momo. Momo stares him down. Ochaco wonders if she will refuse, but Momo reaches for him and offers him the staff.

Ochaco doesn’t know why she decides to trust his word. “Take this. It will help you walk.” The man takes it, hesitating for only a moment, and then turns out of the door. His steps are weak,
supported mostly by the crutch as he walks. His steps gain more confidence as he approaches the
turn, and vanishes beyond the wall. Ochaco sort of hopes he gets caught by the officer at the door.
But she knows if he was able to sneak in under the cover of stealth, he’s as likely to escape without
drawing attention.

She has other priorities to worry about. Ochaco helps Tenya lay Deku on the bench by the wall.
Tenya fishes out a handkerchief from his pocket, grimacing at the bloodstain down the side and
wipes the sweat away. In the short time from the strange man’s disappearance, the color is slowly
returning to his face. Momo hovers over them while Tenya stands and paces.

Deku wakes up, disoriented, and promptly vomits into the trash bin Ochaco offers him. “Are you
feeling better now?” Ochaco asks. Deku groans and covers his eyes with his arm.

“Fuck.” Deku answers, which doesn’t answer her question at all. Tenya stops pacing and sits on the
row of tables where their maps and plans are laid out. Deku bolts upright. “Oh -- oh! I saw -- I saw
his face. For a second.”

“And?” Ochaco asks.

“I --” Deku frowns. “I -- I can’t...I --” The frown drops, and he leans over to vomit in the bin again.
Ochaco rubs his back, the only comfort she can offer while he recovers. His face is much healthier
looking after he picks his head up and leans his back against the wall. “That sucked,” he says,
which is a stunning observation for someone three seconds away from dying less than a minute
before.“What the fuck was that?”

“Your guess is as good as mine.” Ochaco replies. “Although it seems our, er, friend wasn’t feeling
too good about it either.”

“Yes,” Momo chimes in. “The effects appeared mutual. At least he told the truth -- you recovered
after he left.”

Deku grunts. “Damn. That is one hell of a quirk.”

“He said it wasn’t his quirk.” Tenya corrects. “But he didn’t explain the cause either. Very -- ah,
cryptic.”

Deku mumbles an agreeing tone. He gestures to Ochaco, indicating his desire to leave the bench.
His legs tremble as he walks, but he wraps his arm around her shoulders to walk back to the table.
Tenya speaks first, as they all catch their breaths and refocus. “I take it that wasn’t your first
meeting with...whoever that was.”

“No.” Deku says. “We met -- twice. Before. The first time I told you about -- about that night I was
patrolling outside the Tokyo district.”

“Yes, I remember.” Tenya nods, recognition alight in his eyes.

“Shouto met him after the gala,” Izuku hesitates. “And then again during that week we weren’t
talking. I met him the second time when Shouto had to...pick something up. He told me about
Komiya and a few things I don’t think he was supposed to tell me.”

“Komiya,” Momo prods. “Our villain?” Deku nods. They have a name, now, and Ochaco sighs at
the realization that there is yet another detail he didn’t tell them in their briefing.

“And what about his face?” Ochaco presses. “You were saying something, before. You said you -
-” Deku presses a hand to his face and groans.
“I -- It’s hard to explain. It’s like everytime I try to pull the memory back, it makes my --shit.” He leans forward and presses his hands to his eyes. “It’s -- it hurts. I think there’s a reason he keeps his face covered.”

“Perhaps,” Momo says. “We can’t worry too much over it now.” She nods to Tenya. “Open it. He said we would find our answer in there.”

Tenya opens it, careful not to break too much of the seal. “What is this symbol?” The question isn’t directed to anyone in particular, but Deku tenses.

“That’s...a story I’ll tell you another time.” So many secrets, Ochaco’s heart aches. She doesn’t know how Deku handles the stress of keeping that much forbidden knowledge in the vault of his mind. It was hard enough for him to explain One For All, and the truth about himself and All Might. Such a burden. Such a lonely promise of a life. It was always like that with him; always trying to carry the weight of the world alone, never stopping to let another person help him bear it. While he doesn’t deserve to stand in the situation they’re in now -- he has to know it’s the consequences of his own poor decision making that dragged them all inside.

Tenya lays the letter on the table. It’s no more than a few lines. No address in the first line, only a smudge of ink.

I’m sorry --

You won’t learn this until much later, but this story begins and ends within that of a circle. I will never have enough time to explain that which I would like to tell you. For now, I can offer this: To Uravity-- as always, you will do what is right. To Creati-- heroes have the best instincts; trust yours will not fail you now. To Ingenium-- your next great journey has barely begun. To Deku-- don’t forget your promises; remember to ask for help, you are not alone.

The answer to your puzzle: She has returned home and she is not expecting company. You must draw her out with the promise of my gift to you.

Deku steps away from the table, muttering under his breath. “Shit. Shit! I should’ve known.”

“Known what --?” Deku pulls the grid map up, uploading a new map onto the surface. “Alright. What am I looking at?”

Deku points to the center of the map. “She never left,” he insists. “The first time she left this message -- about meeting in her house. She called it her home. She has to be there.”

“Then we know where she’s going.” Momo studies the map, rubbing the inside of her palm. “But we would be walking back into her trap.”

“Not if I distract her --” Tenya and Ochaco jump on him before he has the chance to finish that thought. “Absolutely not,” Tenya says, at the same time Ochaco cries, “Not gonna happen!”

Ochaco had (almost) forgotten how deep his self-sacrificing streak runs when left unchecked. Deku sucks air in through his teeth and starts, “It’s the best plan considering our --” Tenya is on him again, angry hand gestures and all. Ochaco only gets involved after Deku tries to duck out of his way and sputter out excuses as he makes for the door.

Momo watches the three of them argue, feigning renewed interest in her whiteboard. Ochaco senses she’s ready to walk away and leave them -- Momo’s quick sidestep to the exit would indicate she’s ready to leave. But -- she doesn’t. Momo cranes her head to the side and stops. Hand on the handle, her cheek pressed to the side. Deku and Tenya snap their mouths closed and Ochaco
calms her high emotions. She listens.

One motion with her hand and they all freeze. Waiting.

*Bang!* Even muffled through the wall, Ochaco recognizes the sound of a gunshot. The first shot is greeted by four return shots: *bang! bangbangbang!*

“More visitors,” Momo hums. “Not the friendly type, by the sounds of it.”

“Give me a *break,*” Deku rips his gloves off his utility belt and slides them on as the sound of gunfire draws closer. “I’ll take care of this.”

“No!” Ochaco grabs his arm and pulls him back into the room. “You said it yourself -- you need to rely on *us* more. You can’t just run in there without knowing who it is.”

Deku grimaces. A third round of gunshots echoes down the hall. She squints at him, prepared to rattle off another scolding, but he nods. “Come on, Tenya. Let’s go greet our guests.”

“You can help me move everything,” Momo wipes her messages from the whiteboard. “We should probably move locations, too.” She gestures to their plans on the table. “If we’ve already had two intruders, I’d rather not test the rule of threes.” Ochaco doesn’t resist; she knows protocol. If a location is compromised, they have to pack up and leave as soon as they can.

Tenya returns first. His expression is stiff as he speaks. “I recognized the officers outside. They were the same ones from Shouto-kun’s guard. She -- *Komiya* must have...done to them whatever she did to Shouto-kun.”

Momo asks, “Are they taken care of?”

“The officer at the door was taken by surprise, which is why they made it as far as they did.” Tenya’s eyes glint with determination. “I suggest we remove this case from any and all police involvement from this point forward. I believe it may be too dangerous considering who we are up against. It will only hinder us.”

Ochaco says, “The Board of Heroes isn’t going to like it, but they’ll have to deal with it.”

Momo’s nod is slower, but firm. “Our team will act as its own unit from this point forward. As for...” She frowns, leaving her thought unfinished.

Deku bursts through the door. “So I hear we’re going rogue?” With approval from the others, he lets out a relieved sigh. “Good, ’cus I already called the Chief and said we’re handling this on our own.” From his face, Ochaco knows that conversation did *not* go over well with the Chief of Police.

“If it looks clear outside, I say we make for the van. We’ll need to move locations as soon as we can.” Momo pushes the box of files into Tenya’s arms. He nearly drops it, recovering only through quick reflexes.

“Agreed.” Deku’s face tightens. “There’s uh, one other problem.” He takes in a deep breath. “There were *only* five officers that followed us here. The ones from Shouto’s guard, I mean.”

“And?” Ochaco prompts. Tenya’s shoulders tense, and it takes a moment for that information to sink in for her.

Momo’s face falls, her mouth twisted with worry. “If there were *twelve* officers assigned in that
escort, where are the others?” The question sits heavy, a physical weight in the air around the silent table. From her expression, Ochaco knows Momo arrived at the answer before the rest of them.

Tucking a stack of maps under his arm, Deku turns to them and says cheerfully: “Good news! I finally have a plan.”

“A good plan?” Ochaco asks, dubious of his high spirits.

“It’s the perfect plan.” Deku’s smile is confident, but Ochaco watches his hands tremble at his sides. “It will work.”

Tenya, as well, does not appear fooled by his confident mask. “How much of this plan am I going to hate?”

“About half of it. No, that’s too generous. Maybe twenty percent? Ten percent?” He wilts under Tenya’s stern glare. “Okay, you’re gonna hate all of it, but -- it will work.”

“I hate it when you say that.” Ochaco mutters. She dutifully rolls up the rest of their supplies and follows the others out the door. “Usually it means you’ve got something dangerous and stupid planned.”

Deku meets her eyes outside the door while Momo closes it behind them. He smiles; and it’s that hero smile he wears before plunging into an uncertain future. Ochaco smiles back, the sharp smile she wears under her helmet when she sees rough terrain ahead. Turning to Tenya in the van, Deku opens up the first part of his plan: “So. How do you all feel about arranging our class reunion a little earlier this year?”

Within an hour, Ochaco already feels the strings of regret pulling at her slowly-building headache. She knew most of her classmates moved all over, taking on positions in different areas of Japan, even abroad for international contracts, but -- she didn’t realize how fast they would drop everything. There is no one better, after all, to trust with a situation like this than her old classmates.

“Aren’t you supposed to be in Hong Kong?” Ochaco asks Ojirou, who shrugs helplessly.

“I was getting bored over there.” Ojirou admits. “I’m honestly surprised how many of us responded so quickly. Pretty amazing.”

Ochaco, too, sits back in amazement at the sight before her. Their location site is outside the border of Tokyo, edging into abandoned development area. Tucked away in an abandoned resident hall, the pro heroes of her youth -- her classmates -- lounge around on dusty counters, entering light sparring practice with their peers, even doing stretching exercises under the table as they wait for their upcoming briefing. The battle to follow after, she knows, will hopefully leave everyone in one piece and back home before dawn.

Ojirou is pulled away by Sero and Kaminari as they attempt to rope him into a daring contest of physical skill -- Ochaco rolls her eyes, boys never change -- and replaced by Mina. Mina doesn’t exchange small talk, she moves right to her point. “Have you seen Momo?” Mina asks. “We’ve been trying to find her for like an hour.”

“Yeah, except she’s not there. Have you seen her?” Ochaco shakes her head. Mina pouts. “I thought she was supposed to be leading this whole shit--uh, festival of shit?”
She spins around at Mina’s prompting to find her. No sign of Momo at the communication center. Not in the supply room either. She pops into the tent beside it, the room she last saw the tall heroine standing over the battle plans. “Er...I don’t know, actually. She was right here a minute ago.”

Mina throws her hands up in the air. “Whatever! I’ll track her down.” She stomps off, cursing as she leaves. Ochaco watches her back disappear into the maze of heroes, wondering where she left her helmet among the mess of supplies and costumes in the lounge. She doesn’t make it to the door before she’s gently tackled from the side, warm arms around her waist.

Spinning from the unexpected contact, she tenses and relaxes. “Tsuyu!” If she didn’t already recognize the sweet-water-and-salt smell from her girlfriend’s dark hair, she knows her girlfriend’s touch. No matter how many times she changes her shampoo, her hair never forgets the rivers and streams she’s visited. “I didn’t know you were coming.” Ochaco would rather kiss her girlfriend and sweep her off her feet, content to spend the rest of the day watching daytime television wrapped up under a warm blanket. (She so rarely has the time to do that -- it makes her sad to think about how much time they spend apart.)

“Of course I came,” Tsuyu replies, croaking happily. “We always stick together, don’t we?”

“I guess we do,” Ochaco replies, running her hands through Tsuyu’s bangs. Her girlfriend lets out a small appreciative *ribbit* at the touch. “I’m glad you’re here. Things have been...*really* crazy.”

Tsuyu nods, solemn. “It’s always like that when our class is involved.” Ochaco laughs, wrapping her arm over her shoulder and steering her to the supply room. She finds Shiozaki passing out earpieces and reflective sunglasses, tossing them into people’s hands with help from her vines.

“Meeting in the battle room in two minutes!” Tenya calls out. “Everyone make sure to grab an earpiece and glasses, we’ll discuss the rest inside!”

Shiozaki passes her a bright pink earpiece and a silver mirrored sheet for her visor. “Thanks, Shiozaki-san,” Ochaco greets her. “I’m glad you’re helping out here. I didn’t know if you saw our message or not.”

“I only came because Tsuyu-chan said I should come,” Shiozaki says honestly. “As I know our class doesn’t have the best track record with...*anything* of this scale.” Ochaco hears the implied *don’t make me regret it*.

Ochaco tunes out most of the meeting. She already listened to their briefing before *this* briefing. Their fellow heroes are given the bare minimum -- only that they will be up against a mind-control comparison quirk and that everyone would need to remain alert at all times. Tenya and Izuku argued for 15 minutes over whether to share more information. Izuku won in the end only through persuading Tenya it wasn’t necessary for their plan to work.

The glasses were a last minute suggestion from Momo with instructions to wear them on the field. “We don’t know if the glasses will be an aid or not,” Tenya warns. “Momo-san thought they may redirect the power she has -- whether it is through her eye contact, or if a reflection will negate the power of her quirk.”

The place where Momo laid out her supplies is empty of the owner at the table. She asks Deku, but he shrugs. “I don’t know, she didn’t say anything to me.” Ochaco doesn’t like the feeling in her stomach -- she knows something *isn’t* right. She hopes, wherever Momo is, she’s not in over her head. Unlike some of the other people in the room, she *doesn’t* toss herself at the most dangerous looking thing in the room and hope for the best. Momo is more patient, more calculating. She is
Tenya lays out their ground plan, providing their team a sense of the terrain and layout before they charge in. Their entries are timed as randomly as possible, not allowing a break or a chance for their suspect to plan a counter attack. “Maximum chaos, got it,” Sero deadpans behind her. “I think we’ve got that covered.”

Tenya nods. “Yes, that is essentially our goal. We have to test the limits of her abilities -- which is why we shall move up in waves. Groups go in together and stay together. Remember to avoid direct eye contact. We also know she is capable of taking control even without it, but we’re not sure -- not entirely...sure how.”

“Wonderful,” Shiozaki mutters. “I can’t wait to get started.”

Tenya adjusts his frames. He has a solid strip of tape over the broken frame -- probably Sero’s attempt at helping -- that sticks to the side of his face no matter how often he moves it. “We must also consider the possibility she will use Shouto-kun as a defense system. He has a powerful quirk. We mustn’t forget that, though he is technically retired. But he is not able to control his own actions for the time being.”

“Our strategy is meant to be simple to make room for the most amount of improvisation. We can’t really plan for anything because we don’t know what will happen.” Deku concludes. “If everyone runs interference while we secure our target -- that’s Shouto. Thank you all again for coming. Tenya-kun and I will be taking questions until it’s go-time.”

She hopes Deku isn’t lying again. She can never quite tell with his plans -- there’s always something she doesn’t know -- until it’s already set in motion and it’s too late to hit the brakes. (Which is what makes his plans so exciting, and brilliant, and terrifying.)

“Isn’t it weird that we don’t even know her name?” Ochaco startles, not realizing Satou had taken the seat behind her. She had grown used to Kouda’s quiet presence beside her, having zoned out of most of her classmates idle chatter. Mina snorts, her cheery mood dampened by Momo’s inexplicable absence.

“Security clearance,” Ochaco replies. “None of us are high enough in the ranks to have access to the file, or something.”

“That sounds about right.” Satou doesn’t sound like it bothers him as much as it bothers Ochaco. “Guess it doesn’t really matter.”

Mina climbs over her chair and whispers (loudly), “If it’s seriously such a big security risk, aren’t we breaking pretty much every rule in the book? What are the chances we get suspended from the next rankings because we’re all here illegally?”

“Er,” Ochaco thinks back to Deku’s expression after he got off the phone with the Chief. “I’d say very likely.”

“Nah,” Sero whispers (as loudly as Mina). “Board’s run by morons, they’ll never know we were here.”

“If none of us die here I’m gonna make Midoriya buy us all a round at the bar,” Kaminari adds to the conspiracy, his whisper as loud as everyone else in the group. “And if we do die, he’s paying for my funeral. I want it to be, like, epic. Fireworks. Free festival food. An hour long symphony played in my honor to express the greatest loss in the history of --” Sero shoves his hand over
“Dude,” Sero says, wounded. “What do you need a symphony for? I’ll sing at your funeral. It’ll be the saddest day of my life. But I gotta let everyone know how much I’d miss you, bro!”

“For real?” Kaminari gasps. “Bro, that’s so nice of you. I really love you, bro.”

“I love you even more, bro.” Sero swoons, dropping into Kaminari’s lap. “My dude. My pal for life.”

“I’ll never understand them,” Shiozaki comments mildly, staring at the chair ahead of her with a vacant expression. “Every year, I think they’ve strayed as far from normal people as possible. And then next year I prove myself wrong because they only act weirder.”

Mina pretends to wipe a tear from her eye. “I think it’s cute. So romantic, you know?” She gestures to the two of them, beaming, her smile twisting into a grimace. “Agh, they’re making out again. They were doing that the whole time we drove here. And I was in the passenger seat!”

“I’ve missed our class,” Ochaco says, rubbing her temples to soothe her headache. “But I remember why we all agreed not to do communal living past our third year. Like, right now, I remember exactly why we made that agreement.”

Mina throws her arm over Ochaco’s shoulder and squeezes her in a hug. Which is fine, Ochaco loves hugs -- except Mina is choking her. “Hah, yeah! I miss you guys so much, all the time.” Ochaco makes a weak noise of agreement through her chokehold. “We need to get together more. I feel like I only see some of you, like, once every two years!” Mina throws her hands up, gesturing angrily to the front of the room. Ochaco is relieved to regain control over her breathing.

“You can say it’s Midoriya-chan, he won’t be offended. He knows.” Tsuyu says. Ochaco coughs through her laughter.

“Yeah, Midoriya, what’s up with him?” Kaminari chimes in from the floor. Ochaco doesn’t know how she missed the two of them falling on the floor given how dramatic and loud they are. “The guy ghosts us all for like four years and suddenly he’s showing up all over the place. ‘Cus he finally realized Todoroki was head over heels for him in high school? Like, what --”

Deku appears at her side as if summoned. “Did somebody say my name?”

A chorus of “nothing” and “don’t worry about it” echoes through the small group. Deku blinks, confused, waiting for an explanation. Sero whistles and stretches, pushing Kaminari off of his legs. Ochaco stands, abandoning the ensuing (dramatic) pretend fight that breaks out in the aftermath.

Deku pulls her to the side after Ochaco straps on her extra gear. Helmet tucked against her side, he offers her a shaky smile and leads her into one of the adjacent buildings. They don’t need to duck to enter -- given they’re almost the same height -- but Ochaco frowns at the cobwebs and dust covering the door. He is quiet. Ochaco sits her helmet on the dust covered table, taking his hand and wrapping her fingers over his scarred ones. His hand trembles, tense and stiff between her own. She doesn’t ask what’s wrong, she doesn’t offer him empty platitudes. She knows. He will tell her when he is ready to speak. She waits.

She doesn’t have to wait long. “I’m changing a few things...from the order we planned. The second wave is our cover. I didn’t want to reveal too much, I know it will only make things more complicated.” Deku says. He takes a deep breath. “We strike while the focus is on everyone else.” Dropping his gaze, he fiddles with his gloves. “You and I will team up there. I’ll lead, you stick
behind me and don’t go in until I say so. Can I count on you?”

“You know that already,” Ochaco tells him. “What next?”

“I’ll take the front. Until you think you’ve got a decent shot, signal me -- doesn’t matter how, I’ll
know. Then you grab Shouto and you run.”

“And then what?” His returning look sets her heart sinking deep into her stomach. “Oh...Oh, Izuku,
no.”

“If we fail --” Deku stops, hesitating at Ochaco’s frantic gesturing. “-- if we fail, I will surrender
myself. And you will tell everyone to fall back, you will get Shouto out of there, and let me handle
it.”

“Izuku,” Ochaco whispers. “You can’t.” Deku smiles and envelopes her in a too-tight hug, the type
of hug that leaves her breathless and saddened to witness it end. “I hate you when you -- I hate that
you’re doing this again. You always do this when you think there’s nothing to lose. I could punch
you right now.”

“You won’t,” Deku replies. She hates the ease in his tone. “I know you won’t. And I have so much
to lose, Ochaco. That’s why I have to do this. You can’t tell anyone, okay? Just between us.”

“I hate you,” Ochaco repeats. If she doesn’t cry first, she will punch him.

“I know,” he says. She hates him even more for saying it like that. “You have to promise me you
get him out safe, okay? And if...if I --”

Ochaco interrupts his last wish with a shove. “Stop. Stop talking.” Deku backs up, arms laid out in
a surrendering gesture. Ochaco covers her face with her hands. “I won’t let you.” Her hands drop
back to her sides, hands clenched in a fist. “Do you understand me? I won’t let you.”

“I understand,” he says. “But this is my mistake. I’ve got to make this right.”

Ochaco doubts her volume level will maintain the steadiness from before, but she pushes through.
“We all make mistakes!” She doesn’t know why she bothers; it’s not like a few words will change
his stubborn head. A good kick in the ass might, but it’s more likely to send the wrong message.
“You’re so -- so --!” She turns around and walks away before she finishes her sentence, snatching
her helmet off the table with an angry huff. If Deku feels like being an idiot, she’s not about to let
him go out and win the death by idiocy contest.

(Not alone, at least.)

“Tenya,” Ochaco interrupts him in the middle of an order exchange between two of his sidekicks.
“I need to talk to you.” She doesn’t have to add the “alone” at the end of her sentence. Her
expression conveys it all -- worry, fury, determination. Without question, without words at all,
Tenya follows her into the next room.

Tenya is unsurprised, barely blinking through her frantic explanation. He is more prepared than
she thought. “I reflected on what I have learned in my time knowing Izuku-kun,” Tenya says, half-
defeated, half-impressed. “The last time on this mission, he did something similar. And I have
realized that it is best to plan in a worst case scenario. As, so often, he does resort to extremely bad
decision making.” His determination shifts; uncomfortable, a little guilty. “That being said, I’ve
already called for some...backup of my own. Although, getting them to agree was definitely not the
easiest thing I’ve done today.”
Ochaco blinks. Frowning, tries to remember who hasn’t already replied to their urgent emergency

Hey, One Of Our Class Members Is Kidnapped And We’re Really Fucked mass text message.

“How did you call?”

Tenya sighs, fitting his helmet over his head. “I can only hope they don’t escalate our situation,” he replies, deliberately avoiding her question. She reads his hesitation, quick dismissal, and she knows exactly which classmate is on his way to add fuel to the bonfire.

“I guess we’re making the most out our class reunion. C’mon Tenya,” Ochaco turns and smiles, sharp and unwavering. “Let’s get the party started.” She takes his hand and follows him back; relieved to find familiarity among the faces of people she knows will have her back no matter what happens next.

4.8% RISE IN QUARTER CRIMINAL INCIDENT REPORTS, STUDY FINDS

May 20, 20X1

TOKYO -- A bi-annual study through the Department of Annual Criminal Investigation reports last quarter introduced a spike in crime across the country.

Tensions between the changing status of heroes, more active quirk activity in densely populated areas, and a shift in ranking dynamics have officials wondering what the new year will bring.

Currently unconfirmed by officials, some theories surfaced online regarding a drop in incident reports the next quarter. A likewise report following Pro Hero Deku’s new placement at the top of the rankings experienced a significant drop in violent incidents, but an increase in petty criminal activity. These statistics are yet unofficial while the release of the next quarter is expected in the next month.

Last year’s study from the same quarter [see Figure 1A below] reveals this rise is unprecedented for the...

...Continued on Page 3.

His steps slow to a stop outside a small apartment. The last eight blocks, like this one, are completely devoid of life. No doubt the apartment is abandoned as well. She leaves him on the first floor, choosing to pace on the upper landing. Home, Shouto thinks, and wonders where the thought comes from. He’s never seen this room before; never crossed this building or the outlying area. This area of the city is a stranger to him. As is this woman, despite her familiarity with him. Her familiarity with Izuku, too, leaves him spinning as he tries to connect all the threads of information he has to no avail.

He doesn’t know her name, but she speaks to him like she’s known him for years. For a lifetime. How could --? Stop thinking so much, the small voice tells him. Don’t worry. His shoulders relax. He doesn’t have anything to worry about. From the stairs he hears her rise, jumping from one step
at a time. The sense that she wants to speak to him, even though he isn’t entirely sure how he knows.

Sitting up with attention, she motions for him to walk to her. She inspects his face, eyes narrowed. The glow is dimmer, but her determination is not. “I wish you hadn’t met me this way,” her voice borders sympathy, disgust, and another emotion Shouto doesn’t know how to put into words. Bitterness? Sympathy? She pauses, considers her words. “You’re not who I’m here for.”

If not him, then who else would she be looking for? The catch in his tongue loosens. He doesn’t know if she deliberately lowered her guard or, like his earlier hope, her quirk did have a limit over how much control she had at a time. “Then why am I here?” As soon as the words leave, his ability to speak is extinguished.

Even under the lowlight he makes out the flash of her muscle tension. She made a mistake, then -- his speech was not part of her plan. Hope flares in his chest. She can be distracted. She is not in complete control. She makes mistakes. Her fists clench at her sides. He can feel her rage simmering under the lid of her smooth smile. “Believe me -- or don’t -- but you and I are victims of the same crime. I pity you.”

He should focus on her words, he decides. It’s the most information he will get out of her.

Her smile flips, teeth bared, snarling. “It doesn’t have to be that way. You and I will never again see the terrible future I have lived.” There is no glee, no joy in her eyes. No sense of the same cruelty. “I will kill him. I will end this here.”

Him, Shouto thinks. The hope from before dims. He sees the shape of her plan now, though vague and unclear, but he knows: Izuku.

Shouto doesn’t say anything. Not that he could. His eyes burn in the dry air. Sinking into the crumbling sense of control he felt slipping away, he understands: he is missing far more information about her and his situation than he originally thought. He doesn’t know anything about her.

He doesn’t even know her name.

“You believe in justice, don’t you?” Shouto clutches onto the last thread of his control and feels it slip away; smoke in the air. “I do. I believe that we all must pay for our mistakes.”

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[Photo 1a: Pro Hero Dynamite, blasting off in the air alongside Alien Queen (ground) and Cellophane (mid-air, expression filled with fear). An ambulance is flipped over on the ground behind them. The destruction in the scene is immense, but the heroes are keeping their footing and racing for the villain ahead.

Photo 1b: A collection of heroes on scene at night, Creati at the front. She’s directing traffic and handing out flashlights in front of a dock area. Tsukuyomi, the Jet-Black Hero, is hovering above her from a perch of a security van. Dark Shadow is stretched out, soaking in the light from the moon above their heads.

Photo 2a: Pro Hero Entropy and Earphone Jack, gathering civilians and first responders out of a first story building. Half of Entropy’s body is covered in frost, Earphone Jack is supporting him]
from the other side with her arm wrapped around his waist. They are both wearing grim expressions of determination.

Photo 2b: A green blur among the crowd, Hero Deku stands before a towering figure (mostly in shadow). His back is to the viewer, posture indicating he’s ready for a fight.

20XX YEAR IN REVIEW: HEROES

r-ridgeujump:
20XX was one exciting year! Stay tuned for next year’s stats, big events, and other shocking news. Or, maybe if you were in a coma for the last 12 months, here’s a fresh reminder & a swift recap for you!

Our review for 20X1 will be released January 20X2!

>WHAT MADE OUR YEAR<
-Laser Eye (#8) named “Rookie Hero of The Year” (Apr 20XX)
-Top Heroes speak out against quirk & quirkless discrimination (May 20XX)
-Vivid Lady (#19) heads environmental activism campaign for increased sustainability practices (June 20XX)
-Entropy (#4) retires (Dec 20XX)

[READ MORE]

Posted 8 hours ago via lesbianiconcreati source r-ridgeujump
4,003 notes

Tags: #hero news, #current events, #year in review, #tbh forgot most of this stuff happened, #i feel like 20XX went on forever and this year is going way too fast

Mother doesn’t get visitors very often. The knock on the door surprises both of them. This must be an unexpected visitor, outside of their family. Fuyumi moves to answer the door before her mother has the chance to rise from the couch. She catches a hint of green from the frosted glass, throwing her confusion into the front and center of her mind.

“Deku-kun--?” A quick wave in greeting is all she gets before he steps inside and throws his shoes on the mat by their door. Her confusion mounts, exploding in the forefront of her mind into full-blown anxiety. He’s wearing his hero costume, gloves tucked into the side of his belt, hair blown in every direction from the speed of his journey.

His expression, which worries her the most, is devoid of any smile. She’s never met him, not once, without seeing that reassuring smile on his face. Without it, his face looks older, narrowed.

“Sorry, have to talk to your mom really quick!” He doesn’t wait for Fuyumi to respond and pops his head into the next room, searching for her mother. “I’ll be out of here in a second!”

Blinking, Fuyumi closes the door and slips into the room after him. She knows how to walk quietly; how to become invisible. Deku doesn’t notice her entrance, but mother does. Mother always notices.
Deku stands, anxious energy running through him. His fingers twitching at his sides, ready to bolt out the door the same way he entered. Mother greets him, invites him to sit with her.

“-- really say more. I’m kind of in a rush,” She can tell from his back, even without looking at his face, that he came here for a reason. “Can I --” He shakes his head. “I -- I just wanted to say that -- that I really love your son. I love him a lot. I hope you know that.”

“I know,” Mother says quietly. “I know you do.”

Right glove, then left; he removes them and lowers himself to the ground. Almost on his knees. “I - - I’m sorry, I can’t explain yet. But after, maybe -- maybe Shouto will tell you. I’m sorry.”

Fuyumi slides in beside her mother, one arm on her shoulder. Mother takes his hand and says, “There’s nothing to be sorry for.” Her smile is understanding, sharp. She must know, or she must recognize something in his expression that Fuyumi does not. “But listen to me. I don’t know what is going on, but I know whatever it is you are planning -- it will not help my son.”

“Is Shouto alright?” Fuyumi asks. Deku startles, blinking at her.

“I don’t know,” he says, honest and genuine as the same boy that she knew when he was still Shouto’s classmate. “But I’m going to bring him back home. And he’s going to be alright. He will be.”

“I trust you mean that,” Mother says. “But you must keep your promise to me, young hero.” Deku lowers his head and nods. Fuyumi doesn’t know what her mother made him promise, but it must be from another conversation. It’s between them, she decides. Not for her to know.

Deku stands, bowing to each of them. “I have to go. One other stop I have to make before I -- before everything. I will see you soon, Yukiko-san.”

He leaves nothing except for an unsettling, invisible weight over the roof of mother’s apartment. “He will keep his promise,” Mother assures her, although Fuyumi aches at the sad, weary expression on her face. “I am sure of it.”

Fuyumi says nothing. Mother goes back to her garden, although she does not touch her plants. She sits out for hours, one hand resting on the iron gate and stares into the deep sunset. Waiting, as she always had, for her children to return home.

[Video: THE “AGE OF HOPE” & UNIQUE ORGANIZED CRIME/RISE OF HERO TEAMS VS. VILLAIN TEAMS - HWWU for April 15th, 20X1 (#526). Thumbnail image: A still from the Hero Ranking Billboard results marking Deku as the #1 hero. The line of heroes behind him are emphasized by rays of colors, with Deku at the front in green and gold. He has his fist raised over his head, smiling, energized.]

Posted 1 month ago by HeroWatch ✔ | Subscribe
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Comments 174

DRAGOnite - 6 hours ago
Promo code for the 15% off is “Chargebolt” for those of you who had a hard time pausing the video at the right time
View 110 replies

A planet? Jupiter? - 1 month ago
Tbh i never knew why there were so many hero teams i always assumed people worked for their own agency. I also had no idea deku was working for creati??? Even though he’s the #1 hero???
View 6 replies

> Team Rocket! Blasting Off Again! - thats why they had to introduce agency rankings because defining a single hero in the top 10 is getting more challenging due to villains pairing up more and more

Recommended videos:

Rising Stars Gala'XX/“SPOTLIGHT” TRAILER [1080p] - 9Briirm
108k views

#CREATIJACK CONFIRMED BABES *CHAMPAGNE EMOJI* - RainbowReji
256k views

6 minutes of Alienqueen & earphonejack making fun of other heroes (compilation #2) - SevenDaysMoon
80k views

[[DARK SHADOW]] / {TSUKUYOMI} QUIRK ANALYSIS - TheVdAnalysis
31k views

!CosplayTutorial! - DRAGON HERO: RYUKYU - CosplayInHeroes
59k views

At the window, he makes out the vague shape of bright human-figures approaching from the left side of the abandoned lot. She paces, anxious energy running through her as she taps the side of her arm. “He figured it out sooner than I thought,” she frowns. “I should’ve expected that. Always bringing his annoying friends.” Friends, he thinks slowly. Friends are good.

Continuing, under her breath, she mutters: “The first time...the first note, he thought it was all about him. He was too distracted. I should’ve killed him then. But I need it back. As long as he has my journal, I can make this work in my favor. I can still win.” Journal. Shouto frowns. What journal?

A memory creeps, slow, pushing back against the fog: A note with the promise of blood. Something that must be returned. While lacking most of his other senses, he knows it can’t be a coincidence. But if the journal is hers, then why did the man with the coat have it?
“You know,” she turns to him, eyes blazing with the same fury from her arrival. “This is all his fault. If he hadn’t lied to you, maybe things would’ve turned out different. Did he ever tell you that I was the one who left that first note?”

He shakes his head, the first movement he has regained control over. She doesn’t seem to care, or she’s too anxious at the sight of the slowly approaching figures from the window. “Of course he lied. Always lying. I never lie. I’ve only ever told the truth. I was always honest. But he still lied to me.”

Her breath shimmers in the air on her exhale. Not from steam. Not from heat. “He’s made his decision. Win or lose -- it doesn’t matter. If I fail, we all lose.” Her conviction is absolute. “If I succeed, I still lose. Someday,” she swears, “You will wish I hadn’t failed...”

The anxious, fragile energy dissipates like her breath into the air. “...And I must not fail.” From the window, he watches the shadows grow longer, stopping a few meters from their building. A truce; the only agreement being time. Hesitation over who would step forward. Who would fire the first cannon.

Shouto comes back to himself, feels his hands flex under his arm. He remembers: he is not safe. Reviewing the information he has, he comes forward with two plans. Best case scenario: he stalls her long enough for someone else to make a move. Worst case scenario: he knows how this story will end. It won’t be a happy one (not that he ever expected he would have one).

*I don’t want to die here,* he thinks.

“There’s a lot of people here,” Shouto says, not that he can see any of them. He hears their shouts, the vague shapes and colors of costumes he recognizes without putting in any effort to draw it from memory. “You could get hurt.”

Eyes glowing, vicious fury, she snarls; “No. I know what you’re trying to do. They’re expecting you to do the fighting for me, aren’t they? Use you as my weapon.” Resolve straightens her spine, the grey pallor of her skin strengthens. “I won’t. You were never a weapon for me to use.”

She opens the door and walks outside, leaving Shouto behind. He hears the first battle cry. Not that he could move, pressed against the wall and waiting for her control to leave his limbs.

“Shit! Stop fighting me, dude, we’re supposed to be fighting her!”
“Watch out --!”
“-- regroup, c’mon, pull him out of there --”

“Come out, Deku!” Her screech overpowers every other sound, over the shouts of his old classmates, over the sound of his own mind. “Stop hiding behind your friends! Or are you a coward now?”

Shouto’s feet lift, moving him to the door. He doesn’t know if it’s his own decision or from her control, but he moves all the same. Outside, the scene is chaos. A neon pink blur flies over his head -- Ashido -- pink hair flying in every direction. She’s wrapped in Sero’s tape, hanging from the overhang of one of the nearby buildings and cursing at the top of her lungs. Ojirou, too, hopping between Satou and Kaminari. Too focused on defending attacks from their allies to do anything about him.

Nobody seems to notice he’s there, or too distracted to see him standing there. He is as unimportant as the faded yellow orange walls, unnoticed. He’s not alone. He’s surrounded by people who could help, but standing by himself and --
Wumph!

-- on the ground, spitting dirt out of his mouth. Ochaco flips him over and activates her quirk, levitating the two of them over the fighting heroes. She guides him through the narrow stretch between the taller buildings and towards the next opening. “I’ve got you, Shouto-kun!” She spins him around mid-air, grinning through her visor. The top half is covered by a mirrored metal sheet. Hand squeezed in his own, she holds onto him like he’s the only thing keeping them afloat (which, he thinks, is only partially true).

They don’t make it to the other side. Sero’s tape grabs hold of Shouto’s lower calf, propelling him into the ground. He rolls into the hit, landing on his back. He stands. Ochaco is already on the ground a few feet ahead. Crouching low, ready to carry him in another upward tackle. She doesn’t get the chance -- the burning of her eyes flashes across his mind and he sprays a wall of ice, forcing her to dance back.

“Tsuyu, grab him!” Another solid body grabs him from behind, pulling him upwards and outwards of the middle of their battlefield. She doesn’t have him for long -- reacting to Satou’s large bulk bulldozing down the center of her escape path, dropping Shouto in the middle of a stand-off between Kaminari and Tokoyami on the other side. Dark Shadow is quicker, picking Shouto up off the ground and into Shiozaki’s awaiting vines.

She wraps his arms and legs in vines, shrugging. “I was told you might try to attack me. Please don’t do that.”

Shouto doesn’t attempt to remove them. “I won’t.” His legs and arms are already stiff from the hours he spent walking and following orders from another.

Blinking, Shiozaki vanishes from view. He doesn’t know how she lost track of him, but he turns and he’s back at the empty house. The woman is with him. He doesn’t see the other heroes, he doesn’t know how or why he’s missed such a significant gap of time.

“Last chance! Come out now and maybe I won’t kill him too.” Despite the delight in her voice, the grey, sunken quality of her cheeks is sharper. Noting the sweat on her forehead, dripping down her nose and eyes, he wonders if she’s overexerted herself. She raises her hand, dangling thin thread in the light. Red and white. “If you think I’m bluffing --”

Light. The faces of his friends, the woman, the sky all fade into indistinct white.

On the ground, Shouto heaves and clutches his head. He doesn’t remember falling to his knees. He can’t hear anything except for the roar of a wave against the side of his skull. His hands over his eyes, pushing back against the spike of pain rearing where he can’t reach. No words come out of his mouth; breathless gasps as his adrenaline fades.

Distant, another voice breaks through the ringing in his ears. “Stop! I’m here.” Closer, his footsteps light and quick across the soil. Izuku’s voice. “Everyone -- stay back. I’ve got this.”

Shouto stays on his knees, unable to find the strength for his legs. He feels her intent, stand up, but his body won’t move. She asks, as Izuku marches closer, “Finally come to return what you’ve stolen from me? To make right all you have wronged?”

“I never took anything from you,” Izuku looks far too relaxed for someone facing off a villain. It must be part of his plan, to throw her off. Surely, Shouto reasons, he has a plan. “Like I’ve told you before -- whatever you think I’ve wronged you for, I haven’t done. But I’m here to trade.”
Her reply is lost in a snarl. The light returns to cover his vision. Shouto presses his hand against his eye, grinding his teeth. Reminds himself: *I've lived through worse pain. I will live through this, too.* Shouto’s hearing takes another minute to return. He can hear the two of them speaking with no ability to decipher the words, deaf and blind to everything around him. “-- then we don’t have a deal,” Though Izuku’s voice is weak, it’s even. Controlled. “Let him go or you don’t get anything from me, Komiya.”

“I could always make you give it to me,” she says. Her name, at least, Shouto is aware enough to catch. An innocent enough sounding name belonging to a dangerous villain.

“If you had the strength, I’d already be dead and you’d have what you want. You have limits, like all of us.” Shouto blinks down at the soil, waiting for his vision clear. He can barely make out his hands against the dirt; shapeless colors all blurring into a muddy background.

“Nothing has changed. I can still kill you.” The tip of Izuku’s red boot blinks in and out of his field. Komiya’s voice fades in and out; too loud, too quiet. “I’ll kill him first, but you’re next.”

Shouto’s vision fades into normal as Izuku reaches into his supply pack. “Hold on. If I give this to you, then you leave him out of it. You --” Izuku pats down the side of his bag. “-- uh. Wait a minute. Who took my --?”

The wind blows soil into his sore eyes. He looks up, the woman kneeling on the ground, Izuku’s bewildered expression. From the other end of the empty street, Tenya’s voice booms: “*Catch me if you can, villain!*”

The chaos that follows, Shouto will try his best to describe into words later, is breathtaking. Faster than Izuku can react. Faster than the villain, who hurls curses at him. Tenya passes it off to the next runner among their team, leading the villain down the other end of the street. Their impromptu team of classmates cheers him on, passing the book between them and running as they weave in and out of her way.

Izuku doesn’t try to chase him. He watches Tenya whirl past him and says, impressed and annoyed in the same breath, “*That son of a bitch. Go, Tenya, run!*” With her distracted, Izuku drops to the ground beside him, a warm arm resting at his hip. Checking him over for injuries, the other hand strokes his jaw to address him, “Can you stand?”

His head aches, but the rest of his body is more or less in decent shape. “If you help.”

Izuku grins, helping him to his feet -- stops, sways. *Burning,* light, too bright. Izuku holds him as he rocks forward, all of his weight into Izuku’s shoulder. “What’s wrong?” Izuku searches his face. Shouto closes his eyes and presses his palm into his eye socket, pushing the feeling away. He feels her return, the presence in the back of his mind: *I haven’t forgotten you. Don’t move.*

Tenya’s shout from the field snaps his head up. She caught up to him, picking him up with a strength that doesn’t match her physical size, and throws him into the awning of the building over.

Refocused, she turns and makes her way back to the middle of the street. Izuku watches him with concern as he opens his mouth to warn him. He doesn’t get the chance. The light returns, pressing deeper into the back of his eyes. Grunting, he drops back to his knees and pulls Izuku with him. Izuku takes his hands and pushes his them away from his eyes, murmuring, “Shouto, hang in there. It isn’t real.”

He can’t speak, mind the quiet hissing between his lips. Focuses on the feeling of Izuku’s hands in his own, forces himself to overcome the sensation of his eyes melting inside his skull. He wasn’t
too young to forget the feeling the first time. He certainly wasn’t looking to relive the experience.

“No!” Komiya screams. Izuku drops his hands, shifting beside him and standing. Shouto’s vision clears again, blurry shapes sliding into focus like someone flipping through an old cinema reel. Withdrawing the thin threads and wrapping them between her fingers, she abandons Tenya’s chase and charges them instead.

He feels it before he sees it: light. Again, bright and encompassing the world around him. Shouto closes his eyes to prepare himself. Waits a few seconds, opens them again. His head doesn’t ache. Blinking, he takes Izuku’s offered hand. Follows his gaze to the building he walked from, squinting at the bright halo on the roof.

“Franchement, it is very rude to have a party without waiting for the most important guest to arrive!” Shouto squints deeper, unable to make out the shape behind the glowing beam. Not that he needs to see the person behind it. He knows only one person with an annoying fake French accent. Izuku squeezes his hand, fierce grin back in place. The burst of light only lasts a few more seconds, long enough to daze Komiya from her chase. Growling, she pushes forward, blinking quickly to remove the effect of Aoyama’s quirk.

It takes him a few attempts, but Shouto remembers how to form words again. “I hope you have a plan.”

“Still working on that part.” One hand shielding his eyes from the dust, Izuku’s smile is diminished into a grimace. “I’m up for suggestions?”

The blank look Shouto gives him prompts Izuku into rambling out a plan of his own. “Uh. So. Fighting her alone doesn’t work. Been there, done that. Not looking to reattempt. But she loses control when she’s distracted, she’s weaker with more people around. Distractions keep her from doing anything serious. So, we need more distractions. I’m still thinking --” Most of Izuku’s words are drowned out by the sound of an explosion. “-- about our...oh, seriously.”

“OVER HERE, ASSHOLE,” Shouto can hear Bakugou’s voice as loud as if he’s standing beside him. No need for volume control if his goal was to throw everyone off guard. Shouto isn’t sure if Bakugou’s taunts are directed for him, Izuku, or the villain standing in the middle between them. Bakugou raises his steaming gauntlet, almost cheerful (if that was an emotion Bakugou could possess) in the clear stunned silence that follows. “I’VE GOT SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH YOU, BITCH.” He hops down from the roof, smaller explosions cracking and snapping in-step with his furious pace.

“There’s our distraction,” Izuku says. Despite Bakugou’s highly explosive entrance, Komiya doesn’t take much interest in him. She runs for the two of them, hand outstretched and unleashes a bloodcurdling scream. Shouto’s vision whites out, a moment delated, giving him enough time to think, shit.

Through the ringing, he’s sure he hears the low catch-drop of an engine stalling; followed by an even louder engine thrumming to life. More light, breaking through his closed eyelids. Movement. The ground, he feels under his limbs, trembles with excitement. Izuku’s voice, close but at the same time far away like he’s talking through a tunnel: “Hang on, Shouto.” Warmth; a hand briefly taking his own, then releasing it, before he can entirely register the feeling at all.

He comes to with his back on the ground, bright red and white lights crossing his vision in a complicated dance of color blurs. Worry is etched into Izuku’s face, a streak of blood running down the side of his cheek. Shouto blinks at him. “Hey,” Izuku says, voice low. He helps Shouto move into an upright sitting position, which is about all his brain can handle. “Can you hear me?”
Shouto clears his throat. “Yes.” That’s probably the second least important question, after *are you okay?* He decides to aim directly for more urgent, pressing concerns. “What happened?”

Izuku shakes his head. “Uh -- I’m not sure what you saw, but Tenya-kun and I got a good kick in. Kacchan blew a hole in the ground so deep I think we’re going to feel the aftershocks for a while.” Shouto snorts. “But after that -- I don’t know, really. Whatever happened, it knocked everybody out within a hundred foot radius.” Izuku’s relief shines through on his face. “She’s gone.”

“There was a light,” Shouto tries to tell him. Izuku nods, mouth twitching. “Yeah, I saw it too. I -- I know she’s gone. She isn’t coming back. Don’t ask me how, but I -- I know.” He frowns. “I...have a lot to explain to you. *Later.* But first we’re gonna get out of here. Okay?” Shouto nods, leaning into his shoulder and closing his eyes.

Tenya interrupts them, after enough time has passed that Shouto is on the verge of actually falling asleep. He politely coughs, explaining, “I am sure there is a much more comfortable place to rest that is not...here. And the two of you need medical attention, I recommend we stop at a clinic.”

“Only if you get looked at too,” Izuku tells him. “I know you’ve still got a concussion. Don’t use me as an excuse to get out of it.” Tenya protests (too loud), and he feels Izuku’s laughter through his chest.

Both of them help him stand, Izuku supporting him more on one side. Izuku limps with his other foot, making their crawl to the other end of the street opening slow and unforgiving. Tenya assists them, but he has his hands full with all of their former classmates flocking to him for answers.

“*Dude, that was so crazy, did you see what happened in the --*”

“*-- holy shit, did anybody see where she went? What the fuck was all of that?*”

“I’m seriously never going to answer another distress call from any of you, this was the worst *--*” He doesn’t envy Tenya’s job of wrapping up and sending everyone home. Not when there’s that many questions. Tenya, though weary, embraces them with his utmost attention and energy.

Shouto notices Bakugou hovering around the edge of the group, skirting any conversation from the inner group. He’s always prickly, unless he’s around Kirishima. He finds Kirishima’s bright red hair among the other heroes. They must have arrived together, but he didn’t see Kirishima at first.

“I will answer your questions during our debriefing!” Tenya promises the line of grumbling heroes. “I am personally inviting everyone back to Idaten, there will be medical aid and resources for *--!*”

“Hell yeah!” Ashido cries. “Party at Team Idaten!” A few scattered *woos* and *whoop!* *party!* break through the other heroes. Tenya’s face falls (horror, he assumes). Shouto feels a little bad for him, but he should have learned his lesson from the last time he offered to host an event at his agency. He can already see Tenya slowly approaching regret over his horror.

Shouto is sure Bakugou’s glare is meant to deter them. Izuku, of course, makes it his mission to crawl over to him anyway. “*Really,*” Shouto hisses at him. Izuku gives him a bland look and continues their steady three-legged shuffle over to Bakugou’s brooding corner. Bakugou scoffs at them, but he doesn’t tell them to go away.

Within reasonable distance, Izuku stops. “I didn’t think you’d come,” Izuku says, hesitant.

Bakugou snorts. “Fucker destroyed my garden. You think I’d pass up another chance to kick her ass? Had to move apartments ‘cus of that shit. Giant pain in my ass.” That explanation is *almost polite,* and therefore markedly out of character. He glares at Shouto, which is about the only thing
so far he’s said or done that actually makes sense. “Don’t fucking thank me.”

Watching him stomp off to go bicker with Kirishima, Shouto looks to Izuku for answers minding that completely useless explanation. Izuku shrugs. Startling at the unexpected contact, he shakes off Kaminari throwing an arm over his shoulder, even though Kaminari’s suggestion to find a bar sounds pretty good to Shouto. He deserves a drink after the day they’ve had.

Ochaco, already patched up with a band aid covering her jaw, wraps her arms around the two of them. “You’re a dumb fucking idiot, I love you. But if you ever do that again I will end you,” Ochaco growls. He’s pretty sure that threat is meant for Izuku.

“Yeah, I got it,” Izuku grumbles. Ochaco squeezes him in an even tighter hug, releasing only to draw them back in, one arm still wrapped over Izuku’s shoulder.

A shocked cry stills most of the group’s rowdy storytelling. “Tenya!”

Shouto groans. He’s too tired to deal with more drama, more conflict, more of anything. He wants to go home, lie down on his bed, and sleep for the next week. Izuku starts laughing again, quiet, only for Shouto to hear. “Come on,” Shouto complains.

Izuku shushes him, smirk growing out of the opposite side of his face where the first few blooms of bruises are growing across his skin. “Hold on. I’ve been waiting for this, don’t ruin it for me.” Shouto doesn’t have the energy to reflect on that cryptic reply.

Tenya’s entire body locks up, tense. “Yes! What can I assist --?”

Aoyama marches down the center of their squabbling party of heroes and stops in front of him. Their height difference, if anything, only makes Aoyama’s outrage more comical. “I was in the middle of something very important you know!”

“Ah,” Tenya flails. “Right, yes, I know. I was -- I was not expecting you would come. I did not know if you saw my message or not.” A few of the people behind Shouto giggle, quietly smothering it or pretending to cough to mask the sound.

“Of course I came, what kind of hero do you take me for?” Tenya's jaw clicks shut. "And why is it that you must use only use emergencies to take me away from my work? That your life must be in great danger before you ask me to spend time with you?" Shouto doesn’t know how he’s the only one left out of knowing the context for whatever is unfolding, but he’s suitably glad, again, not to be standing in Tenya’s position. Aoyama continues, irritation bringing out a higher, shriller tone. "**Mon cher,** there is such a **wonderful** invention for long distance communication that I’m sure will dazzle you. It’s called a **phone.**"

To the side he hears Ochaco gleefully mutter, “**here we go**” under her breath.

“I have a phone,” Tenya tells him, blinking rapidly. Aoyama tuts, plucking the broken frames from his face and inspecting the broken glass. Tenya tacks on a half-hearted attempt to defend himself. “I -- I did not know you were allowed to take calls. In -- in the -- where you are working.” Shouto doesn’t have to be facing Aoyama to know he is giving Tenya the most dramatic, award-winning, unimpressed look of the century.

“I’m working underground, not **off the grid.**” Aoyama quips. “Now, are you going to pick up the phone and invite me out to dinner again -- or are you **really** going to make me do everything by myself? **Natu** **rallement,** after you are properly looked over.” Tenya looks like he’s about to explode. The cheering and whooping from their classmates probably isn’t helping his blood
pressure.

“I,” Tenya starts, and Shouto rarely sees him at a loss for words. Somebody in the back yells “hell yeah, class prez, get it!” which goes largely ignored. “I -- I will. Yes. I will do that. If you -- if you are available this weekend, I would be honored to be in your company.”

“This is great,” Izuku murmurs into his neck. “Now maybe everyone will stop making fun of us for being too dramatic. We’ve got some tough competition, see?”

“I don’t know,” Shouto tells him. “They’re both too upfront.”

Aoyama nods, approving. “I am amenable to that.”

“That’s good,” Tenya says. He clears his throat a few times. “Yes. Very good.” Clears his throat again, not that it erases the deep flush on every corner of his face. Deciding the amount of time spent flustering Tenya was well worth it, Aoyama takes his hand and pulls him towards their supply area in search of more band aids.

Their other classmates trickle out, satisfied and tired with the outcome of the day’s events. Kirishima claps him on the shoulder as he walks, making both of them stumble. “You two look like you’ve had a wild day.”

“Worst day ever. We need a vacation,” Izuku agrees with a hum. “I’m thinking somewhere sunny.” Kirishima laughs, catching Ashido in a headlock as he passes her. The two of them scuffle in the dirt, cursing and laughing. Even at a slow pace, Izuku and him leave a fair distance away before either one of them surrenders.

Momo rejoins him at the edge of the perimeter by their cars, unpacking supplies from an emergency vehicle onto the ground. She sees Shouto and Izuku, running over to hug Shouto first. “I’m so glad to see you’re safe. So sorry I --” She pulls back, serious and focused. Shifting into first aid mode. Before she continues, she wipes Shouto’s face down with an alcohol wipe and grimaces at the blood on it. -- I had to clean that, you’ve got so much blood on your face.” Relieved, she brushes her hair back behind her ear. “I’m glad you’re alright.” To Izuku, she says, “I’m sorry I disappeared without saying anything. I knew -- I knew something wasn’t right. I went to check on Kyouka, she wasn’t answering my messages.”

Shouto has a few questions of his own, but his exhaustion weighs in over voicing them. “Is she alright?” Izuku asks. Momo’s grimace deepens.

“She was caught unawares by the other half of Shouto-kun’s guard escort,” Momo explains. “I’m glad I arrived when I did. She’s resting now, but she’s…not very lucid. I think one of them had -- I can’t tell if she has a concussion or if she was hit by some kind of compulsion quirk.” Her cheeks darken. Shouto decides he doesn’t want to ask. “She won’t stop talking.”

Shouto forces Izuku to stay in place for Momo’s quick injury assessment (not that he has much of a choice, he can’t hop around on one foot) and covers their shallower cuts with more frog-themed band aids. Shouto is content to let her harass Izuku over the enormous bruising on his back, even knowing he will likely be icing it for Izuku once they’re back home.

She dismisses them in favor of helping their other unattended injured, pointing them in Jirou’s direction on the other side of the van. The window is already open, a single leg sticking out attached to black combat boots. Jirou flops over the opening, leaning down and poking Shouto’s forehead in greeting. Shouto rolls his eyes.
“Heeeey,” Jirou brightens at the sight of them. She has a large strip of gauze wrapped over her forehead, a bruise poking out of the bottom by her brow. Her fingers are wrapped too, like she’s preparing for a round in a boxing ring. A distinct sign of Momo’s overzealous caretaking sensibilities. “You guys made it! I’m so happy you’re here. Today’s like, the best day ever!”

“So it is,” Shouto replies, to humor her. She grins and claps her hands to her cheeks, beaming.

“That’s awesome! Hey, heeey. Did Momo tell you?” Her smile grows more mischievous. Neither of them have a chance to ask before she blurts out; “I asked her to maaaaaaarry me! And she said yes! I’m gonna cry, seriously guys, can you believe it? I love her soooo much. You both have to come to our wedding, you’re like, my favorite people. My best friends forever.” From the other side of the car, Shouto makes out Momo’s exasperated, “Good heavens, Kyouka.”

Izuku grins, laughing behind his hand. “Congratulations!”

“She’s not going to remember any of this tomorrow,” Shouto tells him. “And if she does, she will probably never speak to any of us again.” Izuku doesn’t seem like he’s too concerned. They say goodbye to Jirou, promising to attend her future wedding in extravagant clothes, and make for the other cars.

Taking off for the first car, Izuku drops his hand and walks on ahead. He stops at the passenger side of one of the larger vans and taps on the window. If it’s only the two of them, why would he pick such a large car, Shouto wonders. The window rolls down, slow, and he realizes Izuku isn’t looking to step inside.

“I thought you might be here,” Izuku says. Shouto slides between the next car and takes a look inside the window for himself.

Shinsou, deep eyebags and dark scarf, flickers down to glare at the two of them. “Not like I had a choice. Aoyama ran off for one of your stupid class adventures, I have no choice but to follow. It’s in the contract.” Besides his scarf, it looks like he got dressed in a hurry without time to grab the rest of his costume. Shouto decides not to comment on the odd choice of patterned shirt he’s wearing (sleeping yellow ducks).

“And you stayed in the car,” Izuku summarizes.

“And I stayed in the car.” Shinsou agrees. “I told you, I did my part for that investigation. With what you told me about that quirk, there was no fucking way I was going anywhere near that.”

Izuku huffs, laughing. “That’s fair.”

“You looked like you had it handled.” Shinsou reclines deeper into his seat. “Head home. I’ll get the details after you submit your report. Aoyama blew my cover too many times this week, so our case is pretty much finished. I’m ready to step out of the underground for a while.”

Walking away from the dark car, Shouto asks, “What was that about?”

Izuku’s wince doesn’t convince him that the answer will be any better than any of his other answers so far. “Uh...well. That’s a story. So back when this started, I thought I might need an expert. On this type of quirk. This whole case is -- off the radar. It’s, er, all classified. For the most part, he just left me with a lot of notes on my case files about how he thought the whole thing sounded ridiculous.” Forced cheer, he adds, “But it’s over now.”

Izuku insists on driving. Shouto decides his vision is more blurry than usual and doesn’t argue with him over it (at least, not as much as usual). “Why do I have the feeling there’s a lot you aren’t
telling me.” Missing the questioning inflection, Shouto sinks into the passenger seat and closes his
eyes. He opens one eye, watching Izuku’s expression from the side.

“Shouto, there is so much that I have to tell you,” Izuku says with a laugh, only a little hysterical.
“But I will, I swear. We’re alive. Right now, I want to go home.” One hand on the wheel, the other
reaching for Shouto’s hand. If given the choice, Shouto knows, Izuku would be perfectly happy to
never let go. “Everything else we’ll figure out.” With a low noise of agreement, Shouto turns his
head to the window and falls asleep to the sound of the engine.

[Photo 1: Distant shot of Hero Deku with his arm over Todoroki Shouto, dressed in swim trunks
and a towel over both of their shoulders. Deku has a sports bag on the ground beside him, making a
face for the camera and holding out a peace sign, bright red sunglasses. Todoroki is wearing green
sunglasses and a pink round brimmed sun hat.
Photo 2: Another distant shot from the shore, displaying Deku and Todoroki mid-water fight.
Todoroki is wearing a white shirt and peach toned swim trunks. Deku is shirtless and wearing neon
orange swim trunks. Todoroki has his hand raised, blocking his face from the enormous wave
Deku sent his way.
Photo 3: Leaning against the commuter rail, Deku appears in a deep sleep even with his neck at an
angle that hurts to look at. He’s wearing an acid-green and pink camouflage Alien Queen inspired
hoodie. His hair is a mess, covering most of his face. Soft lighting on his jacket gives the photo a
more delicate presence, despite the subject within.]

Liked by iida.t, icreati, lumistar, queenofaliens, uravity, tapeguyhero and 23,912 more

herodeku:
私があなたを見るとき、目の前に私の残りの人生が見えます。

View all 1,835 comments

> tapeguyhero - glad to see u actually using ur vacation days
View replies (12)
>> herodeku - :-/

> uravity - ❤❤❤

> iida.t - You certainly deserved a break! Enjoy your time off!!
View replies (14)
>> herodeku - Youre only saying that because you want me to come back and tell everyone to go
home. i know theyre crashing at your office...i saw the class story.
>>>> iida.t - Perhaps
>>>>> herodeku - (●’Ψ‘)

> no_teeth_bones - omg WHERE was this taken??!! It looks so nice i wanna go there too

> rredriot - Nice shades bro where did you get them?
View replies (27)
>> herodeku - YOU EVER HEARD OF RED RIOTS AMAZING MERCH? WELL LET ME
TELL YOU, BEST SHADES I HAVE EVER OWNED, DEFINITELY RECOMMEND, this is not
a paid advertisement and absolutely authentic genuine response
At the hour it is, Shouto knows it is rude to knock. He didn’t consider the time when he left, but it was more of an instinctual reaction than a well-planned one. With rehearsed, practiced ease, he swipes the magnetic key over her door, sliding it open with gentle, quiet movement. Slipping inside, he closes the door behind him as quiet as he entered. His card still works, even though he hasn’t entered her apartment for over a year.

Momo is on the couch, alert at his entrance. She has the television on in the background, volume muted, not even pretending to watch the program on the screen. Shouto feels guilty at waking her. Any noise will wake her, no matter how exhausted she is.

He wonders if he should apologize and leave, but Momo was never one to rescind an offer to stay on her couch for a night. “Can I stay here tonight?”

Momo pats the free sofa cushion, gesturing to the other side of Jirou’s dozing figure. “You know you’re always welcome here.” Shouto takes the seat beside her and leans back. He doesn’t sigh, but his exhaustion overwhelms him and his exhale is deeper than intended.

Momo drapes a delicate hand over his arm. “You’re back from your vacation early. I assume he told you everything. Are you okay?”

“No,” Shouto says honestly. “I needed some time to think to myself. He knows I’ll be back by tomorrow.”

Her nod lifts his spirits. “I think that sounds reasonable.” With her free hand, the one not stroking Jirou’s hair, reaches for the table and offers him the remote. “We can watch something in the meantime. But please, no dramas. I’ve had enough of that for several lifetimes.”

Shouto isn’t in the mood for late night television reruns, shrugging off his jacket and falling face-down on the cushion beside her. Not that he can see anything on her screen. His depth perception and sensitivity to brightness has yet to fade, but it is less extreme than the first night after returning to his evacuated apartment. Now all he has to worry about is a light headache. It will fade, he knows, with time. Like his nightmare of choice the last few nights, the one that shook him awake, dreaming of bright light and the feeling of his limbs pulled down by a weight he couldn’t control.

Years ago, he sat alongside her on this same couch and thanked Momo for her friendship. For helping him out of an area of his life he felt he couldn’t escape from. As she did then, she stroked his hair as he relaxed on the cushion, like his mother would do when he was young. Jirou’s soft whistle snores are the only discernible change from his memory.

Momo pages through a magazine, offering it to him if it might help take his mind off the new burden of knowledge that sits heavy in his brain. Sore, like an infection, too tender to inspect closely. It hurts to trust someone so much and learn they were barely holding back an incredibly large lie. He can’t allow himself to ache forever. At the same time, he doesn’t want Izuku to apologize for the rest of their lives. Nothing will change the past. He can only prepare for the future.
Shouto takes the magazine, squinting, and hands it back because he can’t read anything on the cover. Not the right kind of distraction. “I have a headache. I think I’m getting old. Might need reading glasses soon.” Momo snorts, covering her mouth too late to muffle the sound. Jirou wakes up and mumbles, “what?”

“Shh, it’s late, my love,” Momo soothes her with a gentle tone. “You can go back to sleep.” Jirou lets out a snore-snort and does so without further prompting.

The two of them do not sleep, even though Momo takes long blinks between watery eyes. Shouto knows his uncomfortable position on the couch has nothing to do with his own inability to drift off.

Near dawn, the silence breaks. “I’m sorry,” Momo tells him, quiet. Her voice is low, almost a murmur. “If he told you everything, you must know I lied, too.”

Shouto says, “Yes,” and closes his eyes; grateful to escape from the shifting swirls of dark spots that crawl in and out of his vision. “I know everything.”

Morning comes and brings with it a lesser ache. Izuku is asleep on the couch, deep rings under his eyes. Shouto can’t imagine he slept well, wondering when Shouto would return. Wondering what Shouto would tell him, if Shouto would throw his towel in the ring and walk it off. If Shouto would tell him to leave.

Shouto doesn’t say anything. He sits on the couch beside him, lifting his head to rest it over his lap. Izuku stirs, but doesn’t open his eyes. “I didn’t think you’d be back this early,” Izuku mumbles.

He pulls back the hair covering Izuku’s face, releasing a deep sigh. It feels like he can breathe again; as if the two of them were holding their breaths for the night and waiting in tandem for the weight to be released. “I couldn’t sleep.” Izuku hums. “I thought about what you said.”

Opening his eyes, Izuku rises and meets him at eye level. “And?”

“No promise,” Shouto says, as evenly as he can. “That you won’t keep everything to yourself. As long as we’re together, you have to let me help you. That we will trust each other to tell the truth. Even when we don’t think it’s important. Or think it will make one of us worry.”

“I’ve always trusted you,” Izuku says. “It was never about my trust in you.”

“I know,” he says. “Promise me, Izuku.” Izuku smiles and takes his hand.

"I'm always making promises for you Todorokis," Squeezing his hand, Izuku's smile fades. "The same goes to you. We both have to promise."

The journal is unearthed from the bottom side of their new couch. “I can’t believe you tore a hole in your couch,” Shouto shakes his head. “To hide this stupid thing.”

“It’s our couch,” Izuku corrects. “And I don’t know. I came back here and our apartment was ruined. I didn’t know where else to put it.” The officers Momo sent to search their apartment for bugs didn’t find anything, but they did leave a mess.

“We should find a better place for it,” Shouto says. “But that’s not -- that’s not really what I’m concerned about.”

“I know,” Izuku says, and had he not already apologized at least a thousand times over, Shouto guesses he would again.
He doesn’t want to hear one. Izuku doesn’t offer another. Shouto takes the empty space on the
couch and leans his head against the sofa. Izuku is asleep again within minutes, breathing slow and
even beside him. Shouto covers his hand over the journal and sighs.

“You’re far more trouble than you’re worth,” he tells it. The journal doesn’t reply; not that he
expected it to.

Buzzfeed Celeb! ✔ @buzzfeedceleb
Some BTS from filming today for an upcoming short: heroes are toddlers in disguise, confirmed
[Photos attached:

Image 1 - Zoomed-out perspective of Earphone Jack leaning into Alien Queen. She has tears
running down her face, but she’s holding her stomach like she’s mid-laugh. Luminesce is
photobombing from the studio chair behind them. In front of them, Dynamite is face-down on the
ground like he’s planking.

Image 2 - Chargebolt is floating on the ceiling and pouting. None of the other heroes in the shot
pay him any attention, or appear to notice his presence by the ceiling light. Luminesce is
photobombing this shot too, less obvious from the first shot, hands under his chin with doll-like
posture.

Image 3 - A line of heroes wearing a long vine from Vivid Lady as a fake mustache. The Vine
Hero does not look as amused as her hero companions. Earphone Jack is using the vines to create a
long fake trail of armpit hair while Alien Queen clutches her stomach, laughing. From the far
corner, Luminesce is faint but visible, crowning an impressive photobombing achievement as he
sits atop Hero Deku’s shoulders. ]

luminesce fan circle $$ CHU CHU CHUNGA! @luuumistar
@buzzfeedceleb WHAT IS GOING ON???????????
2 retweets | 83 favorites
1:16 PM - 28 May X1

Buzzfeed Celeb! ✔ @buzzfeedceleb
Replying to @luuumistar We’re not really sure either
[Photo attached: Ingenium surrounded by dozens of small stuffed ponies. Upon closer inspection,
they are horse masks, with the edges of shirts peeking out from under shoulders. His expression is
that of confusion and fear. Tentacole is shrugging with many arms in the background. Todoroki
Shouto, if only visible by his hair, is hanging off in the background and clearly avoiding whatever
is happening in the center of the image.]

queenie tie @tpyreat
@buzzfeedceleb why do all of these photos look like they were taken in an alternate reality. The
energy in every single one is just Not Right
5 retweets | 519 favorites
1:39 PM - 28 May X1
Liked by Buzzfeed Celeb!

INGENIUM ✔ @t_ingenium
Replying to @buzzfeedceleb ...Never again.
68 retweets | 14,733 favorites
2:14 PM - 28 May X1
Liked by Buzzfeed Celeb!, 轟焦凍 Todoroki Shōto, and 2 others you follow

Luminesce ✔ @lumistar
I HAVE RETURNED MY LOVELY LUMISTARS! I have so much to share with you all!! It was a terrible burden to know I had to leave you, but an even greater reward to know you are still here upon my GLORIOUS return!! ☆(◡‿◡)☆
342 retweets | 6,110 favorites
3:23 PM - 28 May X1
Liked by INGENIUM, DEKU デク, Earphone Jack, and 2 others you follow

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
Replying to @lumistar missed u so much u have no idea
22 retweets | 3,882 favorites
3:38 PM - 28 May X1
Liked by Luminesce

Luminesce ✔ @lumistar
Replying to @radio_jack AS I HAVE YOU!!!
54 retweets | 12,988 favorites
4:01 PM - 28 May X1

Luminesce ✔ @lumistar
A warm welcome from my loveliest and dearest of friends ~ (⋆˘ ˘)*
[Photo attached: A shot from the bullpen in Creati Agency, Luminesce in the center. He’s surrounded by silver and white balloons, Earphone Jack hugging him from behind. Deku is near the background, holding a plate of cake and trying to jump into the shot without spilling his plate. A group of sidekicks are precariously holding one another, stacked four-by-two, with the person on top holding out a large white cake. Their human pyramid, unfortunately, does not look very stable, and the cake appears to be on the verge of becoming a victim of gravity. Creati is watching Earphone Jack and Luminesce fondly, unaware of the impending accident occurring directly behind her.]
872 retweets | 11,711 favorites
5:59 PM - 28 May X1

Earphone Jack @radio_jack
still tastes good
[Photo attached: Pro Hero Creati, left side of her face covered in smeared cake. She looks mildly irritated, while Earphone Jack stands on her toes and kisses away the icing. Earphone Jack is laughing, despite her girlfriend’s clear frustration.]
521 retweets | 6,320 favorites
6:24 PM - 28 May X1

Petition THIS! @bb_8883
_:; this is such a blessed day for #Lumistars and #creatijack fans we are SO Blessed
Team Idaten is far more crowded than Shouto remembers it being. A factor into the overwhelming chaos is the fifteen or so Pro Heroes who camped out over the last week and decided to make a vacation out of the journey. Tenya’s expression says otherwise; he does not appear to view it as a vacation from work whatsoever. Six days into their stay, Tenya calls for the cleaning crew (and extra back up, provided by Izuku).

Backed by Izuku, the two of them politely (very polite, in Tenya’s manner) remind everyone they have actual jobs to return to. “Aw, why can’t we just stay here?” Ashido whines. “I forgot how nice it is to hang out with all of you!”

“Can’t we have dinner first?” Sero interrupts her complaint. “Who knows when the next time we’ll see each other is? Enjoy your company while you have it.” (“I don’t know, probably our next reunion?” Kaminari answers, only to succumb into pressured silence by Sero and Ashido.)

Tenya agrees. Only under the agreement they don’t cause too much of a scene or enact any bad behavior for the dwindling hours remaining of their visit. Unsurprisingly, the majority vote calls for a karaoke bar.

“No bad behavior!” Tenya reminds them. “You all have professional careers to worry about!” (That reminder is, unfortunately, quickly forgotten by everyone else.)

“That’s dangerous,” Ochaco says, watching Shouto accept another glass from the waiter. “You better watch him. We don’t want a repeat of that gala!” She laughs. “Now that was bad behavior.”

“What gala.” Shouto deadpans, thinking of the last gala where the most dangerous event of the night occurred before he ever arrived. “I’m always well behaved.”

Ochaco smirks. Izuku, for some reason, pales. “Oh, don’t you remember? The gala last year, the one right before you retired. You were so wasted. It was a funny night.”

“Yeah, Todoroki, you lush,” Jirou’s laugh crackles and she gasps. (She and Kaminari entered a Battle to the Death Karaoke concert prior to their meal. Jirou won, but her victory had a price.)

“Ah, shit, I really did ruin my voice. I’m not going to be able to talk on my show tomorrow. Dammit.”

Izuku clears his throat. “Maybe this isn’t --”.

“Shhh, let me talk,” Ochaco interrupts him. She is far more cheerful after finishing her drink. And Shouto’s drink, too. She gestures to Izuku, who stares her down like he’s hoping to pressure her into silence like the others had done to Kaminari. “And you two were like -- in your own little world. I was surprised to see you two talking. At least that night, it was weird ‘cus I know you hadn’t really said much to each other in a few years. But then,” she points at Izuku with her pinky, lifted off the surface of her glass. “You went off to do something else. And Shouto-kun danced with me. But by that point he could barely walk, haha!”

“You always remember the funniest details at those events,” Asui takes the task of silencing Ochaco for herself, shoving a bread roll into her mouth. “The only thing I remember from that gala
was everyone’s surprise because Midoriya-chan didn’t leave after ten minutes.”

“I lost my bet that year,” Jirou frowns. “Satou won, that lucky bastard. None of us thought you’d stick around the whole time.”

Satou, having heard his name from the other table, yells, “It wasn’t a bet! I knew it would happen eventually!”

“And Todoroki kept talking about some story Midoriya told him,” Jirou sighs. Izuku takes deep interest in his utensils and remains silent. His silence, somehow, radiates displeasure. “Could barely understand a word he was saying. But it really left an -- really affected you in some way. You wouldn’t shut up about it. Talked my ear off the whole ride back.”

“Oh, are we spilling gala stories?” Kaminari leans into Jirou’s shoulder. Jirou shoves him off, hard enough to send him reeling back into Satou’s chair. Kaminari leans back in, not so easily deterred by her physical efforts. “Which year?”

“Last year,” Ochaco answers. Izuku sinks down into his seat like he’s trying to disappear under the table.

“That gala...” Momo covers one side of her face with her hand. “...was such a disaster. Isn’t that the one where Shouto-kun stayed at your apartment --”

“-- and broke my shower!” Kyouka finishes with glee. “Which you still haven’t paid to replace!”

“Oh, that gala,” Kaminari grins. “The press thought you brought Todoroki as your date, I remember Kyouka texted me all upset --” Kyouka’s eye twitches. “-- eh, actually. I don’t remember anything. I have no memory at all. Never heard of a gala in my life.”

“Really,” Shouto says. He looks at Izuku. Izuku looks intently down at his food like he’d rather disappear into it. “I...I don’t actually remember any of that. Or talking to you. I thought you left after we danced.”

“I know,” Izuku says miserably. “It was such an awkward conversation. You’re lucky you don’t remember.”

“I remember plenty,” Jirou latches onto Izuku’s embarrassment like sharks sensing blood in the water. “From what Todoroki tried to tell me, at least. Something like, uh, ’write your own story, live your truth, fly like a butterfly --’”

Shouto frowns. Something about the first part sounds familiar, but the rest... “No, I don’t think that’s right. That doesn’t even make sense.”

Jirou shrugs. “You weren’t making a whole lot of sense then either, dude.”

Shouto narrows his eyes at her. “Or maybe you remembered it wrong, dude.” Sero cackles in the seat beside him.

“Aw man,” Kaminari leans over Sero’s lap and taps the edge of Shouto’s plate. “I missed your weird fucking replies, bro.”

“I’ve missed our weird fucking class, bro.” Shouto echoes, monotoned. Kaminari falls into a fit of hysterics and almost pushes Sero entirely out of his chair. Their attention is stolen by Aoyama dramatically recounting his harrowing adventures in the underground, cheered on by the rest of the table.
Hours later, as he brushes his teeth, he remembers his question. “What was everyone talking about?”

Izuku looks up, toothpaste caught on the ends of his hair. “Who? Talking about what?”

“Ochaco said she was surprised to see us talking last year,” Shouto says. “I didn’t know about that. And Jirou said something about -- about the advice you gave me.”

He sees the rapid-fire transition of panic, followed by guilt, and settling on acceptance cross Izuku’s face before Izuku ever opens his mouth. “We talked for a while. That night, I mean,” Izuku says. He turns to the mirror, talking more to Shouto’s reflection than the Shouto standing on his right. “For a while, I thought you were ignoring me because of it. But then I realized you just didn’t remember.”

“I think I remember some of it,” Shouto tucks his glasses onto the shelf by his sink. “What she said sounded -- sounded like I had heard it before.” He leaves the sentence intentionally open-ended. Should Izuku choose to finish it for himself.

‘You’re the writer of that story, of your life,’” Izuku answers quietly. ‘‘Every part, even the end, is all yours to decide.’’

Shouto pauses. “Did you really say that?”

“I remember that conversation better than you know.” Izuku replies. His face is, oddly, unreadable. Shouto decides there’s more to Izuku’s hesitation than at first glance. “It’s not one I think I’ll ever forget.”

“A shame I don’t remember,” Shouto says lightly. “I think I would’ve liked to know what inspired you so deeply.”

Izuku looks at him. Shouto knows the exact moment when his guard drops, when his face regains the openness he remembers. “I don’t think I was inspired by anything that night,” he says. “I think, if anything, I realized you and me…” He doesn’t pick up his words after that, leaving them to trail into nothing.

“You and me,” Shouto prompts.

“You and me were stuck at the same place.” Izuku reconsiders after a pause. “We were both struggling --” His face twists. “-- uh, I don’t know if that’s the right word to use. But that night, everything you said to me -- it made me realize we had both grown apart. We had become different people than I remembered us being. It was hard to talk to you.”

He’s beginning to understand why Izuku was so hesitant to bring it up at all. “Why was it so hard?”

“Oh, Shouto,” Izuku says, and Shouto already knows the answer is far more complicated than Izuku is willing to put into words. “That conversation made me -- realize a lot of things. It was hard because you were far more honest with me than I deserved. But I needed it. The honesty. I think you did, too.”

“I don’t understand,” Shouto tells him.

Izuku’s smile is less forced, but less genuine at the same time. As though he’s already accepted something that Shouto doesn’t know, and probably will never know. “No,” Izuku agrees. “You probably won’t.”
TRIAL DATE FOR ENDEAVOR ABUSE ALLEGATIONS ANNOUNCED, BOARD OF HEROES CLEARED FOR HEARING

May 29, 20X1

TOKYO -- Following the breaking story released earlier this month (May 16th, 20X1) the former high ranking Hero Endeavor is facing charges regarding the abuse of his ex-wife. Child abuse, illegal quick marriage, and spousal abuse are among the charges. Prior to the trial, the Board of Heroes was audited following the announcement to clear claims that the Board withheld knowledge from law enforcement regarding Endeavor’s abusive behavior.

Said the Chief of Police, Nagako Konishi, “We have no information at this time to continue an investigation into the Board of Heroes.”

There is no planned...

...Continued on Page 9.

With his track record for standing in the wrong place at the wrong time, Shouto shouldn’t be surprised.

“Hands where I can see them! Get on the ground!” Shouto was supposed to be picking up a few supplies for dinner. Not part of yet another villain heist. The few allies he has in the store include a kid at the register, an old man (deaf, too, given he didn’t flinch when the villain obliterated a stack of magazines with a stream of fire from his hands), and a middle-aged woman who hasn’t done anything except scream.

He should be afraid. If anything, given the events of the week, he should be rightly terrified. He’s not. He’s annoyed.

“You’re going to regret this,” Shouto tells the man sincerely. Izuku is across the street at the pharmacy replenishing their first aid supply for their bathroom. He won’t be distracted for much longer. “I hope you have good medical insurance. You’re going to need it.”

“Eh?” He blasts a column of fire over Shouto’s head. Shouto rolls his eyes. “What the fuck are you talking about?”

Wind shatters the glass door at the front of the store. The woman screams again. “Told you,” Shouto says, and ducks. The kick passes over his head and into the stomach of the intended target. The solid thump! in the wall behind him is oddly satisfying to hear.

“I can’t take you anywhere,” Izuku complains, brushing off the glass in his hair. “I’ve had enough
heart attacks for one week. Give me a break.”

Shouto takes the hand he offers. Izuku pulls him up in one smooth motion, so smooth that Shouto expects him to dip him in a kiss. It almost looks like that’s part of his plan -- but Izuku remembers they’re standing in the middle of a grocery store and freezes. Shouto is ready for the kiss, which is why he’s surprised by the odd one-armed hug Izuku gives him instead. And a fist bump. From the expression Izuku is making, he is incredibly self-aware of how awkward it looks to everyone else.

After the local officer has cleared the scene, Shouto turns to him and says, “Did you just -- did you --”

“If you ever tell anyone that I no homo’d you here -- ” Izuku threatens. He can’t finish because Shouto is already chuckling.

“I almost wish you kissed me instead,” Shouto says, slipping his hand discreetly into Izuku’s sweatshirt pocket. “That would’ve been more believable.” Izuku grousches the rest of the way home about the stupid fucking contract and I didn’t know if you were ready to go public, and Shouto laughs through his relief.

“Stop laughing at me,” Izuku whines. “I panicked, okay? The store probably has cameras. And there were people outside watching. It would’ve been -- it would’ve been a thing. My agent would’ve had a stroke. And died, probably. I’d be put on trial for involuntary manslaughter. It would’ve been awful.”

“I think you’re afraid,” Shouto tells him, which is closer to the truth than he knows Izuku is willing to admit out loud. He squeezes Izuku’s hand. “That’s fine. I told you it was up to you. When you were ready.”

Izuku doesn’t say anything; not that he needs to. Not yet.
social media for a week straight
D: it’s fine my press agent doesn’t listen to your show they will never know
150 retweets | 1,469 favorites
12:50 PM - 1 June X1

Jenny Jumpy / @sidecon! @jensfunnytrain
Replying to @jensfunnytrain #3
[LATER] RR: did you know people think you and todoroki are part of a dating conspiracy
D: a dating what?
345 retweets | 2,798 favorites
12:54 PM - 1 June X1

Jenny Jumpy / @sidecon! @jensfunnytrain
Replying to @jensfunnytrain #4
EJ: like youre dating and keeping it a secret from everyone
D: well that’d be ridiculous i don’t know him, never met him [entropy]. how could we be dating
RR and EJ: (laughing so loud both of their mics get muted)
404 retweets | 3,107 favorites
12:57 PM - 1 June X1

Jenny Jumpy / @sidecon! @jensfunnytrain
Replying to @jensfunnytrain #4
D: never met todoroki before, i do know a shouto though and he’s pretty cool
RR: yeah you guys are best friends
D: best friends for life
451 retweets | 3,004 favorites
12:59 PM - 1 June X1

Jenny Jumpy / @sidecon! @jensfunnytrain
Replying to @jensfunnytrain #5
EJ: which is why you gave him a handshake [????] the other day [??????]
D: i told him not to say anything about that [?????WHAT??]
289 retweets | 2,171 favorites
1:00 PM - 1 June X1

Jenny Jumpy / @sidecon! @jensfunnytrain
Replying to @jensfunnytrain #6
RR: it’s very manly of you to hug your friends
Deku: yeah it’s why i give my partner lots of hugs. for the manliness of it all
689 retweets | 3,698 favorites
1:08 PM - 1 June X1

Jenny Jumpy / @sidecon! @jensfunnytrain
Replying to @jensfunnytrain #7
EJ: nothing manlier than having a boyfriend
RR: exactly
D: the manliest thing you can do is kiss another man
533 retweets | 5,905 favorites
1:14 PM - 1 June X1

Jenny Jumpy / @sidecon! @jensfunnytrain
Replying to @jensfunnytrain #8
RR: i guess i’m the manliest person in this room
Mid-week, an ever changing jump between Wednesday and Thursday, there is a day reserved for long standing lunch reservations. The day doesn’t matter, but the arrangements are made more out of a promise Izuku and Shouto made to keep somewhat of a schedule together. Shouto leaves the apartment in the morning, follows his slow commute from the station to his mother’s house, and arrives outside Creati Agency by the afternoon. (Izuku is usually late, so Shouto takes his time with his mother. He sees her on the weekends, too, but those trips are more sporadic and less-planned.)

He leaves a little later than usual, waving to his mother from the window. He catches the train and text Izuku: *when’s lunch?* Izuku doesn’t reply right away; as he often does not.

Shouto doesn’t mind Izuku’s tardiness. He’s not in a rush to grab food and head back to his apartment -- especially if he’s in the apartment alone. While the apartment is cleared and bears a (much needed) security update, Shouto doesn’t like to lounge around in the quiet. The quiet unnerves him, more so than it ever did before the break-in. He thinks he misses the sound of company, adapted his life around having others in his presence. Growing up in near-isolation, he wonders why he ever returned to that silence. He doesn’t want the quiet undisturbed nature of his life to return, if ever. Happier to live with the chaos, the unpredictable fixture of having people coming in and out of his life as they choose.

The elevator takes him to the top floor. Izuku’s last text is an apology, explaining his lateness (not that Shouto expected he would be early) and that he would be wrapping up in the field as soon as he could.

It takes Shouto a little longer than normal to decode the message. He tries dimming the brightness on his phone, but it doesn’t help him read the text any easier. He manages to reply, delayed, that he didn’t mind.

Shouto pokes his head around the office, acknowledging the remaining faces he recognizes with a curt nod. He doesn’t recognize most of the new sidekicks, and he definitely doesn’t recognize a single face among the intern staff.

“Hey, it’s Entropy! Er, sorry! Todoroki-san!” Shouto is comforted to see the (much smaller, less conspicuous) statue of post it notes resembling Deku is still on the wall. He hears more talking between the staff as they speculate the reason for his unexpected visit. Ignoring them, he pokes his head into Momo’s office and is unsurprised to find it empty.
Turning around, he bumps heads with Jirou -- or she bumps her head into his chest. He has the height advantage over her. “Oh, Todoroki!” Jirou catches his arm in her own, mischief dancing in her eyes. Shouto knows he missed his window of escaping her attention. “Y’know, the funniest thing just happened. Mina cancelled on me, which means I’m out of a guest for today’s show. But luckily for me, it looks like you’re here!”

“Go bother Izuku,” Shouto tells her, pulling his arm out of her hold. “He’d be more than willing to do it with you. He should be here soon.”

“Too bad he got banned from talking on my show until he learns to stop saying things that get him in trouble!” Jirou pins him in another vice grip, locking his shoulder into the joint. “I don’t want another angry voicemail from the person doing his PR, so you’re my lucky guest today!” Shouto kicks her, trying not to make a scene in front of the staff, but Jirou has the advantage of A.) desperation and B.) the knowledge Shouto values his pride more than she does.

“Jirou, really --” He doesn’t know how he ends up in these situations, but he knows Jirou is always the person to blame. (She’s not above locking him inside the studio with her, either.)

Shouto adjusts his headphones with an irritated grace while Jirou prattles on about her introduction and sponsor. “Good afternoon listeners! Sorry we’re starting a little later than usual, I had a scheduling conflict right before the show. That should be all our housekeeping-type stuff for now. With me today, I have a special guest!” She hums and taps her pen against the desk. “No guesses? Alright, I won’t keep the surprise to myself. It’s Todoroki Shouto, local bastard and bad luck magnet! Welcome back to your second ever guest spot on Radio Jack, top station in all of --”

Leaning into the mic (so close his cheek brushes the pop filter), Shouto asks, “How long is this going to take? I have other things I need to do.” Jirou kicks him under the table -- he knows she hates when people mess with her equipment. “I’m supposed to meet your girlfriend for lunch. We had plans. Plans we made a month ago. Important discussions.”

She narrows her eyes at him. “Oh yeah? How come I wasn’t invited? I want to spend time with my girlfriend too, y’know.” Jirou kicks him in the knee (again). Shouto aims a retaliatory kick at her under the table. From her furious expression, he knows he made contact.

“You were invited,” Shouto corrects, wincing at the third kick Jirou lands on his knee. He tries crossing his legs under the table, but Jirou takes to aiming for his ankles. “I think you told us it sounded boring.”

“Oh right, you two were gonna talk about your sappy feelings and how much you appreciate your friendship, blah blah blah.”

“...That’s not what we’re meeting about. We’re talking about our future. For myself in particular.” Jirou rolls her eyes at him.

“Oh yeah?” Hand on her chin, she prompts, “What’s that look like?”

“For me, somewhere with writing, hopefully.” Jirou should know the answer already. She’s using him for a talking point. “Although the journalism field doesn’t appear to be very welcoming for retired heroes.”

Jirou mutters, “That’s because the news is a nightmare. You should start a vlogging channel instead.” Shouto glares at her.

If Jirou is going to play dirty games, he won’t let her escape this one without her own embarrassing
"I thought you said you didn’t care what I did after I retired?"

“You’re stupid,” Jirou says flatly. “You’re my friend, of course I care. I know you said that just so everyone else would have to hear it. Bastard.”

Unsympathetic, Shouto says, “You should’ve asked Izuku to replace me. You get what you take.”

“I guess I do.” Jirou leans back in her chair. “Anything else you feel like sharing about your very unexciting, normie civilian life?”

“Not particularly.” She groans and pulls off her headphones. “Take my advice next time.”

He has a feeling she’s itching to grab her box of pens and start throwing them at him. “Yeah, sure. I will. Fuck you.”

“I hope you get fined for saying that,” Shouto tells her, sincere.

“I hope you get food poisoning on your date with my girlfriend.” Jirou retorts. She brightens considerably at the thought. “I’ll tell Momo to take photos.”

“She won’t.” Shouto isn’t too concerned at Momo betraying him over something like that.

Jirou shuffles her cue cards, humming. “I was supposed to have an actual agenda today, but you really threw a wrench in my plans. Like you said -- I’ll take what I can get, or whatever. Help me out here. Pick one. We’ll talk about whatever’s on it.”

He takes the cue card and frowns, squinting. His vision, as of late, is less and less predictable. A side-effect he assumes from his last great villain encounter. “We can always talk about you,” Shouto suggests, discarding the card. Jirou throws a pen at him. “But I guess we can keep talking about me. As the host, it’s your decision.”

“Cool. Back to you,” Jirou says. “How can you make yourself more entertaining in -- let’s say, hypothetically -- the next thirty seconds?”

“Or I could talk about my boyfriend, I think he’s rather entertaining.” The cue cards are next, most of them flying in every direction. Very few come in contact with their intended target (his face, most likely).

“Bastard,” Jirou mouths at him. “No, I don’t think you should. I think he’s really boring. Definitely not worth mentioning. In fact, so boring, I already forgot what you said. Were you talking about how many interesting, very normal, activities you did this week? As a single, definitely available, currently unemployed, not in a committed relationship man living in the most exciting city in the world?”

“I disagree,” Shouto says. “I think he’s worth mentioning. He’s already had plenty of visits on your show, I thought that would make him worthy of your exciting standards.”

“Nope, definitely not. Never met your boyfriend before.” Shouto raises both eyebrows at her. “I didn’t even know you had a boyfriend, this is the first I’m hearing about him. Ever. That’s so funny.” Her fake laughter is incredibly forced. “Well, I’ve learned new things about you today. How fun and exciting is that? Uh, so, we’re gonna break really quick and I’ll be back to DJ the rest of your commercial free afternoon.” Jirou mutes his mic, even before the ON AIR light stops flashing, and kicks him so hard his chair flies back into the wall.

“Midoriya’s agent is gonna kill me!” Jirou scowls. “See if I ever invite you back here again,
“Sounds good to me,” Shouto says, rubbing the sore area of his lower calf where her boot made contact. Jirou kicks him again, not as hard, but with enough force to sting. (Shouto pushes over the box of pens on her desk on the way out and chuckles at her frustrated groan.)

Enough time passes between Jirou taking him hostage and Izuku’s newest text. Where r U, the first one reads, followed by, Nvm I see youre busy. Have to change. Topfloor in 10.

He doesn’t know when Momo returned to the building, but he walks out of the elevator on the top floor and sees her standing in the bullpen. She steals him aside while he waits for Izuku to finish changing. Shouto looks out the window over the tower, searching among the lights and buildings. What he wants to find, he isn’t sure, but he is relieved to see the skyline hasn’t changed too much since his leave. The office is uncharacteristically quiet, but this kind of quiet doesn’t unsettle him. While he doesn’t always check the agency emails that Momo accidentally forwards him from time to time, he thinks he remembers her mentioning that most of the afternoon staff was leaving with Aoyama for a field trip on the coast. It would explain the dramatic shift in the atmosphere in the building. The feeling of emptiness, missing all of the regular staff and interns he saw in the office hours before.

Her footsteps are quiet. Watching her reflection in the glass, he waits for her to speak. “It’s funny,” Momo reflects, having found her words. “I assumed after your retirement you’d finally get some peace and quiet.” Shouto huffs. “How foolish of me to assume something like that.”

“It’s not like I go looking for trouble,” Shouto says. “But I have a very interesting life.”

“You do,” Momo says, softer. “I also assumed that my role in your life would shrink, become less important. I think I was afraid we’d become distant, going our separate ways. It isn’t like that at all.”

“No,” Shouto agrees. “It isn’t like that.”

Momo takes his hand. “Do you remember what I said to you when I asked you to join my team?” Her eyes are filled with hope; so much that it aches. Like her open-ended apartment clause, her hand always reaching out should he choose to take it.

“I never forgot,” Shouto assures her. “A lot has changed since then, but the message is the same. I hope you remember it, too.”

“Of course,” Momo murmurs. She turns, faces the city, tiny light flares dancing in her eyes. He doesn’t ask what is bothering her. If she wishes to tell him, she will do it on her own time.

Izuku makes a noise behind them, dropping one hand over her shoulder and the other around Shouto’s waist. Momo (crouching slightly) leans into their awkward three-person hug. In the reflection, his face blurs among the buildings and lights.

“I’m hungry, can we go get food now?” Izuku complains a few minutes into their comforting embrace. Momo laughs, resting her chin over Izuku’s head (despite his complaints), and turns away.

Izuku steers them to the elevator, Shouto turning to ask him a question and realizes he can’t see Izuku’s face either. He knows where his face should be, the indistinct line between his hair and his skin, but he can’t make out the details, Izuku’s expression, anything at all.

“Something on my face?” Izuku asks, light, unconcerned. Shouto shakes his head and blinks,
rubbing one eye with his hand. Izuku’s face wobbles at the edges. He squints and forces the features of his face into view -- even though the strain sends a throb of pain through the front of his head.

“No,” Shouto answers, following Momo out to the first floor. “I was…” No words come to mind. “…thinking. Nothing to worry about.” The lights of the city blur around him, ever crowded, as he thinks: tonight they may, finally, swallow him whole.

[Video: DEKU SAYS TRANS RIGHTS!!
Thumbnail image: Hero Deku at a convention booth, awkwardly filmed from the table at a low angle. He’s grinning in the frame with a pen in one hand and the other holding down a stack of flyers. His gloves are sitting on the table beside him, and he is wearing his celebratory white cape as part of his costume.]

Posted 2 years ago by DekuFC | Subscribe
233k views

i asked deku if i could record him saying trans rights at herocon and he said “yeah” and i got this. u can hear me giggling in the background the whole time i;m sorry

Comments 321

farinaheen - 8 months ago
U heard it hear first folkes...DEKU SAYS TRANS RIGHTS!!!! Transphobes perish instantly
View 3 replies

DoctorDilamo- 6 months ago
Omg this is so wild. SO I i was actually right behind u while u were filming and i gave deku my trans flag after u left and told him i really appreciated how supportive he is for the trans community and how much it means to me and everyone else. and he started crying. i love him so much i really can’t express it in words but seeing this reminded me and made me :’)
View 6 replies
> DekuFC - OMGGGG WAIT WERE U THE ONE THAT GAVE HIM THE GIANT FLAG THAT HE WORE AS A CAPE ON STAGE??? I STARTED CRYING WHEN I SAW IT I LOVE HIM SO MUCH THANK U
>> DoctorDilamo- yes :D

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Red Riot & Froppy at equaliTy Conference - Sponsryy9
108k views

"Whats a gender sounds terrible” ft earphone jack & luminesce - RadioJackEdits
283k views
For all his concerns over Izuku acting oblivious at times, he knows that is rarely the case. Most of the time, Shouto wishes he was a little less observant.

Surely, his behavior is not so drastically different that it would raise concern. Little changes in his routine. Longer response time to text messages. A newfound preference for phone calls over messaging. Going through the motions, choosing a book to read before bed and realizing he can’t. The characters are nothing more than a formless stain of black ink between the pages. He can’t write (not that he was doing much on his own), can’t focus long enough to put down any words in the blank document he’s had open on his laptop for months.

In the following weeks he comes to terms with the new limitations of his vision. It’s not the first time he’s endured the loss of vision, but he was too young to remember. To live with the frustration of reaching for something he had, once, and finding nothing. He decides it’s not worth complaining. A few headaches and days where everything is too blurry for him to tell the difference between the door and the wall are far more minor, inconsequential things to live with. He should be grateful to be alive.

“When were you going to tell me?” Izuku asks, towelling dry their salad bowl and fixing his gaze on the wall. Shouto is washing dishes and almost drops the glass into the sink. He does, unfortunately, twist the tap the wrong way and spray the two of them with a blast of hot water.

“Tell you what,” Shouto replies dumbly.

Izuku rubs his face with his elbow, clearing the water from his face with a scowl. “You know I’m not an idiot, right?”

Shouto, not following whatever direction Izuku is chasing, repeats, “What.”

“I know something’s wrong, Shouto,” Exasperated, Izuku throws the towel onto the counter. “I pay attention. So does Momo-san.” Less serious, he adds, “She told me you mentioned needing reading glasses. Do you really think I wouldn’t notice? You were reading a book upside down last night. I never heard you say anything about having vision problems.”

“Traitor,” Shouto mutters, lacking any real bitterness.

Izuku catches his hand, still wet with dish soap, and Shouto panics at the wetness under his eyes. He assumed Izuku was wiping away the water he sprayed on them by accident. “How long?” Izuku asks, serious.

“You already know,” Shouto sighs. “I’m sure you’ve figured it out.” He reads Izuku’s guilt from his face. “If you’re going to blame yourself for--”

Izuku interrupts him with a firm shake of his head. “No. And I -- I know. But it doesn’t make me feel any better. You’re supposed to tell me things like that. We promised each other, remember?”

He protests, “It isn’t that important,” and quiets at the stern look Izuku gives him. Silent, Shouto hears his intention all the same: You’re important to me. Shouto pulls him close, chin resting over his head, and promises again.

Later, he will arrange the appointment for himself. Izuku picks him up from the office as promised. Shouto can’t read the time on his phone screen due to his fuzzy vision, so he isn’t sure how much time passes from the procedure to Izuku’s arrival.
“Your vision will improve with time,” the doctor tells him, barely passing her eyes over Shouto’s chart. Shouto knows she said her name at the beginning of their meeting but he missed most of her introduction. It’s not like he can read her badge, either. She frowns. “But -- without having the exact cause for why it changed so dramatically, there’s not much else I can do. You’ll need glasses for the rest.”

Shouto says, “I can live with that.”

“I’m sure you can,” the doctor agrees. “I’m not sure how effective the healing will be. I can tell you have some older scarring on your left, likely some other form of healing was used to save your vision?”

She’s asking him about the scar. “I don’t know. I was very young.” The doctor finishes her examination and takes him into the next room. Within five minutes he’s checked out, dark shades covering his eyes to help with sensitivity.

He squints at the people sitting in the waiting room and wracks his memory for the color of Izuku’s shirt when he dropped him off. Izuku doesn’t keep him waiting very long. “Hey! Shouto, over here!” If not for him, Shouto would’ve walked right into the glass door on their exit. “Can you even see me right now?”

“No,” Shouto says honestly. He’s pretty sure he’s looking at Izuku’s head. To Izuku, he must look like he’s staring out into space. “The doctor said that was normal. I should have my vision back by the end of the day.”

Izuku makes him dinner, doting on him with extra care (as much as Shouto doesn’t want to admit, he likes it. Only a little). He picks up dinner for both of them, running errands up and down the stairs so Shouto doesn’t have to try and climb them himself.

Shouto’s not entirely sure, but he’s pretty sure Izuku replaced the barstools. Not that he could tell by looking at them, but he doesn’t remember the counter brushing his knees. He tries not to think about the implications of Izuku exploiting his temporary blindness to replace more of his old furniture.

He’s more sure his headache, now a dull throb, is fading. Small mercies.

gaydeku:

deku confirmed on earphone jack’s podcast today he’s been living with todoroki “entropy” shouto in the same apartment...AND he brought up his “mysterious partner” again and slipped a few pronouns. specifically “he” and “his” pronouns.

gaydeku:
updated becus i read more translations:
“YOUR BOYFRIEND” “I ALWAYS HAVE TIME FOR YOU” BITCH???? WHAT? WHAT???? HELLO????

todoshotos:
> context for the rest of you because i know masa’s screaming doesn’t include any context (thank you to rei @j-jyrou for translating!! go follow her for more international hero news stuff, she’s amazing and speaks more languages than i can count)

From the english translated transcripts of Radio Jack’s Empty Booth Broadcast Podcast: s6e28

#1
09:42-10:03
EJ: You’ve stayed in Tokyo since July?
D: Yes.
EJ: A long time for a temporary [position], but what next? I know your fans are curious about you [future].
D: I’m not going anywhere for awhile. I realized I’m here to stay for a long time. Unless I’m fired [by Creati] or Shouto kicks me out of our apartment[...]

OUR?????? APARTMENT????????????

#2
14:09-14:29
D: Do you have something to confess to me? I didn’t see this, but I’ve had worse [partners].
EJ: I’m not a homewrecker. You’ve got a boyfriend to worry about, he won’t be happy to hear I’ve stolen you from him. (cut-out)
D: (break) My fictional boyfriend.
EJ: (cut-in) And I am a lesbian. Yes, sorry. You’re right. The fictional boyfriend. He is fictional and not real. Make believe boyfriend.
D: Yes, he’s not real[...]

BOYFRIEND????????????

#3
19:25-19:48
D: I used to be early to everything, I had too much anxiety about being late. But now I have a full time job that makes being on time impossible. It feels like I never have enough time.
EJ: [probably says the equivalent of ‘it be like that sometimes’ but she’s laughing so much it’s basically unintelligible?]
D: I told Shouto ‘I’ll always make time for you, don’t worry’ but he was so embarrassed that I said it in front of so many strangers that he left at the next stop without me.
EJ: He told me that you yelled it so loud people could hear in the next car over. That’s why he got off [the train]. And I’m pretty sure what you actually said was ‘I’d spend all of my time with you if I could, but since I can’t, I’ll find a way so I always make time for you.’ Something like that. I don’t know how he [Todoroki] wasn’t immediately swooning with a line like that. I only know this because I teased it out of him. He was so red [faced] the whole time.
D: In my defense I had a concussion. I barely remember that conversation. He was the one who repeated everything back to me.
EJ: More permanent brain damage, amazing!
D: Shouto told me after he did find it very romantic, but I also threw up [on him] when we got home. Does that mean I win or lose [romantic] points?
I WOULD HONESTLY JUST DIE INSTANTLY IF SOMEBODY SAID THAT TO ME. INSTANT K.O. how do you not spontaneously combust after somebody says that to you

also im fucking crying who allowed either of them to be this funny. this show deserves every award for comedy

gaydeku: well i know for a fact that todoroki shoto can spontaneously combust at will so i guess the better question is: Why Didn’t He?

gaydeku: AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA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Defending himself, Shouto retorts, “I wasn’t sure what to pick. I thought they looked familiar enough to me.” Izuku keeps laughing. “I like Tenya’s glasses. They’re perfectly acceptable glasses.” That only sets Izuku off in another round of uncontrollable, shrieking laughter.

Shouto takes two pictures: one of himself in the mirror and a picture of Izuku on the floor and sends both to Tenya. *he won’t stop laughing at me*, Shouto complains. *I think they are very handsome on you!* Tenya replies. *We’re matching!*

The reactions of his other friends is, needless to say, full of mixed opinions. Ochaco compliments them, but in the end she agrees with Izuku. Not that he’s surprised she would take his side. “People like you and me aren’t meant to wear anything with squares,” Ochaco confides, like they’re sharing a secret. Momo overwhelmingly approves and takes several photos of him for her Instagram page. Aoyama voices his opinion through several cryptic tweets on his account. Jirou laughs so loudly that she is kicked out of the restaurant they’re eating in.

It takes a few days for Izuku’s chuckles to die down. Shouto is too stubborn to order a different pair, and takes to propping them on his forehead so he can slide them down when they are needed. Sometimes he forgets they are there, which Izuku also teases him for.

There’s only so much his pride can take, with each time he asks over the following days, “*Izuku, have you seen my glasses--?*” and Izuku replying, without fail, pointing to the top of his head and laughing.


**Posting 15 hours ago by BuzzfeedCeleb ✔️ | Unsubscribe**

1.2M views

*“Inviting all of us here was a mistake. I know somebody’s going to break something expensive.”***

***(DISTANT EXPLOSION)***

*“Don’t say I never warned you.”*

We needed to attempt something new, exciting, and incredibly daring to revive our indifferent audience and save our failing media sharing company…but in our efforts created something that the world wasn’t ready for. (Disclaimer: No heroes were harmed in the making of this video.)


If you like our content, subscribe to get instant alerts about the videos from our channel! [https://bit.ly/6mH92kL1](https://bit.ly/6mH92kL1)

...P.S. An unexpected visitor wandered into our set halfway through filming. We’re not sure how he got in, but we also didn’t want to be rude and tell him to leave...so he’s here too. Spot him if you can.
MLP DYNAMITE - 6 hours ago
Dynamite: “what the fuck do you mean I got Washy the washing machine hero”
Earphonejack: “The quiz tells no lies. You /are/ washy”
(small, barely audible explosion)
ABSOLUTELY FUCKING GOLDEN COMEDY THANK YOU FOR THIS BLESSING
View 2 replies

Gotta Fast Car - 12 hours ago
Deku: ‘Congratulations you are the best most legendary hero!’ wow i cant believe i got all might
haha thats so funny
Deku: (sees the answer is actually Deku, starts crying)
Everyone else: laughing or also sympathetic crying
View 15 replies

I am All Might’s Secret Brother - 5 hours ago
pause 4:09 ull thank me
View 11 replies
>B RICE IS N ICE - a wild todoroki spotted looking confused as 2 how he got there
>>J09nexx - I Found him again at 11:09 look closely topright
>>>meronpan - zoom in and enhance MORE
>>>>Pinkreleapse - i must know why hes wearing ingeniums glasses >:o

sEennMyior - 1 hour ago
Quiz: You are the coolest, incredibly talented, rude mouthed hero
Earphone jack: hell yeah
quiz: congratulations you are ENTROPY
Earphone jack, immediately: THIS QUIZ IS F*CKING RIGGED
View 5 replies
>M1ruka - @9:34 look in the background u can see him laughing at her reaction
>>Cornwalled - ;_; so cute

88Myukiii88 - 6 hours ago
Is nobody going to talk about how ridiculous the editing in this video is. THE opening shot with
ingenium surrounded by the other heroes in horse masks? All the random cuts to the heroes either
breaking stuff or setting something on fire?? ALIEN QUEEN’S ENTIRE VILLAINESQUE
MONOLOGUE BECAUSE SHE GOT CHARGEBOLT AS HER QUIZ ASSIGNED
HEROSONA? LUMINESCE CONSTANTLY PHOTOBombING FROM THE WEIRDEST
ANGLES? WHY IS TODOROKI THERE? WHAT?

This entire video reads like a shitpost but it’s glorious fuck you buzzfeed for making me watch an
entire video from your stupid ass channel

Pay your editors more for the content that keeps you in business. COWARDS
View 16 replies
>Chesed Pizza - i was with you up until “quiz assigned herosona” and i blacked out before i could
finish reading the rest of your message

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i made another entrodeku conspiracy video and its even better than the last one - HighwayRider77
107k views
Izuku stumbles in the door a few minutes after five. Dawn is still a little bit a ways from creeping through the open shade. Hours before, Izuku told him not to stay up and wait for him. Shouto couldn’t sleep, unable to close his eyes. The apartment is too still. Too quiet. He hears Izuku’s uneven breathing from down the hall, heavy footing on one side. Favoring one foot over the other, landing heavier on every other step. Shouto left the door unlocked, but he hears Izuku cursing for his keys. Pushes the door open with another curse after he realizes it was already unlocked and closes it behind him. Before the door is completely open, Shouto scolds, “Please tell me you let someone look at you before coming back here.”

He is greeted by Izuku’s shy smile and a collection of orange bandaids across his face. One is curiously hanging off his ear -- like it was pulled off from its original placement and came in contact with another area of skin by accident. “Yeah, yeah, I did. Momo-san threatened to suspend me for another week if I didn’t.” He takes off the top half of his suit and lets out a sigh at the sight of Shouto lounging over every available corner of the couch.

“I don’t know if I should be offended that you listen to her more than me.” Shouto holds his gaze, shifting his legs from the other end and granting his boyfriend access to the other half of the cushion. Izuku jumps for the opportunity (literally), barely missing Shouto’s vital organs in his landing. He wiggles around until he finds a comfortable spot. Shouto doesn’t want to admit out loud that the new couch is much more comfortable than their last one. He fears Izuku may take the opportunity to replace all of the other furniture in his apartment. (He saw mattresses in Izuku’s search history, and he fears the bed is probably the next victim.)

“She’s my boss. You’re just my boyfriend.” Izuku opens his arms and leans his head into Shouto’s shoulder.

Shouto leans away. “Just your boyfriend?”

Izuku pops one eye open, but he closes it and smiles with an amused hum. “Don’t be too jealous. I heard she’s already taken.”

“As if she would ever let us forget.” Shouto replies. There is only so much time he can dance
around the question he desperately wants to ask. “What happened tonight?”

“Uhhh,” Izuku shrinks into the side of his shoulder. Shouto presses his cold hand into Izuku’s stiff shoulder. Izuku sighs like he stepped into a steam bath. “There was an accident. One of my boots malfunctioned. Got slammed into the side of the old theater building.” Shouto sighs again, heavier. “Hey, I got lucky. I went right through the window. Barely a scratch.”

With lesser enthusiasm, Shouto echoes, “…Lucky.”

“There was a production going on,” Izuku explains. “I crashed through the ceiling and landed on stage. I think it was a very memorable performance for the audience. And I got tickets for their next show because they felt bad for me!”

“Lucky,” Shouto repeats again.

Continuing with his earlier optimism, Izuku adds, “Do you know how crazy that timing is? What are the chances of that ever happening again?”

“What are the chances,” Shouto agrees flatly.

Izuku shrugs, amused by Shouto’s less than enthusiastic reaction. “Once in a lifetime experience…”

Shouto snaps back, “Don’t turn this into a proverb.” Izuku pretends to fall asleep on his shoulder and turns into dead weight. Shouto tries to force him upstairs to their bed and gives up after two attempts. He can’t blame Izuku for feeling too lazy to walk up the stairs, he is too tired to move. He imagines Izuku must feel even more exhausted than he does.

Izuku pulls his head back, moving back from the outer cushion. He lifts his hands to Shouto’s face, stroking his thumb against his cheek until Shouto relaxes into a light doze. His hands, though rough and calloused from layers of scar tissue, are gentle as they remove his glasses from his face. Shouto opens his eyes, slow, and blinks sleepily at him. Izuku smiles -- full of love, promise, resolve -- and leans down, forehead brushing the tip of his brow. His glasses drop onto the cushion, then the floor. Shouto warns, “If you break my glasses --” and Izuku kisses his words away.

They sleep, limbs tangled together on the couch, until their rude interruption later in the day. Jirou kicks the door to their apartment open and screams loud enough to wake their neighbors on the next floor. Shouto doesn’t need to see her to know it’s her; he knows the sound of her overdramatic screaming by pitch and tone. Izuku kicks him in the stomach in his panic to stand, leaving Shouto groaning into the cushion.

Jirou must be incredibly frightened by the sight of the Number One Hero in half of his costume, holding a pillow like a weapon over his head. She screams again. “How did you get in here?” Izuku drops the pillow once he recognizes her. Shouto heaves himself up on the cushion and squints at her.

“I picked the lock!” Jirou closes her eyes, opening one and sighing with relief. “Oh, good. At least you’re both wearing pants.”

“I told you not to break in here anymore,” Shouto tells her, fumbling around on the table for his glasses. Sliding them on, he stands and sleepily walks for the stairs. Jirou screams again.

“I don’t want to see your -- aawugghh! I spoke too soon!” She ducks under the book he throws at her from the side table. “Where are your pants?”

Gesturing to his shorts, he says, “I am wearing pants.” Shouto dodges her retaliatory throw. “I’m
wearing pajamas because I was in my apartment. Sleeping,” He scowls at the cover on the ground. It’s one of the books his mother gave him. “Stop ruining my stuff.”

“You’re the one who woke up late!” Jirou retorts. Izuku ignores the two of them and goes into the kitchen to make himself breakfast. “Get dressed. You’re supposed to be doing things today! Outside. In the real world. Momo told me to come get you because you two are always late --”

“S’usuallymyfault,” Izuku says, mouth full of leftover egg and rice. He swallows and adds, “Do you want breakfast?”

“Breakfast?” Hands moving wildly, she pushes Shouto up the stairs and chases after Izuku to push him up the first steps. “It’s like four in the afternoon! What the hell is wrong with you two?”

“I got home late,” Izuku protests, at the same time Shouto says, “I was doing research.” Jirou throws more curses at them to get dressed.

Jirou refuses to step foot in their bedroom while they’re changing (as if the three of them didn’t change into their costumes in the same area for years). Shouto rolls his eyes at her. Through the door, Jirou shouts: “Do you even know what today is?”

“No,” Shouto answers. Izuku echoes his reply. He can hear her cursing under her breath from the other side of the door. Jirou waits until they give her the all-clear (shirts and pants, appropriately dressed) and drags them out of the apartment.

“You’ve got a press meeting, in like, fifteen minutes,” Jirou tells Izuku. She glares at Shouto. “You’re supposed to be on a live show tonight. Together. Does that ring any bells?” Shouto stares at her blankly. “This shit always happens when Momo isn’t here.” Jirou mutters darkly. “You two are the worst. The worst.”

“I’m doing a what?” Shouto asks, but Jirou ignores him.

Glancing at Izuku, Shouto looks to him for a reminder. Izuku scratches his head and pulls out his phone. He plays his voicemail, pressing his phone to his ear before turning on the speaker. Shouto has yet to meet Izuku’s agent, but he knows the sound of their voice. “Good morning, I’m calling to remind you about your appearance on Night in Tokyo Live, TONIGHT, I hope you got my other voicemail and the message from --”

The memory clicks into place; the voicemails from the day before, Momo vaguely reminding him before she left about his agreement to appear on another live special. “Oh shit, that live show.” Izuku blinks. “Oh. I forgot about that.”

Their reaction doesn’t reinspire any confidence for Jirou, who glares at them through the rearview mirror. She pulls to a sharp stop outside the agency steps, barking at Izuku to get out of the car. From the window, Shouto realizes Izuku’s tie is crooked. He doesn’t have time to fix it as Jirou is already merging into traffic.

Alone in the car, Jirou sighs and taps her fingers against the steering wheel. “You guys need to start using a calendar, seriously.” Jirou drops him off outside the Night in Tokyo stage building. She hits the gas before he’s completely out of the car and races for the exit. Shouto makes a rude gesture at her through the window, watching her cackle in the mirror.

The last time he was on a stage like this, Izuku was meant to be there with him, too. He wouldn’t be too surprised if the same situation plays out again; Izuku is busier than ever, called away for emergencies at the most inconvenient times. Even busier with Momo hosting a conference
overseas. Shouto knows he’s working double shifts to cover for her absence. Barring any significant emergency, he should (hopefully) be sticking around for longer than his last visit.

The host, Hidaki (now with bright orange hair), gives him a hearty handshake and greets him like an old friend before running off to harass the camera crew about the set-up.

Izuku spots him first and pulls him aside before the final call. Shouto doesn’t realize he’s there until he feels a hand on his cheek, dragging him out of his thoughts and back into reality. One hand winds into Shouto’s hair and pulls, dragging him down a few inches and planting a messy kiss that doesn’t quite reach his mouth. He laughs as Shouto draws back. “What’s that for?” Shouto asks.

“Saying hello,” Izuku grins, smiling and chasing Shouto for another kiss. Shouto picks up his chin and Izuku misses, pressing a kiss to his jaw instead. “I know what my agent said, but…”

“I’ll do my best to keep you in line.” Izuku’s publicist, agent, and press manager delivered a polite -- but very sternly worded -- voicemail warning them about their upcoming liveshow. Izuku played each for fifteen seconds before deleting all three of them.

“...it feels silly.” Izuku finishes with a sigh.

Shouto presses his lips to Izuku’s warm forehead and brushes his short curls aside. “They made several very convincing points. Broadcasting our relationship could make me a target.” He considers. “Or, at least a larger target than I already am. Like your manager said -- you have enough on your plate to worry about. Don’t add unnecessary stress for yourself.”

“Yeah, sure.” Izuku agrees, unconvinced. “But I don’t want us to hide or -- or pretend we’re something we’re not. We shouldn’t be afraid. What’s the point --”

“I know what my agent said,” Shouto interrupts. “But what’s the point of being the Number One Hero if I can’t even have a boyfriend without constantly worrying something’s going to happen? What’s the point of all of this if we live the rest of our lives afraid of the future?” He’s been thinking about this for a while, if Shouto were to guess. Long enough for it to spill out in an angry rush.

Shouto opens his mouth, closes it, and then opens it again before he can change his mind. He’s not as gifted as Izuku with words, but he tries, he tries, and sometimes he stumbles on the right words. He can only hope these are it: “As long as you’re in it,” he says slowly. “I don’t see why I should be afraid. We can do it together.” Izuku’s eyes shine under the low hanging lights, and Shouto knows they were the right ones. (This is not about telling everyone. They could do that anywhere, anytime. It’s about accepting they will be afraid, but choosing not to let it hold them back.)

They have no more words to spare, they return to the chaos of the live show. The director’s assistant calls their names and leads them to the side entrance on stage. “Remember to come out after you’re introduced,” he says. “We’re going to break for commercials throughout. If you need something make sure you ask, we don’t read minds around here.” He’s a different assistant from the last time Shouto visited the set. This assistant talks fast, shaking his wild pink hair as he walks. Shouto blinks and he’s gone.

Izuku presses him against the wall while a crew of staff carry a couch onstage. The host is already at their desk, waving to the audience and talking to the first row of the crowd. Even after the area is clear, Izuku leans in. Hands on either side of the wall by his face, trapping Shouto in place. “What happened to discreet?” Shouto asks. Izuku smiles playfully, raising an eyebrow. A few of the crew members take interest in their position, but they’re occupied with setting up the final touches on the set.
“You trust me.” Not a question. Izuku says it like a fact. Like a promise. Shouto nods. He leans in and presses his forehead into Shouto’s neck. “Trust me with this.” He leans back, and Shouto catches himself from stepping forward and reclaiming the space.

The host continues on, talking so fast Shouto is amazed he isn’t red-faced in contrast to his orange ensemble. “Let’s welcome this evening’s guests, Todoroki Shouto and Hero Deku!” The applause is loud, even from backstage. He lets Izuku step out first once they’re given the cue to walk onstage. Their linked hands drop before they are anywhere in the camera’s line of sight.

Izuku fakes him out for the first seat, resulting in an awkward wait-which-seat-is-mine back and forth. The audience loves him for it. Shouto kicks his ankle after they’re seated. Izuku ignores him and waves to the audience, “Oh, sorry Shouto! I think I took your seat.” To the audience, he grins, “Thank you for having us!”

Hidaki makes an excited hand gesture and spreads his hands out, inviting the crowd to cheer him on. “We’re glad the two of you could make it! You have each had warm welcomes in the past, but having the two of you on the same show has been rather difficult, yes? I know last time there was a scheduling conflict, but we made it work. Didn’t we, Todoroki-san? I think it was a lovely show!”

“I suppose,” Shouto says.

Izuku teases, “I wish I’d been there too! But I’m here now, right?”

“Right,” Hidaki agrees. “Well, we don’t want to waste time. A couple items on our agenda tonight for the both of you. First a few questions to get us started. We’ve got a little game we’re going to let you two play a little later. It’s called, ‘How Well Do I Know My Best Friend’ ah, maybe you’ve heard of it?”

“How well do I know my best friend?” Shouto repeats with a sincere deadpan. Best friend, Shouto thinks. He glances over at Izuku, who bites his lip. He must be thinking a similar, ridiculous thought.

“How well do I know my best friend?” Shouto repeats with a sincere deadpan. Best friend, Shouto thinks. He glances over at Izuku, who bites his lip. He must be thinking a similar, ridiculous thought.

“Sounds great,” Izuku cheers, not bothering to hide his smirk. “I’m sure I’ll win!”

“That’s the spirit!” Hidaki pulls up his cue cards. “Did you see how many people came here tonight to see you? I think it’s our largest live audience of the year!”

“They were hard to miss,” Shouto says, with absolutely no inflection.

Izuku laughs and elbows his arm. “They’re all here for you, don’t you know? Everyone’s a big fan of Shouto. I mean, who wouldn’t be? He’s so handsome. I’m a fan of his too.” Shouto rolls his eyes at him.

“Aw,” Hidaki croons. “Everyone loves a thriving, happy friendship!” Izuku covers his mouth with his hand and coughs loudly. “Eh? Are you feeling a little sick, Deku-san?”

“No, just a cough.” Shouto would kick him again if he didn’t know it would bring more attention. “Can I have some of your water?” Izuku leans over and takes the bottle Hidaki offers him, pushing as much into Shouto’s personal space as possible. “You’re so ridiculous,” Shouto mutters, hoping the microphone attached to his shirt won’t pick up his voice.

Hidaki also offers Shouto a bottle of water, which he declines. “Everyone properly hydrated? That’s good!” How did Momo ever get him agree to another one of these. “Alright! Back to our main topic of the show tonight, everyone’s been waiting to see the two of you here for a while. As most of us already know, you two have been friends since you were -- in high school, yes?”
“We were in the same class,” Izuku taps his fingers on the side of the empty water bottle. “We met during our first year.”

Hidaki leans forward on the desk, balanced on his elbows and hands under his chin. “Oh? How did you two become friends?”

“Everyone in our class is very close,” Shouto interrupts before Izuku stumbles his way into over-explaining their entire early relationship. “We spent a lot of time together, as well as everyone else in the hero course.”

“I know in the past you’ve called Deku-san one of your first friends,” Hidaki presses. “Is that true?”

Shouto doesn’t remember when he said that, but he must have shared that at one point. “Yes, Izuku is very persistent when it comes to making friends. If he has decided he wants to be your friend, there’s not a lot that can stop him.”

“Persistent! Wow, that’s almost a compliment.” Izuku grins. “I usually get told that’s one of my more annoying qualities.”

Shouto shakes his head. “That’s not true.”

“How sweet of you,” Izuku lays a hand on his knee and pats it. “This is why you’re my best friend. Right, Shouto?”

The host looks absolutely clueless about -- or choosing to ignore -- the awkward building tension is in the room and clears his throat. “It is lovely you two have remained good friends after all this time. Were you always this close?”

Izuku answers for him, perhaps too honest, “No. Not always. For a few years after we graduated, we didn’t talk for a while. It happens when you work in our field, we’ve all got a lot of stuff going on. We got to catch up when I moved my office into Creati’s Agency, so now we see each other almost every day!”

“What about now that you aren’t working together?” The host asks. It’s an innocent enough sounding question.

“Well, I moved in with Shouto because it was easier than trying to find a new apartment,” Izuku says. “So, even when I’m busy all day, he’s usually there when I get home. Sometimes he stays up to wait around for me! Like a really good friend.” Shouto does kick him this time and he doesn’t care who sees.

“Yes, my apartment is rather lonely without him.” Shouto says, a beat too late. “He murdered all of my plants, but I decided it wasn’t worth kicking him out.”

“I did not,” Izuku gasps. So dramatic. Shouto rolls his eyes. “You know it was all an accident!”


“Yes, very different,” Izuku says. “A lot has changed since then. Not just your apartment.” Considering, he bounces the empty bottle between his hands. Always fidgeting. “Our relationship around this time last year was actually much different than it is now. I like how it’s changed, don’t you?”
Shouto glares at him. He knows Izuku is goading him into saying something that will get him in trouble with his agent, thereby saving Izuku from receiving the brunt of their wrath. Shouto is not so easily beaten. “...Yes.” A significant beat of time later, it becomes clear to everyone else that he does not plan to elaborate further on the area.

The one word response stalls Izuku. The host laughs. “Still a humble man of few words, I see!”

“You're so mean,” Izuku pokes him with the water bottle. “You're lucky I still like you.”

“That’s very nice,” Hidaki says, clearly hoping to cut their banter short and change topics. “We’re about to break for commercial, but everyone please stick around! We’ll be back in a few minutes with more questions for our two lovely gentlemen here.”

Admiring the speed of the stage crew, pulling out chairs and rearranging the set-up for two stools and a warm grey background, Izuku says, “Was that alright?”

“Izuku,” Shouto says, sighing, leaving his train of thought in the open air. He decides words aren’t enough, taking Izuku’s hand in his own. Izuku squeezes it and smiles. “Do whatever it is you want.”

Hidaki re-introduces them after the break. The camera crew gives them the thumbs up after their introduction to the game. “These look like fun,” Izuku says, scrolling through the first few messages. “Do you see any that you want to answer first?”

Shouto looks down at the tablet in his hands and squints, pulling the tablet close to his nose and pulling it back at a distance. It doesn’t make a difference. He can’t read any of it. “I guess I should’ve worn my glasses.”

“Oh! Don’t worry,” Izuku balances the tablet on his lap and pulls out his black case. He grins and offers them to Shouto, pleased. “I brought them for you. I thought you might forget them.” If they weren’t in front of the cameras, Shouto would kiss him. “Uh, I guess I’ll start?” Shouto shrugs. He doesn’t care either way.

Clearing his throat, Izuku straightens his back and holds out the tablet to read. “This question is from Twitter user At Nine Birdi who says, ‘Your utility belt is just a sturdy fanny pack and you know it. When are you going to get rid of it?’”

Izuku pouts. “If you’re going to make fun of anybody’s fanny pack, make fun of Shouto’s. His was so ugly. I wanted to strangle his costume designer every year he wore it.”

Shouto shrugs, unaffected. “I didn’t really care that much.”

“What about my costume?” Izuku draws out his pout with his lower lip out. “Don’t you like it?” He deserves the eyeroll Shouto gives him in response. The audience laughter fills in the background noise. Shouto startles only a little; he forgot they were in front of cameras and a crowd.

Izuku takes his chance to address the audience, inviting them into their liveshow. “Don’t you guys like my costume?” The audience laughter mixes with shouts of “yeeaaah!” from the middle rows. “See, Shouto? Why do you have to be so mean?”

“I like your costume fine when you’re working,” Shouto tells him. “The rest of the time --” He can see from the way Izuku’s shoulders shake that he’s going to regret finishing this sentence. “-- uh, was there a question in there somewhere?” Shouto clears his throat loudly and pretends to read from the tablet. Izuku bends over and laughs, pushing his microphone away from his face to lower the audio feedback.
Fighting back laughter, Izuku nods. “Yes, their question is: Do you both know the story behind the other’s costume?” He stops laughing and freezes. “Wait -- uhhh…”


Izuku puts his head in his hands. “I -- I can’t believe I’m saying this, but I don’t remember if I ever asked why your costumed was designed.”

“Then I win,” Shouto flips the tablet over. “That was fun. Can we go home now?” Scattered laughter from the audience. A loud bell behind them marks Shouto as the winner of the first round, illuminating the number 1 above his head.

The light over Izuku’s glows 0 and he lets out a groan. “Now I really have to beat you.”

If Izuku is treating it like a real competition, the most Shouto can do is humor him. “This question is from user Eyeves Sun. They want to know if either of us know how many boyfriends or girlfriends the other has had. The second one for Izuku because he’s said he’s open to dating both men and women.”

“These are actually rather tame questions,” Izuku comments. “The last time I responded to comments from Twitter, it traumatized me.”

Shouto looks at him. “To answer your question: he’s had one boyfriend,” he answers neutrally.

“Aren’t you going to tell them how you know?” Izuku grins. Shouto swiftly kicks his ankle as retribution. “No? Okay, leave everyone else to guess. And, uh, is this question a little weird? Or is that just me?”

“It is,” Shouto agrees. “I think we should choose another one. Not as private.”

“Uh, right.” Izuku scrolls down a page. “Okay, I like the looks of this one. From user June Bright, who asks: have you done something obvious recently that you know your friend hasn’t noticed? Oh, well, that’s easy. Shouto didn’t realize I painted his bedroom a different color.” There’s a shriek from the audience, a little confused laughter. “It was beige. Very boring. I don’t know how he missed that.”

Shouto conjures a memory of his bedroom and realizes he doesn’t remember the color of the wall at all. “I… I think I will accept defeat this round.” Izuku cheers at the point that glows over his head.

“Oh, this looks good.” Izuku reaches over and points out one of the questions near the bottom.

Shouto taps on the question and reads it aloud: “User Mari Mortey Zero Zero asks: what is the most embarrassing thing you know the other person has done? I think it was the time you convinced Momo to rent an ice cream truck for an event in the field. And then got sick for two days. I came back to my apartment and you were on the floor, moaning on the floor like you were dying. I almost called an ambulance.”

Izuku sputters. “It’s not my fault that dairy and me don’t get along --”

“You ate two gallons of ice cream --”

“-- and, alright, smart guy, here’s a throwback. That time you tweeted from your account how much you liked my big arm muscles. You wouldn’t talk to me for like, a whole day. Momo-san told me you kept setting your hair on fire because you were so embarrassed.” Shouto regrets being on this stage more with every moment. The audience doesn’t care, laughing, shouting approval
over Izuku’s story choice.

“I had no control over writing, editing, or posting the contents of that message.” Izuku shakes his head and mouths liar. Shouto glares at him. Their scoreboard appoints them each another score, despite Shouto’s protests.

Izuku taps his fingers along the side of the tablet and waits for the sound in the crowd to grow under a manageable level. “I think they’re telling us that we’re almost out of time, but I have another question from Twitter user Etsuko Nine Nine. She wants to know if either of us know how long it’s been since the other person was kissed. Wow, what an odd question. An odd question indeed.” Izuku glances at Shouto, and raises a brow; a nonverbal question.

Shouto glances down at his tablet and realizes Izuku completely lied about the last tweet. The tablets are dark, no sign of the messages or questions from before.

“Very odd question,” Shouto agrees. He forces his most indifferent expression in preparation for the chaos his boyfriend has set in motion.

“What time is it?” Izuku asks the audience. “I don’t have my watch on me.” The audience replies in a swell of broken replies and scattered yells; 8:45. Izuku’s grin widens. “Oh, thank you! To answer that question: it’s only been about a half hour.” The yells and disorganized replies cease. He glances at Shouto and Shouto sees a wildfire flash of glee behind his eyes. “That’s a pretty long time to go without a kiss. Don’t you think, Shouto?”

A rhetorical question, Shouto assumes. Izuku doesn’t give him time to reply. He stands suddenly, pulling Shouto along by the arm, and dips him. He’s smiling as he leans down and kisses him, one hand pressed along Shouto’s back and the other on the back of his neck. Shouto feels his laughter, all while smiling into the next kiss.

Izuku releases him sometime after the audience stops screaming loud enough to shatter his eardrums. “Well, that was fun. Thank you for letting us play your best friend quiz!” He is insufferably smug for the rest of the live show.

Walking out of the stage, in a daze from the amount of people congratulating them or asking when they started dating, Izuku pokes his cheek to capture his attention. Shouto shakes his head at him as they exit the elevator and return to the street. He looks up at the sky, all of the lights winking down at him from the billboards and the buildings running from one end of the horizon to the other.

As Shouto warned him, Izuku’s agent leaves a six minute voicemail composed solely of unintelligible screaming. He sees the notification blinking from the corner of Izuku’s phone while he answers his other messages. Izuku grimaces. Shouto doesn’t feel any sympathy for him. “You make your own problems,” Shouto tells him.

“I really do,” Izuku agrees. “But this is the furthest thing from a problem. People would find out eventually. I’d rather be able to decide when that is. Wouldn’t you?”

Shouto hums, accepting Izuku’s arm under his as they walk to their station. “Yes, I would. If that’s your argument for why you --”

Izuku leans in, bumping his hip. Shouto course-corrects the two of them before they fall off the curb. “-- decided to make a spectacle? I think it was very romantic, actually,” Izuku finishes. “I think being spontaneous makes everything more exciting.”

Shouto takes his hand, matching his steps down the stairs. “Is that so?”
“Yeah,” Izuku grins. “You gotta be more spontaneous. I can’t be the one surprising you all the time!”

You do, Shouto thinks. You always have. Warming Izuku’s cold hand between his own, he amends, “I’ll keep that in mind.”
press f to pay respects @proheroricky
I AM SHITTING MY ENTIRE DICK OFF
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH I CANT BELIEVE THAT HAPPENED
3 retweets | 22 favorites
11:26 PM - 5 June X1

mira & the todoriya agenda @e_ntrodek_u
Replying to @proheroricky explain
3 retweets | 22 favorites
11:26 PM - 5 June X1

press f to pay respects @proheroricky
Replying to @e_ntrodek_u hold on
0 retweets | 2 favorites
11:28 PM - 5 June X1

press f to pay respects @proheroricky
@ everyone reading this: #ENTRODEKU IS REAL BABEY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
#NITLIVE (SOUND WARNING) im SORRRYY u can hear my screaming in the back
[Video attached: Blurry frozen still of Deku with his arms wrapped around Todoroki. Their limbs are caught in a motion blur around their faces, but Deku is smiling from the profile.]
582 retweets | 19,982 favorites
11:33 PM - 5 June X1

mira & the todoriya agenda @e_ntrodek_u
@proheroricky Lmao. ok
0 retweets | 4 favorites
11:36 PM - 5 June X1

mira & the todoriya agenda @e_ntrodek_u
wait fr?????
0 retweets | 2 favorites
11:36 PM - 5 June X1

press f to pay respects @proheroricky
Replying to @e_ntrodek_u CHECK THE TAG
1 retweet | 6 favorites
11:36 PM - 5 June X1

mira & the todoriya agenda @e_ntrodek_u
Replying to @e_ntrodek_u WHAT THE FUFRRFUJCURJCFKC
0 retweets | 6 favorites
11:38 PM - 5 June X1

press f to pay respects @proheroricky
if you also passed out from the SHEER AUDACITY of that incredible power move i wouldnt blame you.
0 retweets | 6 favorites
11:47 PM - 5 June X1

press f to pay respects @proheroricky
@e_ntrodek_u pick up your phone you bitch. im needy and i need to scream
2 retweets | 10 favorites
press f to pay respects for masa @proheroricky
would it be considered too dramatic if i said i feel like im transcending human existence
17 retweets | 107 favorites
11:54 PM - 5 June X1

press f to pay respects for masa @proheroricky
I just………….cant express all my emotions right now. but theres a lot of them
3 retweets | 26 favorites
11:58 PM - 5 June X1

press f to pay respects for masa @proheroricky
one of the most iconic and legendary top heroes comes out online & becomes an inspirational figure & spokesperson for lgbt people all around the world. decides to dramatically reveal he’s
dating one of his close friends on LIVE TV & DIPS HIM IN THE MOST ROMANTIC KISS IVE EVER SEEN?? THEN ACTS LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED #entrodeku #nitlive
463 retweets | 2,633 favorites
12:02 AM - 6 June X1

press f to pay respects @proheroricky
THE LOOK ON HIS FACE? he knew EXACTLY what he was doing and he was so fucking
SMUG i sEE it in his EYES #entrodeku #nitlive
202 retweets | 1,705 favorites
12:03 AM - 6 June X1

press f to pay respects @proheroricky
i know you all should be paying respects to me right now cus im Dead but also my respects to
todoroki shouto who looked confused but so in love with his boyfriend deku the number one hero i
can’t even imagine how that must feel knowing that the best hero is your boyfriend and can kiss
you like THAT #entrodeku #nitlive
65 retweets | 528 favorites
12:08 AM - 6 June X1

press f to pay respects @proheroricky
daily reminder i want a boyfriend like that
3 retweets | 34 favorites
12:14 AM - 6 June X1

press f to pay respects @proheroricky
i dont think theres any more ways that deku could mean more to me as a brilliant hero, the kindest
soul, most dramatic nerd in the universe, and everything he represents but yanno here i am crying
again
2 retweets | 49 favorites
12:14 AM - 6 June X1

mira & the todoriya agenda @e_ntrodek_u
@proheroricky is actually crying in our facetime Omg
3 retweets | 15 favorites
12:27 AM - 6 June X1

press f to pay respects @proheroricky
Replying to @e_ntrodek_u i never exaggerate fuck U
0 retweets | 11 favorites
NIGHTINTOYKO!!! LIVE!!! @nitlive
What if we kissed in front of a live studio audience and I was the #1 Hero? Haha, unless... 😏 #NITLive #Entrodeku #YeahThatHappened

[Gif attached: A 7 second clip of Pro Hero Deku pulling his boyfriend into an overdramatic dip kiss, as the camera slowly zooms in and the hands in the audience start flying (blocking some of the shot). Everyone is clearly losing it in the background. Deku is grinning, even from the profile view. His boyfriend, Todoroki Shouto, moves his hands from his sides to the back of the Top Hero’s neck.]

5,928 retweets | 46,928 favorites

DEKU デク✔ @herodeku
Realized just now that I scored LOWER than shouto on the best friends quiz. Unfair
508 retweets | 11,092 favorites
1:07 AM - 26 April X1
Liked by 轟焦凍 Todoroki Shōto

DEKU デク✔ @herodeku
Replying to @herodeku Everyone in the comments is asking so i’ll say it once: YES I HAVE A BOYFRIEND HIS NAME IS SHOUTO AND I LOVE HIM SO MUCH
1,092 retweets | 18,229 favorites
1:14 AM - 6 June X1
Liked by 轟焦凍 Todoroki Shōto, INGENIUM, and 2 others you follow

HeroWatch ✔ @herowatch
...I guess it’s safe to say we’ll be making a few major updates to the “Heroes in confirmed relationships” forum page. What an exciting way to end the week!
144 retweets | 2,003 favorites
1:56 AM - 6 June X1

Morning people are the worst type of people, Shouto reflects, cursing the single ray of light shining directly into his face. The bed beside him is cold, but that doesn’t bother him. That’s not a problem for someone with his abilities. The window -- Shouto squints and turns over to face the other wall - - is a different issue. He doesn’t want to move and pull the shade down. He knows plenty of people who prefer rising early in the morning. One of the only glaring faults in working with Momo, irritatingly cheerful even at the first sign of dawn, teasing him over a cup of coffee. His boyfriend adds an extra layer of irritation, joyfully singing and clapping all of the metal pans together in the middle of a kitchen utensil orchestra from the floor below.

“Izuku,” Shouto closes his eyes, hoping his voice carries down the stairs. “It’s too early.” Izuku continues talking and pan-banging. He sighs, relieved at the beat of silence.

Footsteps from the stairs. Izuku’s voice trickles down the hallway. He sounds like he’s on the phone. Shouto groans into his pillow. He tries bending the pillow over his ears so he can block out the sound of his voice while chasing after the last few minutes of sleep he so desperately wants. Izuku’s laughter mixes in with his slow march to the bedroom.
“Shouto!” Vibrant. Too bright. Too much energy for him to deal with. Shouto groans again and turns his head into the other pillow. “Are you up yet?”

“No, go away,” Shouto mutters, too low for Izuku to hear through the pillow. Izuku shrugs off his reply. His footsteps return to the stairs, quick jumps between steps until he hits the bottom. Shouto’s neck aches from the stiff angle and returns to his comfortable resting position before Izuku’s interruption. But Shouto’s eyes remain open despite his greater desire to keep them closed. Too awake to return to sleep. Shouto gives up (bitterly mourning the extra half hour of sleep he almost reached) and stumbles out of bed, following the sound of Izuku’s voice to the kitchen. He picks up his glasses on the nightstand as an afterthought.

Even from the stairs, the words are too indistinct for him to make out. It is only stepping into the other hallway he makes out Izuku’s half of the conversation: “...like I said, all the nice decor is from me! Shouto wouldn’t let me split the rent, so I’ve been paying him back by slowly replacing all his shitty furniture.” He’s too tired to translate who or what Izuku is talking about. “Don’t tell him I said that. I don’t think he’s noticed yet.” Shouto shuffles behind him and pours himself a glass of water. Izuku is preoccupied with whoever he’s talking to on the phone and doesn’t notice Shouto walking behind him. He has his phone out in front of him; like he’s making a video call. Only the camera is facing the wrong way and he doesn’t see Shouto come up behind him.

Shouto rests his chin on Izuku’s shoulder and wraps his free arm around his waist. At the same time, Izuku swaps the camera back around and beams. Too bright, Shouto thinks again, but lacking the same misery. After a cup of coffee, it might sound fond. “Oh, you’re awake! Finally! How’d you sleep?”

Dropping one arm from Izuku he steps back to refill his glass. Humming, answers Izuku’s question with his own question: “Who are you talking to?”

Gesturing to the phone, Izuku turns the camera and waves. Shouto stares at him, not caffeinated enough to deal with his early morning mischief. “The internet.” Izuku answers, grin sharp and daring. He shakes the camera, pulling it close to his face and (Shouto assumes) broadcasts the wonderful imagery of him in pajamas drinking water in their kitchen. Of course, Izuku would take the long message his press agent sent him last night as further encouragement to rock the boat. Izuku adds, “After last night I thought I’d spend some time, eh...doing damage control.”

Shouto steps out of the camera’s line of sight, sighing. “I think it’s a little too late for that.”

Izuku jumps on him again after he changes, racing over (and leaping, given their height distance) to plant a kiss on his cheek -- holding out his phone like he’s taking a selfie. “Look how handsome my boyfriend is!”

“You’re ridiculous,” Shouto tells him. He knows Izuku doesn’t listen, or doesn’t care, because he smiles and saves the photo to his album. An hour later, he knows it’s on every possible social media platform Izuku could get his hands on because the notifications on his phone send his phone into a fit of denial from overuse.

Izuku is not apologetic in the slightest. “Aw, did your phone die again?”

Shouto shakes the phone in his hand at Izuku, charger cord hanging hanging from the wall. He plugs it in, dropping it in despair after the phone refuses to start. “You did this.” Izuku puts on a dramatic act over being accused without evidence. Shouto takes a picture of him pouting (using Izuku’s phone) and sends it to himself for later.

Izuku’s dramatic energy winds down after realizing Shouto didn’t pick up groceries. He complains
into their empty shelves, bemoaning their lack of lunch materials. Shouto doesn’t argue or defend himself. Izuku doesn’t accuse him of forgetting but he knows Izuku is checkmarking ‘Shouto forgot my grocery list AGAIN’ into his memory bank.

(Knowledge for Shouto and himself alone: he walked to the supermarket, realized he forgot his glasses, and couldn’t read anything on the list Izuku gave him. Too stubborn to ask the cashier to read the list for him, he walked home and ordered takeout for the both of them. And then, yes, forgot to pick up groceries the day after.)

“I didn’t want to go to the supermarket,” Shouto says instead.

“Quit whining,” Izuku tells him. “It’s your fault you picked an apartment with no supermarket anywhere near it. When we find a new apartment, we’re gonna pick one right next to the store.”

Bundled in their most casual camouflage clothing (“You’re going to get spotted instantly, Shouto, what are you wearing?” Izuku cries. “That’s the most obvious ‘Definitely a famous person trying to hide under a hat and sunglasses’ look.”) they leave for the supermarket. Shouto pulls his hat further down his face the longer people look at him as they pass him on the street.

“One told you,” Izuku shouldn’t sound so smug, but he does. The woman passing them at the corner takes out her phone and pretends like she isn’t snapping a photo of them. Shouto sees her before Izuku and decides to put an end to Izuku’s smug atmosphere (agreeing to be on that live show was a mistake, Shouto mourns) right there. He pulls Izuku’s coat by the collar, ignoring his surprised yelp at the sudden change in direction. “Hey --!” Izuku protests. He isn’t fast enough to stop their momentum. One hand pushes Izuku’s cap off his head, the other attaches at his waist, catching his mouth before he can voice any more complaints.

The other people down the street are definitely paying attention -- if they hadn’t already recognized them through their terrible disguises. Someone lets out a whistle from the other side of the street. A few people clap. Shouto releases him and asks, a little more breathless than he intended, “Was that spontaneous enough for you?”

While Izuku is speechless, Shouto knows he’s won this round. The dazed expression he wears for the rest of the day was worth blowing their cover.

They don’t make it to the supermarket.

(Izuku only realizes this halfway through his meal in the evening. Slamming his spoon on the table, the other hand gesturing rudely at Shouto and cursing. Shouto laughs to himself, too content to be annoyed by the soup Izuku flicks at him from the other end of the table.)

---

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
[Photo attached: ScreenshotTXT1374892.jpeg]
fools: hero deku is smooth and confident and it’s no wonder he has a boyfriend because he probably asked him out and then they started dating years ago

me, brave, sexy, intelligent: i listened to my girlfriend complain about the amount of secondhand embarrassment she got from standing in the same room as them. for EIGHT MONTHS i lived dealing with watching the mating rituals of two blind ducks swim in circles around one another,
mutually oblivious to their shared idiotic pining. not only did they confess to each other on at least 2 separate occasions, sharing one kiss and bolt in the other direction, they made my life so miserable because i had to watch all of this happen and keep my silence. for so long. but no more! i will not live in silence evermore! in conclusion, todoroki shouto is a bastard who still hasnt paid to replace my broken shower door and men can’t communicate their feelings even if their lives depend on it. i won my bet tho - earphonejack

1,722 retweets | 6,883 favorites
2:23 PM - 6 June X1

Todoroki Shouto ✔ @tshouto
@radio_jack are you really going to start this again
242 retweets | 6,459 favorites
2:38 PM - 6 June X1

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
.@tshouto u gonna defend his honor? ur threats do not frighten me. i can snap u in half like a dry noodle
1,422 retweets | 8,027 favorites
2:42 PM - 6 June X1

Todoroki Shouto ✔ @tshouto
@radio_jack
[Photo attached: “SCREENSHOT0922.JPEG”]

From Jirou Kyouka:
[13/06/XX | 11:03]
plshelp
emergency!!!!!
code HELP ME!!!!!!!!!!!!

To Jirou Kyouka:
what happened

From Jirou Kyouka:
im dying
yaomomo looked at me this morning 4 a long time
i think im in love
i hate my life
fuck this im moving 2 another country an not coming back]

1,958 retweets | 10,030 favorites
2:43 PM - 6 June X1

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
block out the haters in ur life (-B
[Photo attached: Screenshot of Twitter profile saying “@tshouto is blocked. Are you sure you want to view these Tweets? Viewing Tweets won’t unblock @tshouto.”]

1,958 retweets | 8,922 favorites
2:43 PM - 6 June X1

Creati #10 ✔ @icreati
Replying to @radio_jack Is this really necessary?
838 retweets | 4,931 favorites
2:49 PM - 6 June X1

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
ofc.
283 retweets | 2,041 favorites

2:55 PM - 6 June X1

DEKU ✔ @herodeku
Wwhat did I miss I left for two hours???
732 retweets | 8,808 favorites

4:49 PM - 6 June X1

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
Replying to @herodeku nothing dont worry about it
276 retweets | 3,999 favorites

4:56 PM - 6 June X1

Uravity @uravity
:o)
1,992 retweets | 9,311 favorites

4:59 PM - 6 June X1

DEKU ✔ @herodeku
Replying to @radio_jack A) SHUT UP B) Doyou have ANY idea of what game Ur playing here???
2,355 retweets | 15,040 favorites

5:09 PM - 6 June X1

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
Replying to @herodeku bring it green ranger
1,032 retweets | 10,374 favorites

5:13 PM - 6 June X1

Creati | #10 ✔ @icreati
Replying to @herodeku She started this anyways. Not like I don’t already know
1,032 retweets | 8,374 favorites

5:13 PM - 6 June X1

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
Replying to @icreati @herodeku wait no i changed my mind wait wait waitwait
342 retweets | 6,189 favorites

5:20 PM - 6 June X1

Luminesce ✔ @lumistar
[Photo attached: A low resolution image of Hero Luminesce standing behind Hero Deku, who appears unaware of his presence. Luminesce has his hands over his head, a claw-like pose. He’s wearing a white and glittery top, as well as a bright visor. The image is too low quality, but it would appear at first glance to be a visor resembling the brow visor from the helmet of the Speed Hero (Ingenium merchandise).]
298 retweets | 5,104 favorites

5:36 PM - 6 June X1

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
Apartment hunting, Shouto decides, is the worst part of it all. Izuku is overly prepared, with graphs and color coded sheets that break down a full list of pro/con factors specific to each apartment.

With everything that’s happened, Shouto knows it is time. Time to move on. The number of reporters & paparazzi circling his old apartment is growing by the week. It wasn’t part of their plan to move so suddenly, but he knows it’s as necessary as everything else. Change does not come in one area of life; if effects everything, regardless of consequence.

“It’s just an apartment,” Shouto says under his breath. Tenya agreed to come along, Aoyama tagging behind him because apparently the universe loves adding more chaos into his life at every turn. Tenya takes off with Izuku to compare graph charts and inspect the apartment for obvious design flaws.

Shouto sticks near the back, by the kitchen, listening to the realtor sputter out half-baked answers to Tenya’s intensive questioning. “It is more than that!” Aoyama gasps. “It’s about finding the right apartment, mon cher. You must find the one that feels like home!”

Shouto looks out over the expansive view from the apartment they’re standing in and says, “I don’t think that’s what makes something feel like home. It’s how you choose to live in a place.”

“If that is how you choose to see it,” Aoyama twirls around and makes himself comfortable on the temporary show table. “Or, I suppose, home is where you go when you are tired of wandering. That is your home.”

While Izuku and Tenya argue over the price of the listing, Shouto says to the realtor, “We’ll take it.”
todoshotos:
this is the project that myself (ines todoshotos) and masa @ gaydeku spent a month preparing. this
is your go to Encyclopedia for all things EntroDeku related. All the links will be updated as more
information is added into place.

[link to CREATIJJACK CONSPIRACY MASTERLIST (COMPLETE)] for those of you who
doubt our abilities, have a looksee at our last post that inspired us to make this one. Spoiler: We
Were Right!

If the links are broken don’t send us a bajillion messages about it. We’re aware some links get
taken down/deleted and sometimes they get eaten by the website’s terrible script. We’ll fix what
we can otherwise just assume we haven’t found a replacement.

1. Who/What is EntroDeku?

- EntroDeku is a popular ship name about pro heroes Deku and Entropy. The oldest shippers
  refer to it as “tododeku” in reference to the period before Entropy went pro and used his first
  name “Shouto” as his sidekick name for 3 years. (Why tododeku? I have no idea cus that’s
  his last name and not his hero name. After he finally went pro and started using Entropy as
  his hero name, some people flip/flopped or use them interchangeably. EntroDeku is better
  IMO.) [edited: entropy retired last year (x,x,x) and everyone seems VERY confused as to
  which to use. A lot of people still use entrodeku for the #branding but I stand by #todoriya
  because it’s cute AND makes sense. support my todoriya agenda.]
- For the most part, the mainstream fans started flocking after the Rising Heroes Gala back in
  March after the Japan hero billboard chart release and photos with the two of them dancing
  were hosted on the official board of heroes site as promotional material. (eyes emoji)
  They’ve always had a pretty friendly relationship on their social media too which helped
  boost it into the Big Fandom View. Entropy is kind of a social media hermit, but he always
  likes/replies to Deku’s posts (eyes emoji but bolded)...   
- In June, Deku posted a slideshow on his Insta featuring all his friends from school and added
  a separate (completely unnecessary, mind you) section about Entropy. And dedicated an
  entire paragraph talking about him...the translation was very romantic ...(eyes emojis but
  vibrating), and then The Mainstream Fandom of EntroDeku was born

2. Are they actually dating?

- There’s a lot of conspiracy theories (aka why this masterlist exists) that contains every
  known Suspicious Gay Activity
- In the last few years they haven’t had a lot of public contact but Deku talks about Entropy a
  lot in interviews especially when he’s talking about his life at UA
- Some Important Facts: Deku hasn’t dated/seen in public with any other notable figures
  besides Uravity. Those two broke up 6/7 years ago and they seem to be good friends, but
  Deku is notably very quiet on the dating side of things on social media/interviews
- While Deku’s sexuality isn’t known ATM, he’s a huge advocate for LGBT+ Youth stuff in
  japan. I mean a HUGE advocate. so, probably?? [edited: nevermind he’s bisexual we love
  him so much and support an iconic bi hero! (x,x,x)]
- As for Entropy, he never shares anything about his personal life with the public so that’s just
  hard to say. Who knows, honestly [edited: nevermind lmao (x,x)]
- TL;DR—probably not? my Gaydar is pinging so there might be something going on that we
don’t know about. But it’s not harming anybody and Earphone Jack loves making jokes about it on her radio show so I’d say this is a pretty harmless adventure. [edit: SCROLL DOWN TO THE BOTTOM FOR MAJOR UPDATES]

- A lot of our content is here because of Earphone Jack. Bless the Radio Jack show & the host. I love that funky music lesbian

3. Do you have a life?

- no.
- I wrote over 2k words analyzing and dissecting the Rising Gala photos/video & the brief 45sec video from Red Riot’s instagram where they’re sitting together from that event because i have Nothing Else To Do With My Time Apparently
- I am stuck in university hell so I gotta get my kicks where I can find them
- blame masa because he’s my enabler

Onto the masterlist: here are the links to articles, photos, videos, posts, etc., with everything we’ve gathered so far. You’re welcome.

Warning: I’ve been informed this post is like a tvtropes page in that you will spend hours here and not realize how much time you’ve wasted. Great for a free day or when you’re really procrastinating. >Post Created: 14/08/20XX >Last Update: 29/06/20X1 >>>Edit from 29/6/X1: CURRENTLY LOSING MY FUCKING MIND. PLEASE OPEN THE READ MORE

[[ READ MORE ]]

gaydeku: for everyone who’s been asking for it, here it is
todoshotos: edited as of 29/06/X1 with new additions and final commentary from @gaydeku and myself:

**TURNS OUT WE WERE RIGHT. AGAIN.**

(SOURCE: HERO DEKU’S LIVESTREAM (VIDEO CAPTURE) WHERE HE EXPLAINED HOW HE & HIS BOYFRIEND GOT TOGETHER) ALSO, WHAT THE FUCK

gaydeku:

todoshotos: #remember the time we literally unearthed a whole giant ass conspiracy, #that not only turned out to be true but also predicted the future, #WE DID THE SAME THING WITH CREATIJACK TOO WTF, #THE ONLY THING WE GOT WRONG WAS THAT WE GUESSED C/J WOULDN'T HAPPEN UNTIL LIKE WAY AFTER THIS, #if only the power of gay foresight would help me win the lottery or something via @gaydeku

Posted 1 week ago via boneless-deku source todoshotos
With the knowledge of their last encounter still fresh in his memory, Shouto is beyond wary of the note he finds tucked into the side of their apartment door: a date, a location, and a time. (At least, Shouto is relieved, there isn’t anything else that appears remotely threatening.) Signed with four asterisks. The signature of their mysterious friend with the coat.

He tucks it into his jacket. If what Izuku told him is true, he has a few words he’d like to say to that man. Starting off with a few choice curses over giving him a useless journal of gibberish that apparently can’t do anything at all.

(“I don’t think he was lying,” Izuku told him. “I think it has something important in it, but I don’t think either of us are going to find out what it is it by ourselves.”)

He tells Izuku about the note, but asks him to keep his distance. “You could destroy your career,” Shouto warns him. “Sneaking off to secret meetings about dismantling the board.” Izuku tries his hardest to weasel the location out of him but Shouto resists. He lets Izuku know when he’s leaving and changes trains three times to throw him off his tail.

The location strikes him as odd. Not like the distant, remote location in the middle of an abandoned lot like their last encounter. It’s a public area, which Shouto isn’t sure is meant to comfort him or put him more on edge. A small tea shop, empty from the outside.

Nothing is ever gained from cowardice, so Shouto walks inside and orders a cup of tea for himself. He waits by the window, cautious and wary of each new customer that walks into the shop after him.

Shouto almost freezes half the ground area of the cafe when the man with a dark hat pulled over his face sits down in the booth across from him. He didn’t see the man enter. Unless the man was waiting in the cafe before he arrived, which unnerves him even more.

“Todoroki Shouto,” he says, a slow greeting and an even slower acknowledgement. Shouto startles; he does not recognize his voice. Not the man with the dark coat -- at least not the one he was expecting. “I’ve been looking for you.”

The cup of tea Shouto ordered before he arrived is solid ice. An uncontrolled reaction out of his surprise. “Who are you?”

The hat lifts, and Shouto blinks; stares. The man’s face is burned -- much like the left side of his own face, but deeper scarring. He doesn’t answer Shouto’s question and Shouto is only a little peeved at his intentional misdirection. “I am nobody. I lost my name a long time ago. Why did you tell me to come here?”

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“Tell you?” Shouto does not like the direction this conversation is heading, because he’s been in enough life-threatening situations and ambushes to know when things don’t feel right. “I received a
message to meet someone I knew. I didn’t tell anyone to come here.”

The man glares at him. He must take Shouto’s answer as genuine because he lowers his head and says, “I was informed that you were the one who arranged this meeting. The name was yours, I am sure.” He furrows his brow. “I think we both might be in the middle of a set-up.”

“It does appear that way.” His distrust is as heightened as ever. Maybe he should’ve told Izuku before coming here. If anything, Izuku can’t lecture him over keeping secrets given everything that’s happened.

The nameless man continues, “Do you know who invited you here? Or anyone else that was invited?”

Shouto doesn’t have a chance to answer because another voice chimes in and does it for him. “That’d be me! I’m the plus one,” Izuku slides into the booth next to Shouto, wearing headphones and a hoodie that Shouto doesn’t recognize (but he knows is a piece of hero fan merchandise). His hoodie is pulled over his head, low enough that nobody would know it was him at first glance.

“Izuku.” Shouto grits out. “I told you not to follow me.”

“I’m not very good at following instructions, you should know that by now! And you need to learn to check your pockets before you put anything in the laundry.” Shouto curses him under his breath. “Hello mysterious stranger in this nice, fine, perfectly fragile tea establishment. Lovely meeting you.” The man does not shake Izuku’s offered hand. Not to be impolite. Stunned, if Shouto were to guess.

“It is you,” the man says. It’s hard to mistake the awe, the shaky quality of his voice. “You are the one who now holds One For All. I never thought our paths would cross.”

“Uh...” Izuku says, caught off-guard by the introduction. “...Yeah, that’s me.”

His hand moves to his pocket, pulling a slip of paper. “If you are the holder, then perhaps you will know this.” Shouto recognizes the shape on the seal -- it’s the same seal he showed Izuku, a lifetime ago, from the first letter their other mysterious friend delivered. The one that brought Izuku back to Tokyo, the one that Izuku held tenderly and studied as though it held more answers than anything else. Izuku’s eyes gleam, taking the slip and studying it under the light.

“I do not know how or why fate has brought us together again,” the man says. “But you may call me Keeper. I am the last with the knowledge of the Seventh’s secrets. For many years I believed her legacy would end with her death, but I see I was wrong. I have much to tell the both of you.”

Perhaps, Shouto reflects, it wasn’t such a lost cause after all.

dynariots:
anybody ever see an old photo of the rowdy crowd crew and just start crying wtf they’ve all grown up so much and theyre still all such good friends BITCH what the fuck. when i graduated high school i never saw any of those assholes once again ever in my life they straight up stopped existing on the planet.

like the idea of somehow keeping 20 people together? and still staying in contact? can’t relate
Shouto doesn’t always remember to silence his phone. He hears it blast off a message notification around three in the morning, rolls over to silence it, and forgets about it for a day and a half. He doesn’t read it until he sees a message from Jirou (and after reading the preview, decides to delete without opening) and a second message from Tenya.

From Iida Tenya:
[YESTERDAY - 2:44]
Are you available for lunch today?

[TODAY - 8:39]
My apologies I didn’t realize the time when I sent that

He agrees to meet Tenya for lunch. Tenya picks him up, apologizing again for his late arrival. “I’ve had a very busy week,” he explains. “Many of my staff are out for school term, and I’m struggling to fill the hours with their replacements.”

“You don’t have to explain anything to me,” Shouto says, who understands all too well the kind of stress a hero agency feels when half of the staff leaves for a school related commitment. Tenya contents himself with that and returns to his meal. He senses Tenya’s growing hesitation to explain the particular nature of the outing and grows impatient before Tenya has the chance. “Is there any reason you invited me here?”

Tenya deflates. “Yes. Well, a rather good reason, I hope. I received an offer.” Shouto frowns. “For you. It’s for a -- a very underground surveillance site. They’re looking for someone like you to help.”

Shouto stares at him. “For me? You know I’m done with hero work.”

“Not as a hero,” He can hear the excitement return to Tenya’s voice. “I think, for you, this would be a rather fitting match. I’m sorry if this is rather vague, but I haven’t even been cleared myself for the entire briefing. I’ll send more details when I can.”

Shouto doesn’t know what else to say, except, “I trust your judgement.”

Tenya nods, as though that is a grave thing to accept. “Thank you. A lot will have to change if we proceed. I’ll have to speak with Izuku-kun as well -- I have agreed to participate under the same contract.”

“Which means, what, exactly?”
“If everything goes well,” Tenya’s smile is trace-like, barely present at the corner of his mouth. “Then I will be going with you.”

Right on time, Tenya knocks on their apartment door. Izuku is asleep -- although Shouto knows he’d prefer to be awake for this meeting, he’s exhausted from running around all day and putting out fires (only some of which, he knows, metaphorical).

“I’ll be very honest, I’m not *entirely* clear on all of the details,” Tenya warns him. “When I received the offer at the briefing, they wouldn’t disclose the location. Only that they informed us to pack warmly.”
“Shouldn’t be a problem for me.” Shouto replies. Which is, clearly, the least of their concerns. “Anything else?”

“No, only that you’ll maintain your civilian status. Not much else was disclosed. I believe they’re going to use a proper briefing when we arrive on the location.” Tenya sighs, frustrated. “You’re only there to observe, as far as I know. They will probably ask you to take some photographs. And keep a detailed account through journaling, which will be retained after our return as evidence.” Shouto hums.

“Have you made a decision?” Tenya asks, hands wrapped around the mug of tea Shouto offered him. “As I said, it won’t be long-term. It may help you find the right opportunity. I assure you, we will be putting your safety as our highest --”

Shouto knows it would be rude to laugh at his concern. After everything, Tenya is probably the most stressed over his decision to travel abroad with him. “Tenya, it’s fine. I’m going.” Tenya nods and drinks the rest of his tea. They each refill their mugs two more times before Izuku stumbles down the stairs and slumps into the chair beside Tenya.

“Did you rest well?” Tenya asks him. It’s hard to tell, but Shouto is fairly sure he’s teasing him.

Izuku groans and covers his face with his hands. Shouto passes his a mug of tea, warmed by a quick pass from his hand over the surface. “I don’t know how Momo-san does it. Trying to do anything with her staff is madness.”

Tenya reminds him, a quick shake of his head. “Thankfully, you won’t have to worry about that much longer.”

“Oh, right. I’m getting Team Idaten in the divorce,” Izuku says. “At least I get a decent consolation prize.” He laughs at Tenya’s exasperated sigh, rolling off his chair and collapsing with giggles. Shouto laughs, not from the joke, but feeding off Izuku’s lighthearted spirit. Izuku pulls Tenya to the ground with him, laughing harder at Tenya’s indignant yelp.

From the floor, Tenya sighs. “It’s only for a few months.”

“A few months where I’m alone and the two of you are off having awesome, extra dangerous adventures without me.” His humor is dampened by the quieter, solemn turn of his voice. “Can’t wait.”

At the same time he senses Izuku’s hesitation -- and he knows exactly how much it’s killing him to recognize the accompanied physical distance with moving forward. For his career, for Izuku’s, for Tenya’s. He has to embrace the change, even though he hates to lose what he has.

DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
Forgot how much I hate moving 🙅‍♂️=_=
99 retweets 14,758 favorites
1:42 PM - 22 June X1

DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
But moving means new things and thats cool! Im excited to join @TeamIdaten !! :0! More updates on that soon...in the meantime, I am definitely NOT rewatching the same video of baby ferrets
INGENIUM ✔ @t_ingenium
I will be leaving @TeamIdaten for a short while regarding matters in a different area, and @herodeku has graciously offered to hold down the fort in my absence. I promise to return as soon as I can. In response to rumors circulating about an injury: I can assure you I am in perfect health, but I have other responsibilities to attend to.

177 retweets | 4,608 favorites
1:46 PM - 22 June X1

HeroWatch ✔ @herowatch
DEKU & INGENIUM announce changes at @TeamIdaten in the coming year, with @herodeku taking over @t_ingenium’s role following their move.

289 retweets | 8,972 favorites
1:46 PM - 22 June X1

Uravity @uravity
Some of us never change v(=_=)_

[Photo attached: SCREENSHOT9993982.JPEG]

From Todoroki Shouto:
[15:58]
walked into the bedroom because i wanted to take a nap.
found him under the covers crying.
didn’t panic at first but he wouldn’t stop.
finally calmed down and told me he watched videos of a ferrets taking baths.
for two hours.

To Todoroki Shouto:
Yikes. Rough day?

From Todoroki Shouto:
no. he said he was so happy he cried.
at least it’s friday.
still need a nap

To Todoroki Shouto:
What? NO
TODAY IS TUESDAY
YOU'RE BOTH THE WORST I SWEAR

From Todoroki Shouto:
my apologies izuku told me it was fridday
ishould assume by now he doesn’t know what day it is]

289 retweets | 8,972 favorites
1:46 PM - 22 June X1

Red Riot! #8 @redriot
Hey friend, you feel like catching the train ??
[Image attached: Hero Alien Queen performing gymnastics from the commuter handles of a train.
She’s doing a split, upside down, and giving the camera a thumbs up with her free hand. Red Riot
Four feet from the door Shouto hits a wall of boxes from floor to ceiling. “Izuku,” he calls out among the rows of the elaborate cardboard maze his boyfriend established while he was visiting his mother. He didn’t think he had many items in his apartment, or Izuku’s apartment. Why are there so many boxes? “Where are you?”

Muffled, but still distinct through the wall, Izuku answers: “Uhh...I don’t know! The kitchen, maybe. I think there’s a counter under this box -- oh! I found my collector’s items…”

“Izuku,” Shouto repeats. He jumps a foot back, startled by the sight of Izuku’s unattached head poking through the wall. Izuku removed one of the boxes to his left and stuck his head through the opening. He sticks his tongue at Shouto, who mutters, “That is not funny.”

“It kind of is,” Izuku defends. “Kyouka-san was telling me about the time she took you to one of those scary houses --”

“Don’t believe a word she says. She’s lying.” Shouto shoves his head back through the opening. “Izuku, really. How are we supposed to unpack all of this? Where are we going to sleep?”

“Oh,” Izuku clears an actual path from the row of boxes next to the hole he stuck his head through. “I guess we’ll...unpack what we can. Worry about the rest later.”

“I leave tomorrow,” Shouto hates the reminder that the number of hours he has left are quickly dwindling. He doesn’t want to spend the rest of their time together -- for however long he’s away -- to be spent unpacking furniture.

Izuku picks up a row of boxes from the base, cursing, moving with the stack to keep the box on top from wobbling and landing on his head. Shouto reaches up and steadies it from the top. “Yeah,” Izuku says. Shouto doesn’t have to see his face to know he’s frowning. “I know.”

Shouto sighs. “You were the one who --”

“No, its fine!” Izuku’s words sound genuine enough. His face says otherwise. “I’m just gonna miss
you.”

In the morning, Shouto packs his suitcase in silence. Izuku and Tenya wait at the door, talking in low voices as he walks down the stairs. He weaves his way through the (still unfinished) maze of boxes and Izuku takes his bag for him. Izuku is quiet for the drive, leaving conversation for Tenya and Shouto to fill.

Izuku stops him before he walks through the gate. “What’s wrong?” Shouto asks.

“Nothing,” Izuku promises. “Just wanted to talk to you. Before you go. Missing you and all that.”

“Tenya and I will miss you plenty,” Shouto says, which sounds rather rehearsed to both of them. “That means Aoyama and you can spend lots of time together now. You won’t be the only person missing someone.”

“I guess. That does make me feel a little better.” He can’t tell if Izuku is lying to prevent his own guilt from solidifying. “And hey,” he says, and smiles even though he’s crying because that’s the kind of person he is. “Remember to think of me sometimes and write, yeah?”

“You’re so dramatic,” Shouto says. One of them has to keep their composure or he’s never going to make his flight. “I’ll be back here before you can start really missing me. You might appreciate the peace and quiet.”

Izuku laughs, although it comes out as more of a wheeze. “I’ll finish the apartment while you’re gone. Make sure it’s all decorated for you.”

“You’re acting like I’m not going to see it.” Shouto wraps his arm over Izuku’s shoulder with a sigh. Izuku leans the other way, resisting his comfort. “Can you trust Tenya and I to take care of ourselves?”

Izuku shakes his head. “You know me. I’m gonna worry about you two no matter where you are.”

“I’ll be fine,” Shouto reassures him. “You should be more worried about yourself. I’ve heard Tenya’s staff is a little on the wilder side.”

“Pfffh, yeah, sure.” Izuku scoffs. “I handled Momo-san’s crew. I think Idaten will be a relief from them actually. I’m tired of buying fire extinguishers for the office.”

“Then I hope it will be a good change for you.” Shouto agrees. He can’t resist adding Tenya’s light warning. “I heard Izumi is awaiting your arrival. He’s very excited to start his sidekick program with you.” Izuku snorts, tears forgotten.

“Yeah, probably more excited to turn my hair grey.” Shouto will miss him, even at his most dramatic. “I’m still young, Shouto.” Izuku drapes his arm over Shouto’s shoulder, the other wrapping around his middle and leaning all his weight on him. Shouto grunts, dragging his feet forward. “Do you want to see me with grey hair?”

“I would hope, yes. Someday,” Shouto replies. Izuku’s face catches, rising to grab Shouto by the neck and pull him into a kiss. He misses, catching the corner of his mouth. Shouto doesn’t linger for long; he doesn’t draw the moment out any longer than he needs to.

Tenya pauses at the top of the stairs. His head brushes the door frame as he steps inside. He holds his hand out, a silent question: are you ready? Shouto thinks of his mother, sitting outside her balcony where he left her, smiling and greeting the sun. Much like Shouto, she is ready for change. New day; new chapter, new choices. Not exactly starting over -- looking out to the future. Looking
forward.

He turns back to Izuku, lifting his hand to wave from the top of the stairs. Doesn’t push down the
feeling that he’s missing Izuku already. Izuku returns the wave with his radiant smile. Shouto
doesn’t dedicate the smile to memory; he doesn’t need to. He knows, as sure as he is sure about
anything, that he will see that smile again. Tenya is waiting for him when he faces him again.

Shouto does not know what will happen, as most people never know the course of their own lives
while living it, but he does not need the assurance of that knowledge. He may fail. He may
succeed. He may do absolutely nothing at all.

He does not worry about what the future holds for him. The knowledge that his choices -- his alone
-- are what make up the rest of his life. Whether good, or bad, happy or sad, or somewhere in the
middle ground -- he wants every second of it.

He wants this moment and all of the moments to come.

Chapter End Notes

comments required or else i will roll myself off the side of a waterfall inside a wooden
barrel *splash*
- *puts ‘what the future holds’ in the outro* i am the best writer ever i nailed the “does
your title come up inside your actual story” bingo board

mobile translations:
- 私があなたを見...(midoriyas instagram post) - "When I look at you I see the rest of
my life in front of my eyes”
- ”deku says trans rights” - **YES THIS IS AN ACTUAL VIDEO**
- ”franchement / mon cher / naturalement” - frankly / my dear / naturally [french]
- all the other stuff that’s linked is either part of a dumb joke or part of an even Dumber
joke stan loona everybody

actual notes:
- todoroki returned home a year later & they lived happily ever after. the end haha
nope
- shouto: we wont get into any trouble i promise
- izuku:
FAQ: “does todoroki come back?” YES! “is this really the end??” LOL NO this was the ending that developed naturally from todoroki’s growth & & where i pictured it would go. it's open ended, yes, but i hope it gives a clear idea of where his life is going next.

- every1 unanimously loved the mustache from chapter 5
#bringbackthemidomustache2k19

- the big “social media relationship reveal” & why it’s deconstructed: i know the basic breakdown of this trope, there's a photo/video leak "accident" but i HATE the "fans react"/voyeur trope route media fulfills regarding relationships (see: gay relationships) revealed without consent. midoriya and todoroki CHOSE to reveal it. they deserve the power & control to decide who knows and when. tl;dr: this is my universe i make the rules

++ hero names of new character appearances: shinsou = blindside / aoyama = luminesce (inspired by an rp my friends were in. i used starburst in an earlier chapter but i changed it) and shiozaki = vivid lady.

- lmao @ the aoyama & shinsou team up. the two of them Do Not get along. aoyama is a high maintenance bitch and he knows it. shinsou is also high maintenance but for different reasons.

- iiyama canon !!!! aoyama is a u-haul lesbian in spirit and iida is overwhelmed by the affection and honestly #same. if i had a loud knight shouting his adoration for me in french and doting on me i’d probably cry too. i think this is one of the Rarest Pairs of pairs in bnha but i love their dynamic. the hero license arc? that shit's breathtaking bro.

- to clear up additional confusion if my writing didn't explain: the man with the briefcase is not technically part of nana’s old network. he’s aware of it & connected todoroki with what remained, but as far as his real identity - i’d love to hear ur theories in the comments...

- *cut to me vibrating out of my chair* t.t...ti..time..tr--*gunshot*
- (Second interlude has more spoilers than i thought it would. oops.)

final notes:
- i got really attached to this universe so i’m gonna keep slapping that writing machine until my hands give out

- if you’re in the server with me and saw a few spoilers already then don’t worry...that's coming soon. >:3

-only click this if you’re feeling brave, heh :) THAT'S ALL FOLKS! *evaporates into mist* HAHAHA. SIKE.
before (reprise)

Chapter Summary

The length of every journey is measured from the first step.

Chapter Notes

[epilogue part 1]

a much shorter summary of this chapter: **you construct intricate rituals which allow you to touch the skin of other men** [bass boosted]

*tears off the secret hat i had hiding under my wig* surprise! unless you’re here and it’s not a surprise. some people knew cuz i told them & others clicked the “hidden” link in the end notes of ch6, but tl;dr this ride ain’t over yet babey! i hope yall weren't sick of hearing me ramble on for 600 pages because im BACK!

re: chapter 7, epilogue part 1 -- we’re starting at the beginning...but there’s a good reason for that, and there’s still a happy ending we’re gonna get to. shhhh. if u lasted this long from the previous 6 chapters, just take my hand and trust me. if it’s confusing at the start, i apologize, HOWEVER i provided the dates in the social media posts as usual so hopefully that will...make sense. in terms of the timeline.

notes on writing:
this was only supposed to be 20k max. @ past me: dude, what the **fuck** is going on here buddy.
- this was supposed to be its own separate work but i couldn’t separate “before (reprise) & after” from the rest of dwyw. after writing ch5 i thought, i can fix this! i’ll make it a secret chapter and post as the surprise epilogue!
- it’s actually 2 chapters (when i was planning on posting it separately it had 2 chapters outlined) im sorry, you’re gonna be here a while. i WANTED to post this as one large “chapter 7” but the word count was...atrocious and i am not completely unreasonable. a 50k chapter? yah, **no**. take this far more palatable 38k chapter instead. the remaining chapter will complete this work, making it 8 chapters in total.
- this chapter didn’t surpass the ch6 wordcount and thank fucking g-d for that. ch6 remains the longest chapter in this fic and i hope i never repeat that
- the biggest spoiler is in the first few lines of the chapter but only if you’re on desktop and able to use hover for translation. sorry mobile users (lmao)
- this fic is primarily from shouto’s pov with interjections from momo, iida, uraraka, other background characters, & some ocs scrambled between. i deliberately **didn't** add midoriya's pov in a previous chapter because it would be too “revealing” on his side. (i love deliberate narrative misdirection)
- there was a time and place i knew midoriya needed to take a stand on the soapbox. (not counting 2nd interlude!) but it was not going to happen during the todoroki arc from ch1-ch6. it was a different story altogether. but i couldn’t bear the thought of
There are times I wonder how different my life would look had I made other choices. I can pinpoint four or five specific life-altering moments in my past that completely changed my future. In the last few years alone, my entire life changed course. I never believed in the future I have now, and for that I am selfishly glad the future I once believed in has not come to pass.

This is a story about love, and fear, and loss, and grief, and growth. This is a story about change. We need change in order to grow. We cannot become the best versions of ourselves if we don’t let that change into our lives. We must allow it to mold us into something new, and then watch it fade as the old versions of ourselves are shed like the skin of great snakes. For each new story, we begin with change. My origin story as the man I am now did not begin here; it did not begin with my retirement, or the day I applied for Yuuei. It did not begin at my graduation, or the day I left behind years of being a sidekick to become a pro.

My origin story began years ago; before the thought of retiring was even a faint concept in the back of my mind. My origin began with a boy in a ring and the words that sparked a memory of a life I thought I’d forgotten — “It’s your power!” And not long after, on a dark night in a street filled with blood, I bared my soul and said to another as I opened up a new chapter of that story; “Never forget who you want to become!” I redeemed myself from a path that would end in heartbreak and in doing so I redeemed so many others. I could not have influenced the lives of
As with change -- as we grow and adapt to the world around us -- we take on different names. We become different people. Names are an essential part of our lives because they reflect our identity. Each time mine has changed I separated one era of my life to another. I was reborn each time, under a new name, as a new person.

My origin story as Todoroki Shouto: The Student, was about redemption. It was about releasing all of my pent up anger and fear and channeling it into something new. It was about becoming the best possible version of myself. This was no easy challenge. I struggled, constantly, for the sake of my own life and the lives of others. The battle for my soul was not won in a day or by a single event -- but rather by a series of unfolding circumstances all pointing me in a new direction.

[Continued on Page 8] . . .

BEFORE THE BEGINNING...

There are few things in his life Izuku hates more than the galas.

His suit is too tight. His tie is still crooked, even though he spent over twenty minutes in the restroom wrestling it into obedience. He accepted defeat and the light-hearted jabs from Ashido and Ochaco after his entrance. As Number Two Hero, he is announced at the start of the event with his name and title blasted across the room. Shoulders tight, spine straight, he hovers along the side wall and tries his best to make it less obvious he’s alone. The other heroes on his side, paired with their dates and friends, take no notice of him.

The galas are a show for sponsors, for the press, for celebrating hero status -- and despite appearances, are treated as important as every other hero event. Mandatory, in fact. Even heroes must have silly celebrity events, Izuku supposes, like all figures in the public figure spotlight. If he ever has the power over superficial things like this he’s going to disband the gala the first chance he’s given.

He would rather be anywhere else than where he is right now. He didn’t even bother finding a date for the gala this time despite his agent begging him to reconsider. Think about your rank and how it reflects on you, his agent pushed. You can’t take your mother again this year. You have to at least try to make yourself available. You’re still on the market, aren’t you? Don’t you want to make an impact?

I will, Izuku replied, with absolutely no intention of listening to their advice. He went alone, as he had the year before. He decided he was okay with that. Not happy. Not sad. Not anything, at all, really. He was used to being alone and he made his amends with that decision. He had to be okay with standing out. He had to be okay with feeling a little out of place. He had to be okay with standing alone.

He was nervous for his first gala. He asked All Might what he did at the galas, but All Might said he didn’t remember most of them. (Izuku imagines quite a bit of heavy drinking was involved.) Likewise, Izuku heads for the bar and comforts himself with a drink in hand. He's not a heavy drinker, but it’s easier to slip into his confident exterior when he doesn’t have to think about the
number of people he has to talk to. He abandons it at one of the empty tables while he finds sponsors to talk to and masterfully avoids anyone eyeing him with hungry eyes. He checks his watch and sighs, more aware of every slowly passing minute.

Izuku debates faking an emergency call and leaping out of a window. It wouldn’t be the first time he made a spectacular exit at an event like this -- and it’s always exciting for the attendees. He thinks it amuses the other heroes, but he’s never asked. They don’t comment on it, whatever the case may be.

He dances around the edges of the buffet-style tables and waits for the main course before he finds a table. Izuku avoids his seat where the Number Two Hero is designated and slips into the seating with the other attendees. Instead, he takes his seat with Kouda and Shiozaki at the far right side of the dining setting. He is comforted by the line of familiar faces there. His classmates are picked on for being an “exclusive” group of heroes -- but with the lives they’ve had, Izuku thinks they’ve earned the right to be so. Shiozaki greets him first, awkwardly, and Kouda only smiles at him and offers him a plate of appetizers. It isn’t long before the other attendees notice his presence.

“Hey man!” Kirishima drags him over to the next table, one arm slung around his neck to pull him into a small gathered group of Sero, Tsuyu and Kaminari. “There’s a face I haven’t seen in a while!”

Izuku laughs and allows himself to be pulled in. “I’m surprised you said that. All I see is my own face on everything these days.”

“Sounds like somebody’s letting fame get to their head.” Sero teases, his free hand clapping Izuku between his shoulder blades. Izuku pretends to wince at the pressure. Kirishima laughs. His chuckles are joined by Kaminari and a softer laugh from Tsuyu.

“Gotta keep you humble, man.” Kaminari shakes his head. “You look like you cleaned up well. Last I saw you looked like shit. Uh,” His face folds. “Not that you ever look bad or anything! Just, like, y’know. You didn’t look...anyways.”

Izuku doesn’t know what to say to that so he says, “Thanks.” Kirishima laughs like he made a joke. “I guess?”

“Still working over a hundred a week?” Sero asks, elbowing Kaminari. Kaminari snorts, like they know something else Izuku doesn’t. The question doesn’t surprise him too much. They usually ask something similar everytime they meet. Sometimes Izuku throws out an entirely unreasonable number just to watch their heads spin.

“Only when I have to,” Izuku doesn’t keep track of his hours anymore. It’s counterproductive at this point.

Tsuyu shakes her head. She’s quiet in comparison to the heroes beside her, but her reply is pointed. “You shouldn’t have to, Midoriya-chan.”

“Yeah, dude,” Kaminari agrees. “When’s the last time you took a vacation?”

Izuku rubs the back of his neck awkwardly. “Oh...well, er...”

Sero laughs, sharp, unexpected. “Bro, if you can’t answer that -- then you’ve got some serious problems.”

“Yeah, how haven’t you had a heart attack by this point? Hero burnout is real, man,” Kaminari gestures, palms face up. His expression is more sympathetic than Sero. Tsuyu’s unblinking
expression unnerves him the most. Like she wants to say more, or pity him, but knows he won’t
take kindly to either.

Izuku doesn’t know how to answer that. He excuses himself from the table and decides to look for
Iida. He knows Ochaco is somewhere on the floor, he watched her entrance alongside Tsuyu. Iida
isn’t usually late, but Izuku knows he didn’t make his usual appearance alongside the other Top 25
heroes upon arriving. Maybe he decided to skip -- something Izuku wishes he had the privilege of
doing. Skipping, that is.

The invited company at the gala doesn’t always include friends and allies. Izuku is more aware of
this than most.

Endeavor is at the other end of the table, locked in a one-man glaring contest with himself and
Izuku. Izuku feels his presence on the back of his neck, but he doesn’t glance the Number One
Hero’s direction even once. Endeavor hasn’t changed in the last few years; still a tower among the
other heroes, but less so as the years pass. Besides the grey patches in his hair and the scars on his
face. He is as large and intimidating as he was the day Izuku ran into him at his first Sports
Festival. It is better he doesn’t sit at the table, not wishing to relive their stilted small-talk from the
year prior. He imagines Endeavor would rather eat his plate than willingly enter a casual
conversation with Izuku ever again. (He may have used the food fight that broke out last year as an
excuse to dump a plate of rolls on Endeavor and bolted in favor of not witnessing the aftermath.)

Izuku spots one Todoroki he would

much

rather speak to from the other side of the room. He is
easy to pick out every year: Entropy, Number Five Hero, a fast moving figure among the ranks,
and one of the partners for Japan’s most successful hero agencies -- Todoroki Shouto is an
intimidating figure all on his own for entirely different reasons. Or he would be, in his hero
costume, at least. Dressed in black and a sloppy unbuttoned gold vest, he’s comfortably disheveled
among their old classmates (who, as it appears, claimed the side of the room with all the drinks).
His hair glows in the light; a halo of red and white as he tilts his head to the side and talks beside
Iida. From the distance, he watches Todoroki laugh and the faded echo fills the room. His smile is
filled with soft energy and gentleness that Izuku hasn’t witnessed directed at his person for many
years.

Izuku beelines for Iida, turns a corner of tables...and they’re gone. Todoroki, too, as if the two of
them hadn’t been there at all. Izuku spins around in a confused circle. How did he lose them so
quickly? He spots Iida’s tall figure on the other side of the room, formally introducing himself to
the rookie heroes at the front. Izuku can come back around and talk to him after he’s done
impressing the novices. Todoroki, on the other hand…

“Deku!” A barrage of sponsors take notice of him standing alone. Izuku darts out of the way and
(very, very nonchalantly) runs in the direction he last saw Iida and Todoroki.

As if summoned by his thoughts, Todoroki appears before him. Not quite smiling, a little flushed.
He almost passes Izuku on the way back to his table, clearly not paying attention to his directions
or anything in his surroundings. Izuku catches his eye with a wave. “Hey, Todoroki-kun. It’s been
a while, you look like you’re not having fun?”

“Champagne.” Todoroki replies dismissively. Izuku isn’t offended by the lackluster greeting --
he’s long accepted Todoroki’s default is set to Slightly Left Of Impolite. Todoroki stops, blinks, and
focuses on his face as if trying to remember who he’s talking to. The distant iciness fades into
something a little closer to friendly. “You look like you are not having fun.”

Izuku shrugs. “Never been a fan of galas.” He explains. Eyeing the bottle of half-empty
champagne, he convinces Todoroki to leave it at the counter. Cameras, even at a “closed” hero
event, are always on. Not that heroes didn’t deserve a chance to relax or have fun, to unwind, drink and be merry -- but it was harder to erase the day-after press release photos. Izuku makes accidental eye contact with the horde of attention-seeking corporate sponsors from before and winces. He takes Todoroki’s wrist and tugs him in front. The few advantages Izuku has of being shorter than Todoroki is it makes him a smaller target to hide behind. “Let’s talk out there.”

“Why?” Todoroki asks. Always a man of few words. (As he often is.)

“It’s not important.” Izuku struggles to find another avenue to keep the conversation going. Todoroki certainly isn’t helping in that department. “We haven’t talked in--” Shit, he doesn’t even remember. That’s not a good sign. “-- er, I just wanted to catch up.”

“Catch up.” Todoroki repeats, like the concept is too abstract for him to process after (almost) finishing an entire bottle of champagne. “About what?”

Izuku shrugs, not committed to any topic in particular. He can still feel Endeavor’s glare intensify on the two of them, which prompts him to add: “How about we dance?” He raises his hand -- the one not crisscrossed with layers upon layer of scar tissue -- and offers it to Todoroki.

“I hate dancing.” Is Todoroki’s mournful response, but he takes Izuku’s hand and lets him lead them out to the floor. They danced together at the last gala, but Todoroki holds him at a further distance than the year before. Todoroki also steps on his foot several times, which might be a side effect of the champagne or Todoroki living up to his ‘literally the worst dance partner in history’ title that he has yet to relent onto anyone else from their group.

Izuku doesn’t know how to fill the awkward silence that follows. Todoroki doesn’t seem all that interested in talking and Izuku is at a loss. What the hell does he say? Does he ask about his family? Maybe not the best way to lower the uncomfortable tension. Does he ask about work? No, probably not a good idea. He can ask something more personal than that. He and Todoroki are friends. He’s known Todoroki as long as almost everyone else in the room. Surely, he can do better than that.

He spots more corporate puppets out of the corner of his eye and shudders. It’s far better to dance awkwardly with his -- with Todoroki than entering an arena of sharks.

“So...what’s going on with you? Anything new?” He immediately wishes he hadn’t spoken at all. (Nice, he thinks to himself, with no great loss of sarcasm. Nailed it.)

Todoroki narrows his eyes and stares disinterestedly out the window over Izuku’s head. “The same as always. And you?”

Izuku bites his lip and looks down at his feet. Todoroki steps on the edge of his shoe and he winces. He wouldn’t be surprised to see bruises around his toes tomorrow. “Uh. Yeah. Busy as ever. Can’t complain.” That’s such a bad not-true answer, Ochaco told him the last time she asked a similar question and he replied the same. It just sounds like you’re lying.

"I haven’t seen you in a while," Todoroki comments, mild. “You skipped the last reunion.”

Izuku hums, side stepping to avoid a near fatal collision with the staff weaving between the floor with a tray of food. “Why, are you looking to see more of me?” That draws out a small laugh from Todoroki. He cheers quietly at drawing some human emotion out of him. He doesn’t know when that became such a challenge. Success all the same! “Maybe I should move to the middle of Tokyo, then.” Izuku says, half joking. “We could -- I don’t know. Go out and get lunch together every week. Like we used to at school.” Todoroki snorts. “You laugh now. I’ll buy the apartment
down the block and you’ll wish I never moved in.”

Todoroki peers at him with a clueless expression, eyes narrowed. At least he’s looking at Izuku -- instead of glaring at the wall behind him. “Why would I wish that?”

Izuku opens his mouth, closes it, and shakes his head. Changing tactics, he lowers his voice and says abruptly: “Um. Right. So. While we’re on the topic of being in the middle of Tokyo…” Oh great, he cringes. Back to talking about work. Ochaco is right: he has a problem. “…I had a strange encounter a little while ago when I was doing a late patrol outside of your district. I did a little investigation, but it didn’t go anywhere.”

If Todoroki is bothered by the swift change in topic, he doesn’t show it. He steps on Izuku’s foot again (either intentional or a result of his drink of choice) and says, “What’s strange about it?”

Izuku accepts it’s too late to expertly maneuver of this trainwreck and plows through, full steam ahead. He tries to downplay it as deep as he can. No reason to make Todoroki worry. “I dunno. Some guy in a black coat stopped me in an alley one night on the way back from my mom’s. Told me he knew a place where the board’s dirty laundry is stashed.” Todoroki raises a brow. “I didn’t believe him, obviously. I’m not completely incompetent.” He doesn’t know if he should be offended by Todoroki’s other brow raising, but he chooses to ignore it. “I wanted to know if you heard anything similar to that. Or seen anything weird like that.”

A slow shake. “No, nothing like that,” Todoroki says. “Anything else?”

“Nothing. I doubled back to try and tail him, but he vanished. Almost like a ghost.” Todoroki frowns at that detail. Maybe he shouldn’t have phrased it that way.

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“Nothing. I doubled back to try and tail him, but he vanished. Almost like a ghost.” Todoroki frowns at that detail. Maybe he shouldn’t have phrased it that way.

Todoroki shakes his head, pushing past the ghost comment. “Do you think he’s telling the truth?”

“It’s possible. We know some villains --” All For One is entirely implied. “-- had their hands in all the deep pockets of the old officials. With the powers that be hanging over our heads, it’s hard to know who was innocent or guilty.” Todoroki huffs, unamused. “He seemed really familiar. Too familiar, actually, to be a coincidence. The whole thing was really...odd.”

“Odd,” Todoroki repeats thoughtfully. He looks out over the ballroom and says, distantly, “A lot of what’s happened…” A soft pause. “…recently would agree with that, I think.”

Izuku smiles and says, “After you almost got suspended, you mean.” Todoroki returns with his own quiet blink-and-miss-it-ever-being-there smile and falls back into silence.

Todoroki leads him back to the tables after their dance and slumps into a chair next to Ochaco. She giggles and pokes his arm. “Ooh hey! It’s Todoroki-kun!” she slaps his leg with her free hand to gain his attention. “Hey, remember what we talked about last time? At the reunion? I was trying to tell Jirou-san the joke, but I forgot! It was so funny, you wanna remind me what you --?”

The transition is immediate: Todoroki’s face flushes under the light. “No, I do not.” Todoroki tells her firmly. He brightens when he spots Momo, clearly looking to escape the conversation. “I -- I need to go. Talk to -- uh, I’ll be back.” Ochaco laughs at his retreating back. Izuku blinks at his quick disappearance. Iida fills in the space of his absence, lifting Izuku’s mood enough to convince him back onto the floor.

“Is everything alright?” Iida asks. Ochaco disappears with the task of tracking down her girlfriend. They’ve made their greetings and after Izuku runs out of things to talk about. Iida startles him with the question.
“Everything’s fine,” Izuku replies. He knows his answer wasn’t convincing enough to fool Iida and pulls his shoulders in. “Really.” Iida raises both brows. “I mean it. I’m fine.”

Iida looks at his face, searching for something, long enough he grows uncomfortable under the microscope. Izuku turns away. “I only asked because you haven’t smiled at all this evening,” Iida comments. “I was wondering if…” Izuku, not for the first time that night, doesn’t know how to respond. Their conversation lapses into silence. Iida doesn’t appear interested in continuing his train of thought and drops it there, dangling.

He dances with Ochaco, then Iida, Kaminari (always an interesting dance partner), Ashido (she, too, steps on his toes on more than one occasion), and winds up partnered with Yaoyorozu by pure accident. “Oh, I was hoping I would have a chance to talk to you,” Yaoyorozu greets him. Izuku clasps her hand and accommodates for their stark height difference by standing on his toes. He lets her lead, too, not that he’s particularly good at leading. “I thought you left already.”

Izuku frowns. He didn’t keep track of how long he spent on the floor dancing, but it must be longer than he assumed. “Is it that late already?”

“Not yet.” Yaoyorozu amends. “I was -- I admit I’m surprised. You usually leave rather early, don’t you? At the galas, I mean.”

Izuku wonders how many others picked up on his distaste for these events. “I guess I do.”

Yaoyorozu politely asks him about his agency, his mother, and lands on a surprising question: “It was nice of you to dance with Todoroki-kun earlier. Have you talked to him at all recently? Besides tonight, of course.” Her expression settles on surprise, as well. A mirror of his own he is sure. As if it wasn’t her intent to ask the question aloud.


Her expression and the length of her pause, from what he gathers, conveys there is. The best description, he decides, is troubled. “I’m not entirely sure,” Yaoyorozu confesses. “I’m sorry. I don’t know why I asked that. Don’t worry about it, I’m sure it’s nothing.”

“It’s all right,” Izuku says. He wants to ask, then why did you? but he never has the chance. Jirou runs up alongside Yaoyorozu and pulls her away to the other side of the room for ‘urgent’ matters. Their conversation leaves him mostly curious -- gentle concern, at the least. Curious enough that he seeks out Todoroki again on the other side of the tables, sitting alone and staring morosely into space.

“Hi again,” Izuku says, tapping his arm to get his attention. “This seat taken?”

“It’s not.” Todoroki says, shifting his chair so Izuku can step into the one beside him. He barely looks at Izuku -- tracing his finger over the rim of his empty glass like it’s the most fascinating glass in the world and asks, “Did you...need something?”

“No, I just wanted to talk. Didn’t really have a chance earlier.” Todoroki’s knee knocks against his own, sending a stream of warmth down his spine. He doesn’t think Todoroki’s quirk has anything to do with it. Izuku’s on the wrong side to feel warmth. “Like you said, we haven’t talked in a while. Mostly my fault, I know. Work and all.”

“You’re not the only one.” Todoroki snorts and picks up a glass of water and stares at the dripping condensation on the sides. A drop falls on his dress pants, and he narrows his eyes. “It’s -- It’s hard to do both. You of all people know that’s how it is for people like us. That’s how it is.” I wish it
wasn’t, Izuku thinks. Then, maybe, I wouldn’t feel so alone. He feels the guilt tug in his stomach, the same guilt that flickers through him as he watches Iida and Ochaco dance together on the other side of the floor -- the closest victims in Izuku’s struggle between balancing work and friends and living a semi-normal routine. (Work, undoubtedly, won every time.)

“I wish it wasn’t,” Izuku says aloud, more to himself than Todoroki. “I wish it didn’t have to be that way.”

Todoroki replies, but the question is lost in the blur of music and the other voices in the room. A warm weight pressed against his side. Todoroki leans into his shoulder. Izuku doesn’t remember Todoroki leaning in that close, but Todoroki mumbles a complaint into his collar when he pulls away. “You were right,” Todoroki says. He’s practically sitting in Izuku’s lap. Not as sober as Izuku thought. Nobody on the planet would ever describe Todoroki as someone clingy or physically affectionate, but champagne makes him looser around the edges. “They’re really stupid. Galas.” He scoffs. “I hate dancing.”

“They’re good for morale.” Izuku corrects. It takes some convincing for Todoroki to sit in his own chair again. “And good for networking. You can’t have a fancy agency with fancy gear if you don’t suck it up and meet sponsors every once in a while.” Todoroki resists, so Izuku manhandles him back into the chair he’s supposed to be sitting in. A chair that is not composed entirely of Izuku’s physical body. A chair is a good idea -- even better for his spiking blood pressure. If only Todoroki would stay in the chair. Izuku isn’t entirely sure if he, himself, is too drunk to deal with Todoroki’s behavior or definitely not drunk enough.

“Now you sound like Yaoyorozu.” Todoroki groans.

Izuku smiles a little, despite Todoroki’s grimace. “She’s rarely ever wrong.”

“She wants to add my name to our agency.” Todoroki adds with a sigh. “Creati and Entropy Agency. That’s -- a bad idea. She’s wrong about that.”


Todoroki fixes him with a look he can’t entirely translate. Unsettled? “I’m happy where I am.” Izuku senses there’s more to it than that. “I think.”

“Do you want to be running your own agency? Instead of working under hers?” Todoroki shakes his head. “What?”

“I don’t think you’d understand, Midoriya.” Todoroki answers. He looks at the space over Izuku’s head, blinking slowly. Like while they danced and Todoroki made a point not to look him directly in the eye. “Especially not now.”

Izuku frowns. In the light Todoroki’s face shines; almost wax-like, melting under the burn of the lamps around them. Like if Izuku looks away he might fade away into the background. “What do you mean?”

“You haven’t held a conversation with me for more than five minutes since our last big reunion. Four years ago.” Todoroki says, bluntly. He was never one to pull punches. Izuku shouldn’t be surprised by this, but somehow, it rips out the fantasy rug beneath him. The cold and untouchable exterior wall of their early relationship is thrown up between them. That odd, unruflled, remote figure Todoroki once filled in his life before he called Izuku his friend. “You’ve been too busy. You’re too -- too different. It feels like I’m talking to a stranger. Sometimes. Like right now.”
Ouch. Shaking his head, Todoroki finishes, “I don’t think you’d understand. Not anymore.”

He recalls Iida’s comment from before: *You haven’t smiled at all this evening.* Izuku flinches at the reminder. Todoroki’s added words sting like alcohol doused on a fresh wound. “Try me. I think maybe I *would*.”

Todoroki appraises him. “Maybe,” he says softly. His voice is so quiet against the backdrop of guests and music that Izuku has to lean in to hear him. “Well, Midoriya. Do you -- do you think about your future?”

“I mean -- I think about it the regular amount.” Izuku answers, because if Todoroki is going to be honest with him then he should also put in an effort to return the gesture. “Don’t most people think about their future?”

“I don’t.” Todoroki’s reply forces his next reply deep into the pit of his stomach. “I don’t think about it. I don’t think I’ve thought about it for a long time.”

Izuku stares at him. The low lights on the table reflect in Todoroki’s eyes and Izuku sees something behind them that he never noticed before: a strange unnameable light; not fire exactly, but warm and bright, yet wavering and low. Under this light, Todoroki’s youth is stripped away. Leaving a vulnerable, weary figure of a person Izuku doesn’t recognize at all.

Shaking himself, Izuku stumbles over his words as he forms a response. “No I -- I do. Actually, I know exactly what you mean.” The disbelief shows in his face. Izuku isn’t so easily deterred. “I know that feeling. I know I have a future, but I don’t -- it doesn’t feel like my future, y’know? I should be happy. In the future, I think I should be happy. Right now -- right now I feel like I’m just going through the motions.” The words relieve something Izuku reflects on more and more frequently as his attention in the press increases with each day. Something that claws at him at night as he stares at the wall and forces his aching joints to still and rest for a few short hours at a time. Something that chases him with thoughts and questions: *What kind of person do you want to become? What kind of hero will you become?*

From a smaller voice in the back of his mind: *Do you want to live the rest of your life shackled to destiny, as alone, far away, like the others who came before you? Do you want to be like All Might?*

*What do you want, Izuku?*

He wonders if those same thoughts chase Todoroki at night. If those thoughts drive him up the wall as he clings to the concept of sleep, with the only evidence of the struggle present in the bags under his eyes in the morning. He wonders what goes on inside Todoroki’s head -- especially now. Izuku used to *know* -- or believed he did -- a long time ago, a little better what went on inside his mind.

*A stranger*, Todoroki said. Too busy. Too distant. Too much time passed for either of them to play a part in any resemblance of the friendship they once held.

Todoroki doesn’t say it, but Izuku understands. He doesn’t really know Todoroki; at least not as well as he used to. Maybe -- *maybe*, Izuku thinks -- *maybe* he doesn’t really know him at all. (He feels that way about himself sometimes. Looking at his own reflection and wonders at the face he sees there. A stranger to everyone, including himself, no matter how strange that sounds.)

Izuku thinks: *maybe I don’t know you anymore, but I think I would be willing to try again.* He doesn’t say that aloud. He doesn’t want to know what he would say if Todoroki rejected him.
The pause between them grows until Izuku can’t stand the silence. “You’re not seeing the bigger picture, I guess. Think of your life like a story,” he begins. “You’re at the end of a chapter trying to figure out where the next one begins. That’s why you can’t see the page ahead. Or have any idea of what’s next for you. If -- if that makes sense?”

He watches Izuku’s face carefully, scanning for an answer in his face. “I missed your advice,” Todoroki says at last, and laughs. Izuku doesn’t like the sound of this laugh from Todoroki. Not this kind of laughter. It isn’t cruel, or mean-spirited -- but it’s a sad laugh. An empty laugh. Todoroki’s words return to them, true and sour in his mouth: they haven’t spoken in person for months, or had a real conversation in years. And now Todoroki is opening up to him. Todoroki is not what he thinks is a vulnerable person, but he feels like he’s stepping over a line he shouldn’t.

Todoroki continues, without regard to the ongoing conflict in his own head. “I don’t want to do this anymore.”

“This?” Izuku repeats.

“Being a hero,” Todoroki leans back in his chair and looks up at the ceiling. Izuku stares at him. “I don’t want to be one. Anymore. I don’t know if I ever really thought I’d be anything else. Or if I ever wanted to in the first place.” His body language changes, then -- pulling back from Izuku, retreating. Izuku should stand up and walk away, allowing Todoroki to be unguarded without his audience. He should leave.

(He doesn’t. That’s not who he is. Never a time where he didn’t see someone in need of help and run the other direction. No matter the person asking. No matter the situation. No matter the consequences.)

“If you…” Izuku chooses his next words with fine-combed precision. “If you think working as a hero doesn’t make you happy, then you don’t have to. Be one. A hero, I mean.” Todoroki’s gaze on him is strong, so strong, Izuku spins for a second with a surge of embarrassment. Like a tiny bug under a microscope. He is grateful for the recognition of the familiar, something he knows hasn’t changed. Todoroki had a way of looking at people; so intense, so focused. It was hard not to feel like someone caught in the high beams. “I can’t pretend to...to understand your complicated relationship with heroes.” Decent understatement, he thinks, with no pleasure. Endeavor’s presence at the head of the hall burns with vitriol, an unpleasant reminder of a buried bitter history.

He hates how unreadable Todoroki’s face is. Or maybe he wishes he was better at it himself. Izuku is this far already. He meets Todoroki’s eyes and says, “You’ve had so many other people trying to write your life for you, but... you’re the writer of that story. Of your life. Do whatever it is that you want. Every part of it -- even how it ends -- is all yours to decide.”

The words sink in. He can see them processing in Todoroki’s mind in the following pause. “You always manage to surprise me,” Todoroki says slowly. He leans in. The rest of the gala fades away, and Izuku’s world narrows to the spare inches between them. “You’re always -- you always say things I don’t expect. Just now, I realized how much I missed this. I missed -- I missed that too. I’m sorry I didn’t -- I wanted us to be like before.” What? Izuku’s brain trips over itself as it tries to make sense of his response. What does that even mean???

Without pausing to take mercy on Izuku’s confusion, Todoroki continues. “But maybe -- maybe we can’t be. Maybe not. Maybe this is better.” Todoroki nods, as if satisfied by this admission. “Thank you.”

“Uh.” Izuku decides to accept his sincerity as genuine. The drinks from earlier must be hitting Todoroki now; the source of his uneasy sway, the unexpected strength of his gratitude. “You’re
welcome."

Todoroki leans in more. Too close, almost all of his weight against Izuku’s side. Izuku fears he might make another attempt to use him as a chair again. Todoroki surprises him with a different action. His hand, the colder one, reaches up and traces the side of his jaw. Izuku freezes. Despite the hand chilling him from the unexpected touch, Izuku thinks his face feels far warmer than it did a moment before. “I think I underestimated you again, Izuku.” Todoroki’s voice is different. His face is open, waiting, full of expectation. If Izuku didn’t know him better -- which now he questions if he does, given the time and distance between them -- he might call it teasing.

Izuku swallows and fails to come up with another response. He decides to follow Todoroki’s lead and drops the heavy atmosphere and tone. “Well, Shouto, you should know me better than that.”

“Should I,” Todoroki echoes, like it’s a question, and smiles. “And if I -- if I forgot? Could you give me another chance, to know you again?”

What, Izuku thinks, miserably, the fuck have I gotten myself into? “I, uh,” Izuku flails around for a minute to think of another appropriate response. “I -- I don’t know what you mean?”

“I never heard you say it,” Todoroki says, which explains absolutely fucking nothing at all. This conversation is too hard to follow. Maybe Izuku needs another drink for everything to start making sense -- Todoroki definitely does not, certainly. “You never said it when it was my other name.”

The whiplash from embarrassment to confusion leaves him stranded. “I never said your -- your what?”

“My name,” Todoroki repeats, insistent. “Say my name again.”

“Er,” Izuku starts. He wonders if Todoroki is holding a conversation with another invisible person next to him. He knows Hagakure didn’t attend the gala this year -- but it would certainly make more sense than the conversation he’s trapped in right now. “Say your...say your what?”

“Shouto,” Todoroki says softly. “I like the way it sounds -- when you say it.” His expression (Izuku isn’t sure if he imagines it or not) falls on the sadder side of wistful. Longing. “I’ve really missed you a lot. More than you know.”

Izuku’s brain switches on and off a few times. Tries to process all the new information unwillingly provided to him. He sputters, “I -- I mean! Me too! I miss hanging out with all my friends.”

“Do you remember,” Todoroki interrupts, either ignoring him or not hearing his response. “You remember that night we went to the beach, all of us, the whole -- it was years ago -- and I -- I thought I’d never seen you smile so much. That -- that was the last time we really talked, do you -- do you remember?”

“I remember,” Izuku assures him. This conversation walked him out of one minefield and into another. He wants to excuse himself, or fetch Todoroki another glass of water. He certainly feels like he needs one for himself.

“I thought,” Todoroki begins, serious as ever, focused on Izuku’s face with more intensity than Izuku knows how to deal with. He looks down, landing at the bottom of Izuku’s chin, then returns to his eyes, and his expression flickers through confusion and hopefulness so fast it makes Izuku’s head spin.

Izuku has a terrible, absolutely crazy, ridiculous thought: I think he’s going to kiss me. Todoroki is close enough to him, he wouldn’t have to do much. If Izuku leaned in, it would be very easy.
He thinks, *even more ridiculously*, that Todoroki *wants* him to. He could. He could, if he wanted to.

Izuku freezes up instead. Todoroki frowns and leans back. Izuku tries to sort through why that sends a wave of disappointment through him. “I thought, maybe...*maybe* --” The unspoken words lie between them, just out of reach. He doubts Todoroki even knew how he wanted to finish his sentence. Ashido and Sero bump into the back of his chair and their conversation is brought to a startling end.

Izuku excuses himself while Ashido pesters Todoroki for a dance. He strays far enough away to watch Todoroki dance (*terribly*, even worse than their dancing earlier) with Ashido. Close enough to know where he is, if Izuku found the urge to approach him again. Yet distant enough to only observe.

An hour before the gala ends, Jirou takes it upon herself to help Todoroki stumble out of the door and make for her car. Unsatisfied, Izuku decides, is the taste in his mouth after he watches Todoroki leave.

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DEKU デク✓@herodeku

**Suit up!!! Some extras in my gallery from Star Gala last month that I got today ^_^**

[Photo attached: A distant shot of Pro Hero Deku in his dark suit for the Star Gala ‘XX, followed by a shot of a closer angle. He isn’t smiling in the distant shot, but he is smiling in the close-up. The photographer has his attention in the second shot, having noticed he was being photographed.]

2,872 retweets | 9,006 favorites
8:17 AM - 24 April XX
Liked by Alien Queen, Uravity, heroentropy, INGENIUM, and 4 others you follow

I NEED A HERO!!! PLEASE!! @hold_m3

Replying to @herodeku UGGHg so handsome :’V

0 retweets | 9 favorites
8:25 AM - 24 April XX

Battle Fist ✔@profighthands

**Girls Night Out g_g I miss u guys, we gotta meet up again**

[Photo attached: A rowdy shot, a little off-center, featuring Pro Hero Earphone Jack squished between Pro Heroes Uravity, Vivid Lady, and Shemage. Mirage is in the background, one arm around a high-collared vest with glitter: Pro Hero Prism.]

522 retweets | 2,998 favorites
9:35 AM - 24 April XX
Liked by Earphone Jack, Creati | #11, PrIsM!!!, and 6 others you follow

Earphone Jack ✔@radio_jack

@profighthands ugh y didnt u tell me u took this picture -_- i hate u

145 retweets | 392 favorites
9:53 AM - 24 April XX
Liked by Battle Fist

HeroWatch@herowatch
This week’s HWWU will be a little delayed due to technical issues with our recording equipment.
Members who are subscribed to our site will be given an extra store code as an apology for our lack of content this week.

145 retweets | 392 favorites
12:20 PM - 24 April XX

🌟LUMISTARS🌟 @lightstick_lumistars
I care him :( and miss him already :( come back to twitter pls king lumi
[Photo attached: A close up of Pro Hero Luminesce holding a plush of himself, grinning madly. Small star emojis are edited over his head, a halo of sparkles.]
1:16 PM - 24 April XX

CHARGEBOLT CHARGED UP! @irlelectricboi
….uh

> [This Tweet is unavailable.]
15 retweets | 223 favorites
2:02 PM - 24 April XX

♡IKO♡ @3arphonejack
?????????????????????????????????????????
> [This Tweet is unavailable.]
5 retweets | 78 favorites
2:06 PM - 24 April XX

jear dest benist @bjeansdenim
WHAT THE FUCK???? WHAT THE FUCK?????
> [This Tweet is unavailable.]
0 retweets | 16 favorites
2:06 PM - 24 April XX

BRO, I LOVE U, BRO @proheroricky
???????????? WHAT????????
> [This Tweet is unavailable.]
8 retweets | 106 favorites
2:06 PM - 24 April XX

when in doubt meme it out @cao_8
SOMEBOYDY PLEASE TELL ME YOU GOT A SCREENSHOT OF THAT DEKU TWEET
HOLY SHIIIT HOLY SHIT HOLY SHIT SHHOLY SHIT S
0 retweets | 9 favorites
2:38 PM - 24 April XX

self-doubted @sammy999
Only pro hero deku would make an embarrassing personal tweet at 3am local time and delete it after 2 minutes
His mother has a rule about sneaking into her apartment. Izuku should expect the scream she makes when she catches sight of his torso slipping through the half-cracked window. Her scream startles him anyway. He loses his grip on the frame, sliding the rest of the way into the living room. The back of his head cracks against the wall.

Izuku rolls over and groans. His mother screams again. All Might looks down at him from the counter and waves, like this is all perfectly normal. “Hello, my boy.”

“Well, All Might,” Izuku says. He puts a hand to the back of his head and is grateful it pulls away clean. Not like he needs another injury added to his collection. “Hi, mom.”

Ever anxious, his mother stresses, “What happened?” Izuku appreciates her concern. However, he’s **definitely not** telling her about the fight he stumbled upon a half hour before arriving at her apartment. He’s regretting waving off the attention from that medic on site. In the bright light of his mother’s apartment, he can clearly make out the dirt and blood all over his costume. More accusing, she draws her brows up. “Izuku! What have I said about using the door --!?”

“Too much attention,” Izuku answers. The four blocks worth of running he put into losing the trail of paparazzi on him were not put to waste just so he could use the **front door**. He uses the table by the couch to lift himself to his feet with his good shoulder. He can see the moment his mother’s attention fixates on his arm, hanging awkwardly at his side. “It’s fine.”
That probably doesn’t help assure his mother by any means. All Might has the decency to look amused. “Come and sit, Izuku. I’ll get you something for your arm.”

Izuku takes a seat at the counter. All Might rises and begins his slow walk to the bathroom for the first aid kit. His mother fusses over him in All Might’s absence, making concerned noises at the bruising around his nose. Izuku decides not to tell her it’s because he got punched in the face by the door in his office. But only after he slammed it shut in a sudden fit of frustration and it bounced back at him. (He deserved it. As Kirishima would say -- “It’s very unmanly to slam doors just because you’re angry! Not cool to make other people scared just ‘cus you’re upset!”) At least his office was empty.

She takes one hand and rubs at the bags under his eyes as though she might scrub them away, like makeup, like if she rubs hard enough they might disappear.

“You aren’t sleeping again,” his mother sighs. “Izuku…”

“I am,” Izuku protests (which is a lie). “I’ve got a lot on my mind.”

Sleep is hard to come by when all of his thoughts are occupied with the too honest confession of words between two people who were essentially strangers. Not that his brain seems to care either way. He wishes he could forget, if only for the sake of his sanity. Izuku wonders if Todoroki remembers what he said at all, or if the amount of alcohol he consumed at the gala also tested the strength of his memory. Part of him hopes Todoroki forgot, if only to spare them both from embarrassment. A smaller part of him hopes he didn’t, but he doesn’t know which one bothers him more. Todoroki didn’t respond to his texts the day after. Was he too embarrassed? Or just disinterested in reconnecting with Izuku? Either option is terrifying to think about in reality.

All Might helps pop his shoulder back into place. His mother warms a plate of leftover noodles and vegetables in the microwave. While he eats, Inko tells him about her day and pulls out her phone to show him photos of her and All Might at the park. “Have you checked the news today?” Izuku shakes his head. “Oh, then I can show you! They made a very nice video about you and your classmates.”

It is -- a nice video, that is. Izuku allows his exhaustion to catch up to him anyway, letting his mother soothe him into a lull of security and peace he feels like he’s chasing more and more. Rarely catching it either, except in these small moments. He is allowed this. Around his mother, he can drop his guard. That much he is allowed.

“I saw a lot of your friends on the news today,” Inko explains. “They were doing some special event. Very nice, don’t you think?” Izuku nods sleepily. “Especially that girl -- the tall one. Creati? Is that her name?” Izuku nods again. “She’s very nice, I like what she says. Very well spoken. Her and Iida-kun make good leaders. And your other friend with the fun colored hair.”

“I’ll be sure to tell him you think his hair is fun,” Izuku tells her. Another lie -- the knot of confusion in his stomach is even more confusing and tangled whenever he spots Todoroki at a distance, or in the split-second of an advertisement on the train. “I’m sure he would appreciate that.”

“Good,” his mother sniffs. Then, she stops and appraises him again. “Hm…maybe you should invite him over. Or some of your old classmates. I feel like it’s been so long since we had a nice dinner party. I’d like to see your friends come by again. What do you think, Izuku? Maybe just a few. Iida-kun, Ochaco-san? Maybe that Todoroki boy, too?”

“Uh,” Izuku doesn’t know how to politely tell his mother the chances of Todoroki ever returning
his messages again are *slim to absolute fucking zero*, but he doesn’t say that. “I’ll -- I’ll ask.”

She pats his head and sighs. She doesn’t comment on Izuku stopping by her apartment for the third time in a week or the sudden change in schedule. They both know his visits usually average only three times in a month. Not like he could hide anything from his mother even if he tried. “You know you can tell me anything, right, Izuku?”

“Yeah,” Izuku answers, but his reply sits sour on his tongue as though he told a lie.

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[Video: ALIEN QUEEN / BATTLE FIST / FROPY / INGENIUM: LIVE IN TOKYO!!! best moments

Thumbnail: A split thumbnail with a white border between two images. Pro Hero Ingenium, proudly lifted by Battle Fist on one arm and Froppy on her other shoulder. Alien Queen is doing a handstand in the other image, her curly pink hair falling in front of her face. Ingenium is clapping in the background, while Battle Fist is holding out her arms like she’s displaying Alien Queen’s talents for the world.]

Posted 1 month ago by ♫HARMONY | Subscribe

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Comments 349

AllMightPOV Lv1900 - 3 weeks ago

*slams table* was anybody going to tell me ingenium looked so handsome under his helmet or was i going to have to watch this video and find that out myself

View 14 replies

Avttvnm - 1 day ago

this quad is so chaotic i cannot believe how much i needed these four interacting until now. Please do more team fights the power combo here is INCREDIBLE

View 2 replies

hyu uwu - 6 days ago

IVE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS VIDEO THANK U FOR UPLOADING

m m - 1 week ago

can’t help but. stan all four of them

---

Notes under Izuku’s door are a common occurrence for his office. The staff (and the occasional sidekick) sometimes leave reminders or messages for him when he returns. Most notes don’t make it to his desk because his office is locked while he’s out on patrol. The bin outside his door is overflowing, hence why the staff started slipping the most urgent notes under his door. He doesn’t open all of them, but he attempts to read most of them. He’s busy. Out of his office more often than he’s in. Always out. Always on the run. Always moving.

There are three notes on his floor when he enters his dark office. He scoops them up and add them
to the mess on his desk; more messages he will forget about until the morning. His desk is a testament to his busy schedule. The notes are easily lost among the stacks of unfinished reports and unorganized case files. Izuku nearly tosses the notes in the bin with a pile of old mail before he remembers one of them is likely an urgent message from one of his staff. He puts it back on his desk to be reviewed after he attacks the nearest stack of unfinished reports.

It’s quiet at this time of night. All the staff went home hours before. Izuku holds the record for first in the office in the morning and last to leave at night. (Occasionally he doesn’t even leave the building and sleeps on the couch outside his door. His staff usually forces him to go home at least once every three days.)

After rush hour, the city appears to fall into a gentle lull. It lasts until the city wakes up a second time with the nightlife crowd; before the clubs open and the rest of the city is seated with their families for a well prepared dinner. Izuku does neither of those things. His dinner consists of an old -- possibly expired -- protein bar (actually, based on the taste, it is definitely expired) and cold coffee. When he does manage to head out of the office, he returns home to an empty apartment and watches the news station until he falls asleep. Tonight is another addition to a string of long shifts with no end. Izuku thinks this is his sixth (seventh?) double shift in a row.

His phone buzzes. The name of the contact at the top surprises him for a moment. He clicks on the message, skimming it over as he downs the sour coffee.

From Todoroki Shouto:
ran into your mystery man. there’s a message for you

Izuku frowns and types out his response with one hand. Scrolling up for context provides no clues. His last conversation with Todoroki ended in March and consisted of “How’s it going? That’s good. Busy right now sorry, talk later” and faded out from there. Most of the conversation is messages he sent that never received a reply. He racks his memory to figure out what the cryptic message means before he remembers: the gala.

To Todoroki Shouto:
Hey! Hows it going You mean the guy I talked abt @ the gala? That’s interesting.. What kind of message ?

From Todoroki Shouto:
it would be easier to explain in person take a day off and visit so we can discuss you shouldn’t be too busy for that.

To Todoroki Shouto:
I am ALWAYS busy :/
But sure. What you got for me?

From Todoroki Shouto:
there’s a seal on the letter. i’ll send you a picture. and something else i need to talk to you about

To Todoroki Shouto:
Thanks. I’ll take a look
And that sounds .. ominous. Work related?

From Todoroki Shouto:
it’s complicated
To Todoroki Shouto:

??? What does THAT mean??

From Todoroki Shouto:

it would be easier to explain in person.
here's the seal

[Image attachment: IMG_00092.jpeg
The front of an envelope and broken red seal. A ladle-shaped imprint on the front of the wax, with a square base and a half circle on the top.]

Izuku turns his phone over and searches for any trace of recognition with the seal. The mysterious man with the briefcase grows more mysterious with every new detail. He’s sure he’s seen it before -- although he isn’t sure where. He saves the image and puts it away for later.

To Todoroki Shouto:

I know i’ve seen that before
What’s complicated mean???

From Todoroki Shouto:

it’s about what i said at the gala

Izuku gives pause at that. He sets down his coffee, while his hand hovers over the call button for a moment. He relaxes and types out a different response. He hesitates before he sends it, erases it, and re-types it. The flush on his face definitely has nothing to do with the temperature of his coffee.

To Todoroki Shouto:

You remember that?
And which part?

From Todoroki Shouto:

i remember. unfortunately
the part about my job

To Todoroki Shouto:

Can we talk now? I can call you

From Todoroki Shouto:

can't

To Todoroki Shouto:

Are you at work right now?

From Todoroki Shouto:

yes.
as are you i assume

To Todoroki Shouto:

Maybe so

From Todoroki Shouto:

we’ll catch up later
i have a free day this week
i’ll send the address. you pick the day
To Todoroki Shouto:

Fine

From Todoroki Shouto:

i’m buying

To Todoroki Shouto:

Yeah?

From Todoroki Shouto:

isn’t your birthday coming up soon we’ll celebrate then.

To Todoroki Shouto:

Right

Izuku sweeps the trash off his desk and remembers the note. It’s plain note; corners tucked in and the faint imprint of dark ink on the inside. Inside the note is a photograph, which falls onto his desk before he can read the contents inside. An old print, a little worn on the edges, but not too worn for him not to recognize the face. He thinks it might have belonged to a package of old hero collector prints at one point. But this is not an item for a collection taken with care. Entropy, the card reads. Todoroki’s mouth is firm and unsmiling through the photograph. His eyes are crossed out in red.

He turns the paper over. His eyes skim over the message in an instant. One hand trembles at his side as he tips the envelope back and stares at the remaining contents that spill out. Two threads tied together like a bow for a present. Not thread, though. Two strands of…

He barely reads the message beneath it.

...FOR I, THE FATED OMENT, SHALL BE YOUR DOOM.

His phone is in his hand, typing out a new message before he realizes it. Izuku’s whole body moves on autopilot as he backs away from the desk and moves to the drawer where he stashed his utility belt before he sat down.

To Todoroki Shouto:

Sorry. realized I already have a thing next week
How’s the week after for you?

From Todoroki Shouto:

what kind of big?
i’m off again on the 9th

To Todoroki Shouto:

9th is fine
Won’t be late
I promise.

And it’s nothing too big Don’t worry about it

Izuku slides on the top of his hero suit as he scrolls through his contacts for the Chief of Police and the other top heroes he has on speed dial. The window in his office is easy to open without too much effort. He snaps the frame up in a practiced move and leaps out. Stopping on the roof of the next building, he pulls out his phone again and shoots out a quick message.

To Yaoyorozu Momo:

Need favor ASAP
The officer on duty at the station looks very alarmed to see Izuku slam the front doors open. His suit is mostly unzipped, but he didn’t have time to fix his mask or the bodysuit as he ran from the office to the station. “I need a team to search my office downtown.” Izuku orders. The room freezes and then a group of officers fly into action and scramble to put on their gear and guns. “I need to talk to Chief Nagako.”

“Where’s the fire?” The lead detective in the precinct, Saga Hisako, pushes the door to the Nagako’s office by herself ten minutes later.

Izuku doesn’t rise on her entrance. Barely turns his head in her direction and answers, “Emergency code, type melon. All hands on deck.”

She raises a brow. “Yours?”

“No. It’s for Entropy.” Her brow arches higher. “I already talked to Creati, she’s putting together a team to get this sorted. I’m not really sure who we’re dealing with yet so we’re playing it safe. Low profile. Normal guidelines, no alerting him, all that.”

“Who would call in a hit on Entropy?” Saga asks. “Number Five is a pretty impressive target.” She whistles. “They must have a death wish if they dropped it off at your office of all places.” Her voice slows; thoughtful. “Or maybe that’s exactly why they didn’t leave it at Creati’s.” Walking around the table, she sits in the free chair next to Izuku. “Let me take a wild stab in the dark -- he’s the bait.”

Izuku ignores the jab. Detective Saga has never been his biggest fan, and the feeling is fairly mutual. “Do you have anything else useful to add, detective?”

“Saga, go check in with the other officers and get everyone else ready. As he said, we need to move as fast as possible.” Nagako orders. “Deku, hold back a moment.”
Izuku nods to Detective Saga. Nagako is quiet and opens their mouth after the detective closes the door behind her. “Detective Saga does have a point. The details of the note do, eh, indicate he’s not the primary target for the threat. But even if he is, there are other heroes who can take responsibility for both of you.” Izuku makes a face to show just how much he disapproves of that idea. “I think you might be too close to this.”

“That’s exactly why I need to be on it.” Nagako doesn’t look too impressed, so Izuku presses on. “I have to do this. I know what’s at stake.” The Chief of Police makes an expression that Izuku can’t translate, but he interprets it as general disbelief. “Trust me. I know what I’m doing.” He can’t read the Nagako’s (vaguely fish-eyed) expression, but he hopes it’s enough to sound convincing. Firmly, he amends, “We can handle this.”

“I meant for yourself, Midoriya.” Izuku scowls at the use of his actual name, which means this conversation is treading into very uncomfortable personal territory. “I don’t doubt your abilities, or the other heroes on this case. I am aware you all attended the same class. Your bonds with your peers are closer than most.” A beat, followed by their hesitant sigh. “But -- I also know there’s something else going on that you aren’t saying. We can’t afford to take any chances.” Nagako rolls their head to the side, pausing to let those words sink in. “You told me what the letter said. I know the look on your face.” What is that supposed to mean, Izuku thinks. “You’re compromised. On this mission. I don’t doubt your abilities, but I doubt your ability to work objectively. You know what these kinds of codes look like when, eh…” Nagako hesitates again. “…significant others are involved.”

What?

Izuku blinks at him. He waits to see if the other detective jumps through the door and yells “haha, got you! wasn’t that funny!” with the rest of the officers to point and laugh. The Chief’s face doesn’t change and Izuku realizes they’re waiting for his response.

“We’re not -- we’re not like -- uh, that’s not. That’s not why -- that’s not why I’m doing this.” It takes a few false starts before he finds his footing again. “I -- I mean no disrespect, Chief, but you’re making a pretty bold assumption. About all of this.”

Nagako blinks their filmy grey eyes blandly. Clearly not deterred by his reply. “My apologies. I wrongly assumed your relationship with Entropy was…” A tremendous pause. Izuku’s hands stick with sweat to the insides of his gloves. “…strictly less than professional. I only assumed because -- well, people like to talk.” Although he’d rather not hear the end of that statement, Izuku remains in the Chief’s office until he is dismissed and bows. As he turns, the Chief tells his retreating back: “Forgive me for overstepping.”

The moment he’s free he launches himself into the sky. Focused only on the mission at hand, narrowing his gaze to the facts. What he knows: someone wants to kill him, which isn’t that unpredictable. What’s more: someone with an odd fixation on himself and Todoroki at the center of it all. The air boosters at the bottom of his shoes make discontented whirring noises as Izuku races from one end of the city to another. The trip to Yaoyorozu’s office isn’t long from Tokyo Station, but he didn’t get a chance to charge them before he left. He hopes they hold out until he’s at her door.

You’re compromised on this mission. Nagako’s voice echoes in the back of his mind. Everything comes rushing back to him.

Is it because they were friends in high school? Or because they were close, at one time, before Izuku isolated himself involuntarily through work. Less than professional. That could represent anything; a double meaning. Significant other...that detail implies the Chief is far more invested in
his personal life than Izuku is comfortable with. Detective Saga as well, if her cutting remarks where any indication that Chief Nagako isn’t the only one overly involved in his actual life outside of his hero life.

Todoroki barely talks to him anyways! The last time they actually spoke was that disastrous conversation at the gala. Where would anyone get the impression they were --? Izuku feels his scowl deepen at the memory. No need to over-analyze this now. Much larger things to worry about besides people making wrong assumptions about his relationship with Todoroki.

Yaoyorozu, too, gives him a long look while he explains their plan over the next week and the security detail in charge of Todoroki. He mentions the Chief’s odd comment (the one about the true target, not whatever the hell that last comment was) as a joke, a way to lighten the tension.

“Midoriya-kun,” Yaoyorozu frowns. “I -- I don’t think he’s wrong, actually. Don’t you find it -- odd, I suppose, that the message would target Todoroki-kun? If it’s true intention is to draw you out, then -- perhaps it’s not in your best interests to pursue it. Being the target of the message, it does seem like the sender is only using Todoroki-kun as a means to --” Her frown deepens, drawing down her brow. “-- to provoke you.”

“What do you mean?” He has a feeling he isn’t going to like the answer, so he lends his tone more accusatory than he intends.

“I’m only thinking that the Chief may be right,” Yaoyorozu explains. “I know you haven’t considered it from our perspective, but --” Whatever she plans to say after that is interrupted by Iida and Hatsume’s entrance. She doesn’t bring it up again, but the question hangs with him for the rest of the briefing. He never gets to hear the rest of her thoughts and decides it’s for the best he doesn’t ever find out. He’s tired of people jumping to conclusions before him.

What do they know, Izuku thinks sourly.

[Photo: Pro Hero Uravity, out of uniform, wearing a soft pink one piece diving suit, a pair of Froppy branded diving goggles, and a snorkeling mouthpiece. She’s grinning, making a peace sign at the camera holder. In her other hand she has a pair of flippers and a towel tossed over her shoulder. The lighting is gentle, and the colors of the sky behind her reveal a gorgeous dusk mural.]

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iida.t - Lovely as ever. I hope you both are enjoying your well-deserved vacation

ix_ab - SOBS!!! ;_; OMG I LOVE U bOTH!!!!!
The soft golden glow of the lamps and white decorations remind him of another time, not too long ago; a gala. Unsettling; the lightning is all wrong: too bright, distorted, and the colors all over saturated and heavy. He remembers this dream. He remembers this place. He knows which night and memory this belongs to.

He falls into step, taking his seat beside Ashido and Shiozaki. Exactly as he remembers it. Time passes differently in dreams. From his memory, Izuku knows he launched into a long conversation with Sero and Kaminari about his work -- but he blinks and they disappear. Todoroki fades into view before him, smiling and flushed. Izuku offers his hand. Todoroki, unhesitating, accepts. Izuku spins him around the floor once, twice, and turns his head to the side only to find himself looking at Todoroki sitting in the chair by the corner. He doesn’t remember when he sat down.

Todoroki’s expression is the same as it was after he thanked Izuku for his advice. Open. Closer, so close he can feel Todoroki’s heat beside his own.

Here his dream takes a different course. The attendees and the rest of the gala vanish from view. The wax-like softness in Todoroki’s face liquifies. He leans in closer, much closer than he had before. Close enough that Izuku feels like he should pull away, to give himself more room to breathe. His heart beats rabbit-fast against his ribs. He doesn’t move away. He could, if he wanted. But he doesn’t.

Todoroki kisses him, a barely-there touch across his lips, passing his warmth along for only a moment. The feeling lingers against his mouth. “Do you understand now?” Todoroki asks. The light glances off his eyes. Izuku watches his own dazed expression in the reflection. His breath is warm and sweet. “You’re different now, Izuku. You’ve changed. Do you understand?” The lights from the gala radiate more heat and light, bordering on uncomfortably warm. His sweat builds inside his collar.

Todoroki melts into the background of blinding light. His voice comes from a distance, much farther away than before. “Midoriya,” Todoroki calls, his voice bleeding into a new tone -- more urgent. Not Todoroki’s voice. “Midoriya-kun, wake up!”

Izuku snaps awake, finds himself faced with a blurry unknown figure directly in front of him, and (running on panic and confusion) instinctually almost punches Iida in the face. Their escort vehicle is small, and there isn’t a lot of room between them, which spells for disaster. Iida’s quick reflexes and Izuku’s sudden reintroduction to consciousness fortunately spare them both from catastrophe.

While he chokes down a breakfast bar, Iida recites the events of the last few hours in Izuku’s unconscious absence. The assault team and Hatsume’s combined efforts tracked down their (believed) suspect(s) to a warehouse outside the Kyoto district. Video surveillance from Izuku’s office picked up facial recognition on one of their suspects, and they traced them to the hazy orange backdrop of an old city block. Long abandoned, deemed unsafe for construction purposes after an earthquake wiped out the foundations under the roading. A full team of trained officers and sidekicks covered the area on the ground to ensure nobody got in or out without their knowledge.
“You should’ve woken me up.” Izuku complains. Iida’s face contorts into an expression of great displeasure. Izuku closes his mouth and finishes chewing.

Iida redirects into the middle of *Topics He Doesn’t Want To Talk About* because that is how Iida deals with his problems. “You were talking in your sleep.” Surely, Iida wouldn’t be so inclined to force Izuku into confront personal problems while on the job? “I don’t wish to pry, but you sounded distressed. Are you having nightmares again?” *Apparently he is.*

“Something like that.” Izuku answers, wincing. He rests his forehead against the cool pane of the window behind him. The cityscape outside blurs and weaves in a dizzying array of colors, as disorientating as the ones in his dream. “It’s nothing, really.” Iida raises both brows. “I’m fine.” Izuku rolls his eyes and waves off Iida’s offer for coffee. The last thing he needs is caffeine mixed with his nerves and jittery energy. The yawn that swallows inside his next sentence destroys his credibility.

“You haven’t slept in **over 72 hours!”** Iida retorts. He knows Iida will only be **more** upset if he finds out it’s more like **96 hours.** “And -- and you are walking into something that could not more **clearly** be labelled as a trap. Please have some water. Take a moment to rest.”

Izuku shakes his head and says, “I slept on the way here.” Iida huffs and throws his hands in the air like Izuku said something ridiculous. Izuku accepts the bottled water to pacify him.

Their escort vehicle parks outside their makeshift low-profile meeting area. Izuku fumbles to strap on the rest of his gear. Iida and the officers from their escort march with him into the room. As the head of the mission, Izuku takes the front seat. The effects of his dream linger into the afternoon. Iida eyes him with extra concern after Izuku stares off into space halfway through his ground-team and assault briefing.

“Are you **sure** you are feeling well enough for this, Midoriya-kun?” Iida asks after the meeting breaks. The team of officers in charge of securing the perimeter practically fly out of the doors, leaving himself and Iida alone. The guilt in the base of his stomach rears. He’s the cause of Iida’s severe frown and the lines in his brow. “You know I am more than happy to help when you ask. But I would hope you take my advice when I offer it freely: you should not fight like this. Not when you are exhausted. Not when we know so little about who we’re facing. Please.”

Izuku slaps his cheeks. “I’m fine. If I nod off again, uh. I don’t know. Slap me.”

Iida’s face reconfigures into **Very Disapproving And Concerned Expression #2;** the one where one corner of his mouth drags lower than the other. Izuku is **too tired** to argue his way out of this. “I think, instead, I will **leave** you here if you fall asleep again. You could get hurt. As your partner on this mission, and your friend, I --”

Izuku cuts him off with a short, “Yeah, thanks, let’s get going!” and is out the door before Iida can finish his warning. At nineteen, Izuku tracked down the base for the League of Villains with a small task force. He took an unhinged Shigaraki all by himself while running on less than two hours of sleep.

This is an embarrassing punchline to a joke he will tell at a future reunion, in comparison.

He tosses a thumbs up at Iida outside at the window. Iida’s posture radiates disapproval, but Izuku is too far away for him to do anything about it. He bends at the knee, kicks his air boosters into action, and leaps.

Waiting for everyone to get into position does little to relax his nerves. Izuku does his final check
ins with the officers at the perimeter, assuring the all clear from surveillance. The final details puts the ground team engaging with the two unidentified men in front. Izuku leaves the rest to Iida. He can’t worry about the others if it means he has his own mission to complete. He needs to know who sent the message and why.

Despite the sounds of fighting outside, it’s quiet in the apartment. Izuku doesn’t know how this building is still standing, and he doesn’t want to test his faith in the stability of those walls either. One good hit and the whole thing might go down. In the larger scale, Izuku is relieved to be fighting in uninhabited space. No civilians to worry about if things go sideways.

“There you are,” a soft voice coos and Izuku whirls around as he chases the sound of the voice. He looks up. Then down at the entrance as he scans for any signs of life. “I was waiting for you to arrive. And here you are!”

“I’m here.” Izuku mutters. He raises his voice and calls back to her. “Who are you?”

The voice -- a woman, he would guess -- continues talking like she’s enjoying their (mostly) one-sided conversation. “Impatient,” the woman remarks, and this time her voice is higher up. “Are you looking for a fight, Iz-u-k-u?” Using his name like the start of a song, her voice drifts down, closer; although it wobbles like her voice can’t quite carry the tune.

“I don’t go looking for fights unless they come looking for me.” Izuku makes a fist with one hand and flexes his fingertips. This whole scene doesn’t sit right with him. “I have one question for you, though. What’s with the hair? That’s the one thing I haven’t figured out about you.”

The laughing stops. “Figured out? You haven’t figured me out. You don’t know anything about me at all.”

Izuku cuts off his own retort with a frustrated huff. Reminds himself to stick to the plan. Draw her out, restrain, and arrest. “Nevermind. Come out and let’s get this over with.”

“As you wish,” she says, and steps out of the kitchen. She’s barefoot, only in a nightgown and unarmed. No sign of any protective armor, no sign of anything to aid her at all. These villains are usually the worst; they’ve got something else they’re hiding, or a quirk so powerful they don’t need physical protection. Her skin is sunken in and pale, her appearance corpse like and unreal. And her eyes…

“That’s right. Look at me.” she says. Her tone takes on an appraising one. “And look at you. I’ve seen your photos, but it’s different to really see you.” Izuku isn’t sure how to take that comment. Extreme discomfort is the emotion he settles on. Her sigh is wistful. “I only knew you when you were grey.”

Izuku doesn’t freeze up, exactly, but his muscles lock as he watches her approach. The sounds of fighting from outside fade away into faint ringing.

“It’s good to know you never changed,” she comments. She hops over the broken couch, walks right through the broken glass and nails sticking out of the floor. Her eyes never leave him; glowing and beautiful, but terrible and haunting all at once. The plan, Izuku thinks, didn’t prepare him for this.

She continues talking, rambling off about how great it is to see him again, how she can’t wait to kill him, whatever, whatever. Typical for a revenge motivated villain. Izuku guesses she’s talking to herself, or maybe a third audience, but her words seem directed at him in particular. Villains do love their monologues. Usually it’s easier to take them down, but in this scenario, Izuku doesn’t
foresee getting a hit in before she’s finished her speech. Her quirk leaves him stuck in place. “But I expected your pride might step in the way. You always were a little sensitive when it comes to your friends.” She doesn’t hesitate between her words, but he feels her deliberate pause. “Especially...Shouto.”

Izuku doesn’t give her the dignity of an answer, but he doesn’t think he could even if he tried. His entire body feels like it’s frozen in a block of ice (and that’s happened before). The way she talks about him, about Todoroki, how she talks about his life like she knows all of it makes him pause. She talks like she knows him. She talks like she knows something he doesn’t, something he should know -- but the knowledge is missing. A meteor-sized crater of information he doesn’t have access too.

“Don’t worry about young Shouto.” Her sigh vibrates the air around him. “I swore to you that no real harm will come to him. From me, at least. He’ll get what’s coming to him, in good time.” Her conviction strikes a chord of terror. The worst kinds of villains, Izuku amends, are the ones who think they know everything. “But I won’t have a-ny-thi-ng to do with that.”

He wishes he could move. She steps forward, followed by another, and then another. Close enough to touch him, one hand at his neck where his throat bobs with a swallow. She leans in and breathes on his face; her breath smells as bad as a corpse. “You were my hero once. But you betrayed me. You lied to me. You lied to all of us.” Her hand reaches up and pets his hair, which is really not helping her creepiness factor drop any lower. “I’m going to stop you before you get the chance to fool us again.”

“Why.” Izuku says, and the effort it takes to say that one word is, in short, nothing less than formidable.

She laughs like his question is a joke; or like Izuku performed a special trick for her. “Why?” She mocks. “Wouldn’t you, in my place --?”

In between her next blink, Izuku channels every ounce of One For All into his foot and moves in the split second her eyes close. He doesn’t even lift his whole foot off the ground, slamming all the force of it into his heel. The building trembles around him. Izuku is free. The villain hops away when she realizes he’s broken the connection.

One hand at the side of his face, blocking the dust and debris as he shouts after her. He calls back: “It’s not hard when you give your own power away!” Eye contact only lasts for so long. She has to blink, and then he will make his move. Izuku has the advantage of three years of Eraserhead’s teaching under him.

The scream she unleashes forces him to clap his ears together, a dagger piercing through his skull. He dashes out of the building the second it stops and his limbs obey basic commands again. “I’m not finished with you!” She shrieks, followed by shrill laughter. Izuku’s body locks up again. “You think you’re so clever. Come back here, Deku.”

His own legs turn against his will. His body moves under the instructions of another. It’s not like Shinsou’s quirk at all, from his memory of it. He takes one step closer to the door, closer to her, and then he sees Iida. His thoughts, although sluggish, fill with confusion. Why is Iida in his way?

“Midoriya-kun,” Iida calls. His helmet is gone and his armor dented in a few places, but otherwise he appears otherwise no worse for wear. “Are you alright?”

Izuku tries to tell him, You’re in danger, We need to leave, but his thoughts slide away like oil slipping off the side of a plate. He can’t say a word. He knows that is something he should worry
about. Iida repeats his name with more urgency. Izuku blinks. He swallows. Locking eyes with Iida, he forces the remaining air in his lungs he can control into one word -- “Go.”

“Deku,” the woman’s voice calls out. The door is open. “Do as you’re told.” He tenses, drops into an offensive position. If he must fight, he will fight to win.

Her voice chases him, sweet and laced with a sharp bite. “Ingenium won’t be interfering anymore.” Izuku’s leg raises, One For All coursing through every inch of him. Iida dives toward him, knocking him to the ground and forcing him to fire the kick into the sky. His head spins. Why is Iida here? Who is he fighting?

The second the power releases, Iida slams him against the ground. Izuku’s head rings, filled with clarity and awareness. He lets out a gasp -- pain and shock and fear mingled together. Alarmed, Iida calls out, “What are you --? Midori--!

“Go,” Izuku wheezes out. “Get out of --!”

“I won’t leave you here!” In the speed of a half-blink, Iida’s weight is gone. The villain lifts him by the collar with the strength of someone four times her size and throws him a good distance away. Izuku wishes he could turn his neck to see where he landed, but he can barely control his own limbs at the moment.

She hovers over him, grinning down at him from where he lies on the ground. “Stand up. I’ve waited too long for this. Your annoying little shadow was always keeping me just out of reach -- but not today! Not anymore. Stand up, hero.”

Izuku obeys; not that he has any other choice. “I’d ask you if you have any last words, but I don’t care.” She twirls around, pulling at the curls on the top of his head as she dances. Inspecting the slow forming bruise on his jaw, she muses, “You always talked about wanting to live long enough to see everything you’d done. I think I’ll take that from you first.”

*How is she controlling me if she’s not looking at me? The first time, she needed direct eye contact for it to work, Izuku reasons. Think. Think harder. What did she do differently? What’s different about this time --?*

That train of thought goes out the window as his insides start literally burning, and there’s a light, one so bright it sears itself into the back of his eyelids even with his eyes closed. Her scream rips through his head, even though the source seems farther away. More light, cold air. A hand, he imagines, for a moment, sliding into his own and squeezing; he thinks he's burning, sliding away, like his thoughts into

*he thinks he dreams, but maybe it's nothing more than a voice, calling his name.*

*the suggestion of a man with a sad face. a face meant for smiling, drawn with sorrow.*

*why are you sad, Izuku asks.*

*you will know, the man promises. one day you, will know. for now it is better for you to forget you ever met me at all.*

*Izuku can’t help but wonder: are you real?*
He wakes in motion. Iida shakes his shoulders, a desperate rocking that Izuku implies to mean he’s been shaking him for a while. “--ya. Please. Midoriya-kun, please,” Iida’s voice, too, shakes with the same desperation.

If his head didn’t hurt so much, he might find the strength to form an intelligent reply. “What...?” Izuku groans, too slurred for any passable words. It comes out more along the lines of: “Nnnnnngggghhhh.” Iida crushes him in a hug that reminds every aching area on his body is burning in agony. The groan that comes out of his mouth is entirely involuntary. Blinking, he opens his eyes and stares up at a blurry mass of colors that eventually reforms into the warm-toned backdrop of a dusty apartment. He can see the guilt on Iida’s face when he’s released and offers him a smile to lessen it. It doesn’t work.

He doesn’t have the energy to stop Iida from prodding all of his exposed skin searching for broken bones and scrapes. “Does this hurt?” Iida asks him, over and over, and Izuku stares at the clear sky above him and counts the clouds. There’s a giant hole in the ceiling and one of the walls is missing from one of the buildings. He wonders, in a detached sort of way, if he did that. Orange light filters in through the gaps in the canvas of the sky. Light purples and pinks over the cloud columns. Two large fluffy ones in the distance, another four darker ones on the other side. He doesn’t know how to tell which bring rain, but he thinks he used to know. He can’t remember right now.

Iida pokes a sore spot above his brow, drawing another groan from Izuku as he does. “Ow, ow, stop. Stop that.” Iida, of course, takes that as permission to prod the side of his ribs where most of his pain radiates from. Izuku’s vision whites out for a minute.

“You are lucky you’re alive,” Iida’s stern voice greets him when he comes around the second time. “I don’t even know how you’re alive.”

Through his pain, Izuku forces a smile. To Iida, he says: “Too stubborn to die.” From Iida’s expression he knows Iida didn’t find that reply as amusing as he did.

Iida shakes his head and says, irritably, “That’s not something to be proud of.” Izuku laughs and suffers with the immediate consequences.

Finished with his quick injury assessment, Iida decides he’s not going to expire in his arms and asks, “Do you think you can move?” Izuku stares at him. Iida’s head follows a ghost head beside him, and Izuku decides it’s Definitely Not A Good Sign if Iida sprouted a second head. Or that he’s seeing one if it isn’t really there.

“Er,” Izuku replies. He doesn’t answer. Iida abandons asking him any other direct questions. He wraps his hands around Izuku’s head and inspects the bruising along the side of his face. Izuku’s stomach reminds him that he went face to face with an ultra intelligent cake mixer that stirred around in his intestines on the highest setting. He stifles his groan, biting his lip and exhaling through his nose.

“You have a very serious concussion,” Iida concludes. Like that means anything to Izuku right now. Both of Iida’s heads have their jaws set, hard. The expression on his face right before Izuku went down: worried, afraid. Iida always had a brave face, even under his helmet. All that bravery was stripped away when he was tossed to the side, loose limbed. No brave face on him then. And then it was Izuku, alone, and he looked into that woman’s face and her eyes were glowing and
there was pain and -- he squeezes eyes shut. He remembers the pain, he still feels the echoes of it, but he remembers.

“Light.” Izuku gasps out. His eyes fly open again. “There was a light --” Iida presses his fingers a little harder into his scalp, and Izuku bites down on his lip so hard it bleeds. “-- fuck. Stop doing that. There was a light. Did you see it?”

Iida pauses. His expression says everything Izuku needs to know about how crazy he sounds; Iida probably thinks his concussion finally broke a few of his last good brain cells. “We all saw it, Midoriya-kun. It was quite impossible to miss. She used her quirk, it was to distract us.”

“No,” Izuku insists. “The light -- it wasn’t coming from her. There was...someone else. Someone else here. She was fighting them, I heard -- no, I saw someone. I saw...”

“What do you mean?” Iida’s frown deepens. He’s going to get wrinkles frowning like that. “We already captured one of her accompaniments. The other escaped, but we’re tracking him now. He won’t get far.”

“No, no,” Izuku shakes his head and yeah, that’s a mistake. All the other parts of his body quivering in agony decide to make themselves known. He presses his hand to his side and pushes it down, down, down, to a place where he can deal with it later. His next words tremble as he spits them out. “Someone -- someone else...they were fighting her. There was somebody in -- the light, there was...they were -- why am I so cold?” He doesn’t know how long he was shivering, but the heat around him leeches into the cold soil. From the distance, steam rising from the ground; a crater from a great impact of something much more powerful than he could create. Or maybe he did and he doesn’t remember. He doesn’t remember much from the last moments of the fight -- only a vague sense that he missed a critical amount of information in the finale.

Iida doesn’t look convinced. “You hit your head very hard. It’s possible you are remembering it wrong. I’m not sure what her quirk did to you, but -- we will worry about that later.” Firmly, Iida commands, “I’m taking you to the medics we have on site. They will take you to the hospital.”

Izu can’t shake the feeling he’s forgotten something important. It’s probably his concussion, like Iida suggested. Or because his insides feel like they were rearranged in the wrong order. Still, he insists, “No, no -- Iida, listen to me. The other person I saw, it wasn’t a villain. I think...” he frowns. He knew that face. Although impossible, but familiar, and --

he knows he’s seen this face before,

maybe from a dream he thought long forgotten,

maybe from a face he passed on the street,

maybe from a face from a memory too distant to recall when and where,

but he knows,

he knows he knows

he knows this face --

-- and his headache is getting worse. “...I think ’m gonna be sick.”

Iida pats his head, much more gentle than the prodding from earlier. “It is time for you to rest.” Izuku needs no further instructions after that and he’s gone again.
[Video: JPN HERO GALA: STARGAZING’XX
Thumbnail image: Pro Heroes Creati & Entropy arm in arm at the entrance of the Rising Star Gala. Creati is in a deep red and gold dress, with a thin gold band on her arm and across her forehead. Entropy is wearing a black suit to contrast her dress and a gold lapel. Creati is posed like a model, while Entropy is rather stiff and wearing a neutral expression.]

Posted 3 months ago by WorldHeroesOnline ✔ | Subscribe
2.2M views

Video promotional material and editing provided by Rising Stars: Heroes of Japan!

Comments 2.3k

CherryBlossom8 - 3 months ago
its a crime they never broadcast the whole gala to the public... there's probably SO much drama that happens and we only get to hear the secondhand info from people who worked as staff for the event or heroes who snitch about the yearly gala drama
View 3 replies
>ch4rrriizeard - its too bad luminesce wasn't there this year :( i always wait for his dramatic retelling of everything that happened

Yeeehaw!! - 2 months ago
HELLO?????? ZOOM IN ON 4:16 WITH ENTROPY AND DEKU DANCING????????
View 6 replies
>fartgum22 - I KNOW IM STILL DYING
>> AAAAAAal - I think the rowdy crowd heroes dance with all of their friends but the person editing the video really makes an effort to include so many shots of entropy & deku in this 5 minute video, which is hilarious

NoraLeo Butz - 2 weeks ago
Creati was Entropy’s date <3 They make such a cute couple. Love them !!! #OTP!!
View 10 replies
>Alien Queen #1 Fan - this but ironically
>>plasmaKing - im assuming you havent been on the internet in a while but honey have i got news for you…
>>>goth lives on! stan earphonejack! - LMAOOOOO

Aunga Bounaga - 1 month ago
A shame there wasn’t any video of the #RowdyCrowd after most of the heroes had too much to drink. Earphone Jack toppled a table of drinks by accident according to her livetweets. Alien Queen and Battle Fist brought back the annual food fight. Entropy was apparently doing some kind of weird dancing; I would pay HARD cash to see that forbidden video.
View 15 replies
>riverst - or you could. Leave the guy alone. he looked pretty miserable in those photos. plus nobody wants their embarrassing drunk videos leaked, have some respect!
>>Daniel J - That's cause he had to sit with Creati. He shouldve picked a different date. I’d be miserable to if I had to sit next to that ugly bitch lmao
>>>riverst - i regret 2 inform you that your brain is worth nothing more than half a bucket of rolled oats. no braincells in sight. no critical thinking whatsoever. lacking anything of value in even the
loosest sense of the word. Ur presence on this earth is only made useful by transforming u into fresh fertilizer.

LuckyTurtles1313 - 3 weeks ago

the outfits this year???? WOW???? My fave was uhhhhhhuh probably froppy’s lilly pad dress???
the little details with glitter so it made it look like there were stars in the fabric???
Like stars reflecting on the water???? The way uravity floated her down the stairs for their entrance???
Uravity’s suit had tiny lily pads on the collar ???? Literally squealing rn i can’t thats sooo cute now THATS some beautiful couple outfit coordination ;A; omggmgmgmomgg

Recommended videos:

JPN HERO GALA: STARGAZING’-X1 - WorldHeroesOnline
3.1M views

EPIC Pranks with Pro Hero Prism! - Red Riot’s Channel!
572k views

Alien queen makeup tutorial Fail [1 bottle of whiskey + bad decisions] - BeckyDeki
160k views

“RISING STAR HERO” Explained! Billboard rankings & polls - Kyl Brightest
1.6M views

There are few consistencies in his life, but there is one that he knows will never change: Todoroki is easy to find in any crowd. Red and white hair are a pretty unmistakable feature even in a low-lit restaurant. Izuku passes the starstruck hostess and sets his sights on the chair across from Todoroki. A dark blue tablecloth over the table that separates them fades into a softer purple with the warm-toned lights.

As he expects, Todoroki greets him with his neutral default expression. “I hope you didn’t have trouble finding the restaurant. You’re not as late as you said you would be.” Izuku texted him an hour before and sent a dozen apologies for his rudeness. Todoroki said he didn’t mind, but Izuku felt bad all the same. Sitting in front of the real, physical Todoroki, he’s (fairly) sure Todoroki is teasing him. (That shouldn’t fluster him as much as it does.)

He wasn’t expecting Todoroki’s hair to be combed back, to look so groomed and professional for a casual dinner meetup -- Izuku’s stomach does something...weird at the sight of it. It looks different. It looks good, but different. His injury from yesterday’s battle should be healed (for the most part), so the tight feeling in his stomach must be something else. He notices other things: Shouto’s silver tie, pulled from his neck to give a looser appearance. Shouto is wearing a much nicer suit than his own-- that’s out of sheer laziness on Izuku’s part.

“I’m very late, actually.” Izuku corrects. He slept on the train and missed the stop for his hotel. In a hurry, he cheated and took to the sky to spare time. (The boosters on his shoes gave out on the roof of the hotel, which means he will need to take them in for repair again.) “Thanks for trying to spare my feelings.” At that, Todoroki’s mouth twitches. “It’s good to see you, Todoroki-kun. You look…” Handsome. No, don’t say that. He pushes down the strange tingling in his stomach at the
sight of Todoroki’s face up close. It reminds him of his dream, and the memory of -- no, stop thinking. Speak words, out loud, idiot. “...well.” For some ungodly (and very much unwelcome) reason his mind replays the Chief’s last warning: You’re compromised, Midoriya.

“You look tired.” Todoroki replies, and Izuku laughs at that enormous understatement. He hasn’t caught up from the sleep he lost chasing down and neutralizing the emergency code from the day prior. Todoroki wouldn’t know anything about that, though. Izuku should tell him about that. Eventually. (Maybe.) He’s not bringing it up tonight in favor of lighter discussion. (Another bold lie to himself.)

Todoroki orders food for both of them. He knows the waitress and the staff well, if their interactions with him are any indication. Izuku assumes he’s a regular -- given he doesn’t open the menu at all before he orders. With their food settled, Todoroki cuts right to business. “I got a letter, like I told you in my message. As far as details, the man matched the description you gave me.” Todoroki starts. He furrows his brow, clearly deep in thought. “It’s…”

“Odd,” Izuku suggests.

...Intriguing.” Is the phrasing Todoroki settles on. “They confirmed the seal was the same?”

Izuku answers around a mouthful of noodles. “Yeah.”

Todoroki leans forward. His voice lowers, low enough to ensure the staff and other restaurant guests can’t make out his words. “Then her legacy lived on without their knowledge... but, that seems almost too fortunate. If the message was intended for you, that makes it even more suspicious. All these coincidences are troubling. Something about…”

“About what?” He perks up at the curious trail-end of Todoroki’s thought.

Todoroki frowns and pauses to gather his thoughts. “Something about his voice was -- I don’t know what it was. It’s all very odd, as you said.”

Izuku offers, “If that’s something you’d be interested in, I’m happy to let you do some digging on your own.”

Nodding, Todoroki adds after a beat: “I’ll reach out. Hatsume decoded a phone number from what was in the message, which means they are inviting us to make contact. Even if nothing turns up, I want to do an investigation to find out who’s behind it.” A fair judgement call. His mind is made up; he likely arrived on this conclusion hours or days before Izuku came into the picture.

“Could be dangerous.” Izuku says. “Make sure you bring backup.” At that, Todoroki smiles; the first full genuine gleam of teeth for the night. Izuku hates the drop in his stomach at the sight; like he’s on a rollercoaster and taking the final dive off the top. Oh, fuck, he thinks, and swiftly sweeps that brief flash of panic away. Shut up, he tells himself. Not right now. (Strictly professional. Friendly. Casual. Right.)

Their conversation falls quiet after that. Izuku feigns interest in his food, although his appetite is more or less nonexistent. Todoroki moves with his food around his plate more than he eats it. While he’s distracted with the silverware, Izuku retraces the shape of his jaw and the new faint scar above his lip with his stare and hopes Todoroki doesn’t pay too much attention to him.

Izuku knows he deserves the uncomfortable drag of conversation between them. He owes that to his unfortunate history of dropping off the radar. Their last real conversation at the gala (besides the rare text exchange) left him at odds. He wasn’t sure how to approach the aftermath of it, and
spent months agonizing over asking a (preferentially sober) Todoroki more questions. Izuku delayed into cowardice, the safer of his available options. He knows he isn’t alone in that delay: Todoroki seemed content to ignore and move on from it all. But then, he texted Izuku about their unsolved case and brought Izuku back in. His text didn’t provide much but Izuku wonders: how much does he really remember? Does he remember all of it, or does he only remember their conversation about the mystery case?

Izuku can’t help his brain from churning out theories -- is Todoroki embarrassed? Or maybe he’s expecting something else from him, something more out of their relationship -- something Izuku can’t put into words. He doesn’t know if it’s Todoroki or himself but he feels different. He remembers his dream; the ending altered from his own memory, and frowns. Better to wait. He can be patient if it means finding the right answer.

Then the emergency code, almost dying (again), that embarrassing dream his mind keeps revisiting, and Todoroki’s weirdly firm insistence on taking him out to dinner. What is it supposed to mean? What is any of this supposed to tell him?

Their waitress takes the empty plates and sets down a small plate of after-dinner sweets. Todoroki declines, but Izuku takes the whole plate. If the waitress is off-put by the Number Two Hero sitting in her restaurant and devouring fancy chocolate, she doesn’t show it in her face. She refills Todoroki’s glass and leaves, but Izuku catches her giving an appreciative once-over at the other hero beside him. He doubts Todoroki notices because he’s generally oblivious to attention like that. He’s very attractive; most people would have to be either blind, completely stupid, or not attracted to men to realize that. He was handsome in school, of course, but Todoroki Shouto, Number Five Hero Entropy as he is now is…

He’s handsome. He’s...he’s someone Izuku missed from his life for so long it feels like regaining a piece of himself he hadn’t known was missing. He remembers the gala, the blinding lights and the way Todoroki looked at him and for a moment, Izuku thought, he’s going to kiss me. In his dream, Todoroki leaned in and did it for him.

Izuku thinks, all while watching Todoroki -- who is real and in front of him and completely oblivious to everything inside Izuku’s brain. Everything, all at once, stumbling onto the missing piece of a puzzle he hadn’t realized he solved: I think I’d like to kiss him.

Izuku’s thoughts pulls up short there. A realization with the force of a bug hitting the windshield of a race car smacks his entire world off-axis. His face must show some kind of epiphany, or some of his internal panic bleeds through in his expression. Todoroki swats away a fly by his ear and frowns. “Why are you looking at me like that?”

Staring absently at the horrendously ugly painting behind Todoroki’s head, he remembers himself. “Oh, just thinking about...work.” Izuku frowns too, looking down at his plate and rubbing his jaw. He hopes Todoroki can’t see the light bruise forming under the skin there. “Alright. I think that’s enough for tonight. No more work talk.”

“Not quite.” Something in Todoroki’s tone is different. He doesn’t know how, but it sounds heavier. Not sad, but weighed down. Important. “We need to talk about the -- the other thing I mentioned.” More weight. Izuku stills. The sound of his heart roars in his ears, blocking out all other ambient sound from the room besides the sound of Todoroki’s soft inhale. Does he remember?

Todoroki leans his elbows on the table and sighs. “I decided I’m retiring at the end of the year. I’m done with Pro Hero work.” He pauses, watches Izuku’s face for his reaction. Izuku steel himself in the Supportive and Understanding direction and hopes he lands somewhere in that general area.
“You don’t look as surprised as I thought you’d be.” Todoroki notes.

Staring at Todoroki, painfully genuine curiosity settling between his ribs, Izuku asks: “Should I be surprised?” Depending on Todoroki’s answer, Izuku tests two different replies on his tongue.

“I haven’t talked to anyone about it.” Todoroki admits. Izuku blinks at him, speechless. “You’re the first. I’ve been thinking about it for a while. I wasn’t sure if I wanted to tell you.” He lowers his head a little, quieter than before, and adds, “I thought you may try to talk me out of it.”

The two replies half-formed on his tongue crumble away. But -- Izuku frowns. Does he remember? The gala, all of the too-honest things they shared, circling around the center of a storm of things Izuku never wanted to expose.

Izuku is aware enough to know he watches Todoroki, more than most people. Not as much of late, if he’s being honest -- but ever since their conversation at the gala he took notice of far too many things. The thin, weary expression on Todoroki’s face from the few glimpses captured on the nightly newscast. His scattered conversations with Iida, updating him on Todoroki’s life even though Izuku had taken a seat outside the window. Looking in on Todoroki’s life, not allowing himself back to a seat at the table.

*_I noticed you_, Izuku wants to tell him. *_Even when you felt like nobody else was watching, I saw you._

He used to have a place in Todoroki’s life, once. A long time ago. He doesn’t think he has the right to barge right back in, but Todoroki --

(In many ways, the distance provided far more for him. Clarity. The understanding that as much as he struggles, he is not struggling alone.)

-- *Todoroki*, for whatever unknown summary of reasons, _invited_ him back inside.

“Actually...” Izuku starts, swatting away the same fly that encountered Todoroki moments prior. It lands on the edge of his glass and takes a seat on the rim. Izuku returns his attention to Todoroki, glancing around the room and leaning in with his voice lowered. “...I had a feeling that’s what you were going to say.”

Confusion, surprise -- a skeptical mixture of both -- touches Todoroki’s face. “Why?”

Izuku doesn’t let that uncertainty deter him. Todoroki _must_ remember their gala conversation for him to bring it up so directly. After all -- Todoroki is the one who _chose_ to share it with Izuku, again, despite all the time and distance that pulled them apart before. *You’re the first*, Todoroki said. Not Yaoyorozu. Or Iida. Or any number of people that would be far closer, far better suited to handle this response.

Izuku doesn’t tell him a lie; but he is honest enough with himself to know it’s not the full truth either.

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[Photo 1: Red Riot, decked out in merchandise from head to toe from other Pro Heroes (Ingenium hoodie, Invisible Girl holographic ball cap, Earphone Jack “Cool Beats” sneakers, Uravity knee-high socks, Vivid Lady vine-themed scarf, Creati fanny pack, Real Steel sunglasses) and smiling in
front of a tall mirror.

Photo 2: Close up of his ears with two studs; one neon pink and green (Alien Queen), the other circular and yellow (Cellophane).

Photo 3: Dynamite, scowling, out of uniform, wearing a red and black Red Riot beanie.

Liked by uravity, radio.jack, therealsteel, chargebolt, iida.t, thevividlady, queenofaliens, and 9,082 others

rredriot: MERCH TIME!!! all my new faves from this season’s collection (guess the theme :-0)

FT. a grumpy @iamdynamite wearing some of my new stuff :-D!!

View all 68 comments

>uravity - !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

>tanakaa - dynamite is the actual grumpiest but cutest hero tbh

>therealsteel - Thanks man!!

>slinky_- - THE URAVITY SOCKS AAAAAHHNhHHHH WHERE?? I NEED THEM!!!!!!!

>3mecayoungbry - no idea what the theme is. it’s chaotic af

>dekirudeku - OMFG I wish I had money $$ (╯°□°）╯︵ lesai

15 HOURS AGO

No matter where he goes, hotel beds are always uncomfortable. This hotel room is no different. Despite arranging, rearranging, and then again rearranging his pillows and sheets in every known combination he doesn’t sleep. He abandons all pretenses of actual sleep and goes to the patio outside his room and looks out over the city.

The lights and sounds of cars manage to lull him into almost-sleep, which is better than no sleep at all. Too wired from the events of the days before, strung out from thinking in circles over the consequences of his knowledge. He remembers what Todoroki said to him at the gala, even if Todoroki pretends he doesn’t. (Or doesn’t remember at all.) Where does that leave him? Izuku wonders. Where does he go from here?

It takes two more lost hours of sleep before he settles on his decision: pretend it never happened. Shortly after deciding this (tragic) plan of action, he changes back into his hero costume and hunts down a semi-decent looking place that sells coffee.

“Have a good day, Deku!” The barista yells outside the window. Izuku may have cheated and used the To-Go window to skip the line inside. Nobody in the coffee shop seemed particularly upset about it.

“Thank you!” Izuku yells back, as he hops in place and prepares to jump onto the roof of the next building. “You too!” Unfortunately, the coffee is terrible; especially for the ridiculous price he paid for it.

On his way back to the hotel, his phone buzzes. He scrolls through his Twitter feed and pops the
message open while he sits on top of a crosswalk sign. Fans below him open their phones and take pictures. His Twitter feed is a mess of notifications, most of them including mentions and tagging him in posts. He didn’t think his presence in Tokyo was *that* noteworthy, but everyone on Twitter seems to believe otherwise. Izuku personally hasn’t stepped foot in this part of downtown in...*years*, probably. He raises his brow further at the mass of notifications tagging him alongside Todoroki's account.

Someone underneath the crosswalk shouts, “Hey, Deku!” and Izuku offers a thumbs up. The fan takes a picture and runs off, giggling. Without a doubt it will be up on Twitter within minutes and on every hero conspiracy board: #2 Pro Hero Deku Found Using Public Property Impolitely During Tokyo City Outing.

He returns to his phone and opens the first message: a request from Todoroki to meet him at a cafe in downtown to ‘*discuss the benefits of coffee*’ which is somehow an incredibly *weird* and also incredibly *in-character* message from the sender. His wording seems odd for a casual meeting, especially the emphasis on ‘*make sure you bring your costume, need a distraction.*’

_Some kind of fight?_ Izuku wonders. He thumbs through his other missed texts. His brow rises higher and higher at each message. Ochaco sends him a screenshot from Twitter and a million question marks. #RIPEntropy, indeed. He glances over the collection of missed voice calls from Iida and decides to tackle that issue later.

He jumps off the crosswalk, and finishes the last of his coffee in one swallow. Hopefully Todoroki’s coffee place is better than the last one. On his way to the cafe he runs into a quick scuffle. As usual, he’s late on arrival. Todoroki gives him an appropriate amount of shit for showing up thirty minutes after receiving the initial text, but he senses Todoroki is..._preoccupied_ with other things.

And then Todoroki pitches him a fast ball: “It is always possible I did want to have coffee with you, Izuku. You know I love our talks.”

The way he says his name is -- *too much_. Izuku’s stomach drops to a point so far below his feet, he doesn’t know if or how he’ll ever find it again. It’s the same voice he remembers. Does that mean Todoroki _does remember_? He must, if he chose Izuku as the first person to reveal his sudden career change. _He must_, Izuku reasons. _I was wrong. He remembers. He must_ remember.

_But does that mean_ --?

Izuku stops himself from entering another thought circle. He can’t afford to worry about that now! Todoroki’s counting on him. _A distraction_, his text said. Izuku’s pretty sure he knows why: Todoroki believes their eavesdropper is here in the cafe with them. Close enough to their booth that Todoroki probably already knows who or what it is. A distraction is easy.

He doesn’t know exactly _what_ field he’s playing on, but Todoroki offered him a decent size of land to play around with. He bats his eyelashes. He turns up the charm. He is ready for the camera; point, smile, action. “Oh, that’s so kind of you to say, Shouto.”

Todoroki catches their snitch. Izuku stares at his profile, determined and content in the curve of his mouth, and thinks another crazy, ridiculous thought. All eyes in the cafe are on him, he knows, but for a moment he pretends they don’t exist. He leans in another inch and presses a kiss to Shouto’s cheek.

Pulling back, he barely registers how Shouto’s entire expression changes. Izuku doesn’t push down that flare of hope that lights in the space under his ribs: maybe he remembers something, maybe,
maybe, *maybe*. Shouto chases him outside the cafe and his teasing expression is gone. He looks -- *flushed*. Not in a bad way. Surprised.

“Midoriya, I can’t believe you --” Shouto growls and shakes his head, dismissing his own thoughts. “At least come to lunch with Yaoyorozu, me, and Jirou, *you*…”

Izuku doesn’t know how he plans to end that sentence, but he pulls on the teasing thread from earlier and beams at him. “*Me*,” he agrees. “Why, how kind of you, Shouto.” *I like when you say my name*, Todoroki told him at the gala. Izuku finds himself in agreement. He likes this. He likes the bewildered, adorable, unprepared expression on his face. “It’s a date, then.” Shouto’s face crosses the intersection of *I Have No Idea What You’re Doing And I’m Not Sure I Like It* and *If I Could Kill You Right Now, I Would*. Izuku only laughs.

The kiss on the cheek is overkill, but -- it’s not like it *means* anything. Right? Shouto is oblivious but he’s not *that* oblivious. If he remembered, he would say something. He’s always been a direct kind of person. If he doesn’t remember, if Izuku is alone in the hole he’s landed himself in -- it is easier to pretend it’s all for show. The stage persona that comes out when he’s *Deku*, the rising star hero, and not *Midoriya Izuku*, hopeless romantic and optimistic fool, is the perfect cover.

It is safer this way. For who, Izuku isn’t sure, but it’s definitely safer. Desperately quieting the voice in the back of his mind that warns, *pretending will only hurt yourself in the long run.*

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DEKUデク✔ @herodeku
THANK YOU for the bday mssgs from everyone!! I got to spend today having fun, napping and eating lots of sugar. @heroentropy threw a surprise party for me. TY @icreati @radio.jack for the lovely card [Photo attached: A sloppy, half-crushed cupcake with a single candle in the center. There’s a birthday card on the table beside it, signed by Entropy (black ink), Creati (red ink), and Earphone Jack (purple ink). Earphone Jack added a message that says “UR OLD” at the top of the card and a dozen hearts with silly faces.]

937 retweets | 7,633 favorites
10:17 AM - 15 July XX
Liked by Creati | #11, heroentropy, INGENIUM, and 8 others you follow

ingenium lovebot @creatistansrise
If hero deku smiled at me in person i think i’d ascend this mortal plane and achieve immortality. Rip to other ppl who submit to the constraints of death, but im different
465 retweets | 1,980 favorites
10:54 AM - 15 July XX

<3 @bluiineko
u ever think about how most heroes enter bitter rivalries but the rowdy crowd generation of heroes just said “youre all my friends and i would d*e for all of you” and thats so valid and sexy of them
283 retweets | 729 favorites
11:14 AM - 15 July XX
Holding high-ranking position as a hero for the better half of a decade means there isn’t much that surprises Izuku anymore. Yaoyorozu, unfortunately, is one of those people who knows how to completely blindside him. (He thinks she enjoys throwing him off balance a bit too much.) “What have you gotten Todoroki-kun involved in?” She pulls the question on him half-way out the door of her office. Izuku slinks back inside.

Izuku looks at her. “What have I gotten him involved in?”

“I asked him why he was retiring,” Yaoyorozu explains. “He told me he couldn’t tell me. You know what that made me realize?” Izuku has a feeling he’s going to get a lecture even if he doesn’t want one. “Nobody picks up secrets like you do. He’s been acting -- _strange_, when you’re around. You two are up to something.”

“He was telling the truth,” Izuku protests weakly. “He really can’t tell anyone. It doesn’t really have to do with his retirement, this all sort of... _happened_ around the same time. I can’t either -- it’s, _er_. Very complicated.”

“Yes,” Yaoyorozu lands on a gentler, agreeing tone. “I am beginning to understand that.”

Opening his mouth, Izuku plans a few things he has prepared in his defense and doesn’t say any of them. “You know Shouto better than I do. He wouldn’t let anybody force him into something he didn’t want to do.” Yaoyorozu drops her suspicious glare. Izuku makes to leave for her door, but he’s interrupted again.

Her question comes in as surprising as the last: “When are you planning to head back to your office?”

Izuku realizes he doesn’t have an answer. “Uh. _Well_…”

Yaoyorozu rises from her desk. “You’ve stayed here longer than I thought you would. I thought maybe two or three days -- at most. But you _stayed_. And you don’t seem like you’re in any rush to leave.” She walks over to him and inspects his face, finding something there, and speaks for him: “I need some time to find a new hero to take over Todoroki-kun’s responsibilities. Can you do that for me?”

“I like,” Izuku frowns. “Right now?”

“You’ll need to learn your way around here,” Yaoyorozu explains. “The sooner the better, really. I don’t know when I’m going to add a new member to the team. _If_ you’re going to stay here, you may as well make it official.”

“I think I can do that.” Izuku agrees. His enthusiasm dims slightly at the gleeful expression on Yaoyorozu’s face and she dumps a mound of papers for him to sign in his arms.

It isn’t until after the last document is signed, sealed, and tucked away that Yaoyorozu lunges again: “Are you going to tell him?”

He can’t help the panic that flies through him at the thought. There are so many different things that could be, and he doesn’t know which one to start with. “Tell him what?”

Yaoyorozu rolls her eyes. “What to tell him? Where should I begin? That you’re taking over his position, or that whole disaster with --”

Izuku waves his hand to indicate _fine, okay, I got it_. “I’ll tell him tonight -- about transferring here.”
“And what about the code you-know-what?” Yaoyorozu isn’t going to like his answer, but Izuku sealed all the case files and has her locked under a gag order. She looks like she’d rather argue with him, but they both know Izuku ranks higher than her for security clearance. He thanks her and makes his way to leave a second time, but Yaoyorozu stops him again. “I hope you know what you’re doing,” Yaoyorozu sighs. “And if you’re going to be here full-time, please call me Momo. I can’t stand to replace someone who will resort to the same silly formality.”

“Of course, Momo-san.” Izuku grins. He knows his smile will draw one out of her, and he succeeds.

As he expected, Izuku’s agent enters a fit of hysterics after Izuku closes his contract in Datomatsu and signs on as a temporary replacement at Creati Agency in Tokyo City. “You have your own agency!” His agent screams over the phone. “Deku, please be rational about this.”

“I am being rational.” Izuku replies mildly, swerving out of the way of a speeding moped on the sidewalk. Around him, children point and whisper beside their parents and grin up at him. Izuku smiles at a girl with an Ingenium hat as he passes and ignores her embarrassed squeak in response. “I’m moving forward. You said it yourself -- I needed a big move to make headlines.”

“I meant internationally!” His agent squawks. “Like America! Or France!”

“I like to stay close to home.” Izuku doesn’t know if it’s worth fighting back a smile if his agent isn’t around to see it. “You sound ridiculous. I don’t even speak French.” He grins at the familiar sound of a dial-tone.

Izuku doesn’t worry about things like that, even though his agent and his agent’s manager keep telling him he should. Izuku has neither the patience of Yaoyorozu or the divinely granted willpower of Iida to maneuver a flawless conversation with the person responsible for his public image. He’s the smiling hero. A smile says everything a lot better than words. Izuku shrugs and continues on his walk, pulling up his hood as he ducks into an alley and jumps up the side of the wall. On the roof, he gazes out over the cityscape and mulls his agent’s words over.

He texts a long apology and promises to sign for any and every publicity spot for his agent as repayment. His agent isn’t happy, but accepts the compromise. Izuku isn’t leaving Tokyo anytime soon. Or Shouto, for that matter. Unfinished business and all that.

The evening is slow. He falls into the routine of scanning the streets below from his perch on the roof and catches the tail-end of an armed robbery. Izuku feels a little bad for the guy, who squawks when he sees who kicked open the front door. His sympathy lessens when he counts the two bystanders -- the boy at the registers, and an old woman who was on the floor in terror, her groceries covering the surrounding area.

Izuku feels even less sympathy after he gets tossed through the double walls. He takes the hit for the boy at the registers. The hit knocks him unconscious for only a few seconds and he comes to with a fresh wave of pain down his side. Apprehending the thieves is easier with the surge of protective instinct that envelopes him, pushes him through the agony of a new collection of bruises.

His agent calls him after he’s done talking to the officers on scene. The anger is gone from their voice, replaced by exasperation. “I saw you were on the news again.”

“Yeah?” Izuku asks. “Did I look cool at least?”

“...and right now.” his agent adds. “Turn around. On your left.” Izuku turns around with a wince and waves at the camera crew, who realize they have his attention, and turn the camera back to the
crime scene. “You look like you got hit by a train.”

“I feel like it too.” Izuku replies. “But I’ll be fine. Lived through a lot worse.”

“Make sure you get checked out.” He can tell his agent is ready to dismiss him, but Izuku hasn’t found the reason for the call yet. “And remember you’re on Night in Tokyo tomorrow. If you miss that, you won’t have just me to write an apology letter for.” Right, Izuku remembers. His agent doesn’t call him unless it’s to remind him of something important and related to his publicity. Izuku hangs up with a promise not to forget.

Too exhausted to take the easy route back to Creati Agency, Izuku takes the long way back to her building. He doesn’t arrive until late; so late that he needs the spare card key Momo gave him to get into the entrance. The security stand at the entrance retired for the night. The lobby is empty -- Izuku feels like he’s walking through a center for ghosts. It feels odd to walk inside with the lights turned low, stumbling around in the darkness for the elevator button. He finds it and begins his slow ascent to the agency floor.

Shouto is in his office. Izuku stops at the elevator and watches him through the open slit in the curtain around his window, wondering why Shouto of all people would be working late in the evening.

He doesn’t remember how Shouto convinces him to leave, but he shakes himself back into awareness on the subway. He’s pretty sure he falls asleep for a few minutes on their trip up the elevator to the apartment.

Shouto’s apartment saddens him. There’s nothing hanging on the walls, no personal touches or photos anywhere on the table or on the corkboard by the door. Shouto’s furniture comes in varying shapes and colors that lend itself to their presence out of necessity rather than out of choice. Izuku spots a stack of boxes in the corner by the stairs. It’s the apartment of someone who believed their stay would be temporary, and then longer than sort-of-temporary, and somehow six years went by and there’s still boxes with the words “KITCHEN TOOLS” leaning against the wall.

He doesn’t know what makes it worse -- knowing that Shouto lived in this bare-minimum apartment or being slapped with the reminder that his apartment is more or less in the same state. His office had more personal touches; little notes from the staff, some fan letters, all of his photos on his desk. His office was more lived in, felt more like a home.

At least Izuku had his office. Shouto had nothing. The knowledge that Shouto was thinking of retiring for a long time -- years, maybe -- sinks like a stone in his stomach. How lonely, thinks. How lonely that feels. He has the words prepared in his mouth, although he never says them aloud: I think we’re both very unhappy and for the first time, I think we’re starting to recognize it.

[Photo: Hero Deku, half-sitting on the edge of a bright orange stool. His expression is eager, filled with energy, his mouth in motion like he’s talking to the viewer. He’s wearing a dark suit and a silver tie, tugging at the tie with one hand and gesturing wildly with his other hand.]

 liked by herodeku, rredriot, uravity, iida.t, thevividlady, and 42,105 others

talive: DEKU | NIGHT IN TOKYO GUEST COMING 19/07/XX

We’re so lucky to have the rising star hero on the same stage as us! TUNE IN JULY 19th FOR an
AMAZING show and an amazing guest. If you’re not excited yet, then you should be!!!

View all 4,299 comments

> uravity - excited!
> demonloveaccount - HOLY SHIIIIITTTT
> squidbagged - omg
> d.dekulovebox - AAAAAAHAHHHHHHHHHHHHH
> g.e.m.luv - its a good day to be a hero deku stan (▰˘◡˘▰)
> lumist8r - @ all the ppl screaming in the comments, same

With the news about Shouto’s retirement, more annoying reporters, and Bakugou’s arrival at the agency Izuku is pretty much wiped out. He was so tired that he didn’t even think twice about following Shouto back to his apartment. (He wonders if it’d be easier if he actually moved in because he spends most of his time in the area anyway, but...no, that thought treads into a hole that Izuku would rather not go down.)

Picking up his phone feels like the easiest thing he’s done all day, in comparison.

He never turns down a call from Kirishima, and he doesn’t hesitate to accept one. It’s a welcome distraction from his other thoughts. “Hey, man,” Kirishima greets him after the call connects. “Long time, huh?”

Izuku slips into his soft smile, even though he knows Kirishima can’t read his expression from where he is. “I guess you could say that.”

“Crazy year,” He can hear Kirishima’s grin on the other side. “You know this time of year is the hundred days of hell for a reason. But really, the last time we talked? Fuck, I don’t even remember. It’s been so long.”

“Feels that way everytime I try talking to someone in our class,” Izuku confesses. “It’s embarrassing.”

Kirishima laughs, the echo breaking in and out from the receiver. “We’ve all got our own shit going on,” he reassures Izuku. “Trust me, you’re not the only one. Sure, you’re the only one still getting scored on the reunion betting board over how long you stay…I think I’m tied with Sero. Twenty minutes is your record from the last reunion you actually showed up to, I think.”

“Is that real?” Izuku groans. “I thought you guys were joking.”

“Um, yeah. Definitely a joke.” Kirishima says (like a liar). “Uh -- How’s Tokyo? Haven’t been downtown in a while. It’s weird that I miss that place, right?”

Izuku walks across the room and fixes the painting on the wall; it’s crooked, he’s not sure how he missed it before. Or Shouto moved it on him because he wanted to mess with him -- but that doesn’t sound like something he would do. “Same as ever,” Izuku replies, a beat later. “It’s weird
“Maybe I’ll come down one of these days and visit. Unlike you, I know how to use my vacation days.” Izuku laughs and tells him to make the plans.

“How’s he been?” Izuku asks, after they’ve exhausted every other avenue and taken every possible detour to avoid the uncomfortable topic on their minds. Kirishima wouldn’t call him for no reason. Given the circumstances, Izuku has a fairly reasonable idea as to why.

“Well…” Kirishima starts. “He’s been...you know how he is when he’s holding onto something and can’t let it go. Hates getting a reward for something he feels like he didn’t earn.”

“Yeah.” Izuku agrees lightly. “I haven’t seen him that mad about something in --”

“-- A really long time.” Kirishima finishes. “I wish I could say I know what set him off, but I think...with the season rankings from the beginning of the year made him. Um. Frustrated.”

“I guess that would make sense to him,” Izuku says, more to himself than in response to Kirishima’s statement. “Why would he be mad about -- about the retirement news?”

“I think we all know there’s more to it than that. He’s had a rough year. For a lot of reasons. And all those predictions put Todoroki in the Top 4, not -- not Bakugou.” Kirishima says, after a moment. “And that’s like. Well, you know how his brain works. Then Todoroki retires, and Bakugou kind of...” He hesitates again. “...I think it reignited some of his old anger.”

“He seemed like he would let it go.” Izuku says. “And nobody’s hurt. Shouto and I fine. So, there’s that?”

“I guess.” Kirishima says. A beat, then: “That wasn’t what I meant to call you about, seriously. But it’s good to know everything’s okay with you guys.”

“Yeah, we’re doing okay.” He hears the stream of water running to the upstairs abruptly end; Shouto is done with his shower. “What did you wanna talk about?”

“Big news! I’m heading out on a tour in a month or so,” Kirishima says and excitement in his voice returns from his greeting. “It’s a trip abroad. We’re hitting a couple cities in Japan, then in Europe, and wrap up in the States. It’s gonna be great! I’m really excited.”

“Sounds cool.” It’s hard not to feed into Kirishima’s enthusiasm. He’s good at what he does, who he is. “Are you bringing...?”

A bark of laughter. “No, he already told me he’s not getting on a plane for anything. He’s almost as bad as you about vacations, y’know. The reason I’m calling is about that, actually. I -- I talked to the coordinator of the tour, and I was wondering if you’d be interested ‘cus we’ve got an extra seat. It’s only two weeks out,” Izuku opens his mouth. “So don’t give me any talk about missing a lot of work time.” Izuku closes it again. “You’d be travelling around doing some conferences, speaking at panels, some breaks for press events. In general educating people on the, uh, more personal sides of hero work.”

“That sounds rather vague.” Izuku hums and opens the fridge. Shouto, as evident by the lackluster selection of items on the shelves, did not go to the store again. He might be able to run out to the store and pick up a few things before Shouto is out of the shower if he’s fast. (After Kirishima stops dancing around the details of why he made the call.)

“I think it would be really good for you,” Kirishima needles. “To, er, get some stuff out in the open.
Trust me. I think you’d like it. I really think you would. Even though you’ve -- um, I just think you should think about it before you say ‘no’ right away.”

“I -- I’d need to think about it. What exactly is it for?” Izuku frowns and runs through a few possible scenarios to solve Kirishima’s obvious hesitance. His confidence is never shaken, but this phone call allows questions in his mind to pop up and question why.

Kirishima blows out a long breath of air and continues with a stronger voice, “The moderators are really relaxed, you’d like them. Nothing like any other conference you’ve been on. That’s a promise. Half of the profit made from our trip is pledged to charity, but this tour in particular is about...heroes with LGBT identities.” Izuku closes the fridge and starts building his pre-rehearsed reply. Kirishima continues before he has a chance to start. “I’m part of a panel about trans heroes. You’d get to join me for a few discussions, nothing too big or flashy.” Izuku bites his lip and waits for Kirishima to pick up the conversation again. “I know you get kinda...weird whenever I bring up coming out, but I think it’d be good! It’s good publicity, and you get to talk to some other cool heroes on the --”

“I don’t,” Izuku says, after a moment. “I -- I...I don’t know what to say.”

Kirishima is quiet. “I’ll never understand you, man. It’s been so many years. Someday --”

“-- Not right now.” Izuku amends. “Listen, I -- I’ll think about it. Not now. Next year.” The excuse sounds weak, and he winces at how it must sound to Kirishima.

“It’s been years, Midoriya.” Kirishima’s frustrated sigh breaks through his receiver. “You say every year, ‘next year.’ What the hell are you so afraid of? Are you going to keep --” Whatever Kirishima wants to say never makes it out of his mouth. “-- Whatever, man. I can tell I’m not going to change your mind ‘cus you’re the most stubborn fucking person I know.”

“You live with --!” Izuku protests weakly.


Kirishima keeps the rest of the awkward call polite and neutral, but Izuku can’t find the words to explain himself. Finally, he tells Kirishima: “It’s not that I’m -- embarrassed. Or ashamed. Or anything like that, you know?”

“I know,” Kirishima agrees quietly. “I’m sorry for snapping at you. That wasn’t fair either.”

“You’re fine. It’s --” Anything else he tries to say will sound like an excuse, but he knows if anyone will understand, Kirishima will. “-- it’s just a lot. To think about. Thank you for offering. I know you’re trying to help.” Kirishima means well by it, but Izuku is not like him. He doesn’t have the shadow of a destiny larger than his own overwhelming him. He envies Kirishima, in a lot of ways, especially in this.

“Well,” Kirishima sounds a little brighter, having cleared the air. “If you ever change your mind, you know where to find me.”

[Photo 1a: A younger Ingenium (Iida Tenya), around age 4, sitting on his brother’s knee (Iida Tensei). Tensei has ribbons in his hair and it is an interesting assortment of hair pieces and colors.]
Tenya appears proud of his work, while Tensei is smiling with the same proud expression and adoration for his younger brother.

Photo 1b: Early high school or pre-UA, if the costumes are any indication. Ingenium & his brother, both in their hero costumes (very similar, but not identical) and back to back. A proud expression on older Ingenium, with one arm leaning on his younger brother’s shoulder.

Photo 2a: A more recent photo of Ingenium, standing with his brother on the steps of Idaten. Tensei is in a wheelchair but his smile is no less bright or wide as the photos before. Ingenium has his helmet tucked under his arm, the other arm raised like he’s celebrating.

Photo 2b: Screenshot of Instagram post from Ingenium’s account. Liked by herodeku, presentmic, thetailman, uravity, radio_jack, and 26,821 others

iida.t: from one Ingenium to another.

........................................

I am grateful to have inherited your blessings, your legacy, and your unending support. Thank you, Tensei.

View all 1,598 comments
1 WEEK AGO]

todosotos: if you saw this and cried, trust me you are NOT alone

gayredriots: I LOVE HIM SO MUCH WTFFF

todorobee: brb sobbing

Posted 1 hour ago via lesbianiconcreati source todosotos

Tags: #i care him <3, #hero ingenium, #ingenium bros, #photoset, #i ly :pleading face emoji:, #im crying holy shii

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Izuku knows the reports and records department has rather strict rules about heroes bringing their work home with them. It takes a signed pact with a promise to release a firstborn child to remove record or file from the vault for a few days. There’s probably a ritualistic blood ceremony to curse his ancestors should the file not be returned promptly within the time allowed.

Izuku’s kept this case file for over six months. If he returns to the records room now, no matter his status or popularity, he knows the clerk will beat with a filing cabinet until Izuku dies from blunt force head trauma. Or something.

C0288 #76M
FULL CASE SUMMARY
Status: Closed, Unsolved [SEALED]
See also: C0289 #77M
December 29th, 20X-1

RECOVERED EVIDENCE: Significant damage to residence. Residual traces of DNA, unable to match through system.

NOTES FROM ON SCENE:
That’s it. Next thing I knew I was looking out a giant hole where my stove used to be and he [Red
Riot] was really upset. I don’t remember what happened.”

[EYEWITNESS] Pro Hero Red Riot statement: “Watching tv and suddenly our apartment was full
of smoke, Katsuki started yelling and I ran into the kitchen. Saw somebody scale down the side of
our building through the fire escape, but I couldn’t get a clear description.”

[RESPONSE ON SCENE] Pro Hero Deku statement: “Heard an explosion a few blocks down, the
situation was mostly resolved by the time I got close.”

C0289 #77M
FULL CASE SUMMARY
Status: Open, Unsolved [SEALED]
See also: C0288 #76M
July 2nd - July 8th, 20XX
...current motives are unknown. Their movements are unknown. The known members include Akera
Shoin (29), Akera Sorai (27), and [Unknown]. Akera family was notified upon identity match, the
two being half-brothers. The body of Akera Shoin was found weeks later in the fountain of a nearby
school park with his fingerprints, face, and other limbs severely burned. Dental records confirmed
the body’s identity. Akera Sorai remains in Kyoto and awaits trial in the new year. [VILLAIN
#40Q19F / UNKNOWN] whereabouts are unknown. The connection between the targets is
unknown...

Izuku rubs his eyes and flips through the remainder of the case file. Shouto snores, whistling as he
exhales, on the couch beside him. He turns the next page and glances guiltily over at Shouto: the
weight of a lie that he doubts will ever fade away. But what is the weight of one more lie when
there’s so many others he carries? He turns back to the file and glares at the paper, willing answers
to rise to the surface.

VILLAIN #40Q19F, [UNKNOWN]
Age: Unknown, estimated around 25-35
Gender: Female (assumed)
Status: Unknown
Quirk: Unknown. Influencer/Mind Control (assumed)

Records:
C0288 #76M, C0289 #77M

Connection: Similar physical description. Both incidents involve attacks from high ranking heroes.
Additional information: Trophy/ritual involving hair of targets?

He taps his finger on the crease in the middle of the page and runs his finger along the scribbled
handwriting he recognizes as his own. The writing is hard to decipher, even though it is his own,
and even harder to translate his incomplete thoughts scratched into the file.

Notes:
File recovered by Deku:
- Involvement in 2 attacks involving top10?
- No / background / family / motives
- anti-Hero agenda????
- Revenge motivation over a mentor figure (using other heroes as surrogates, probably unable to
take revenge on her true target?)
- What’s with the hair????
- Possible connection btwn both targets - Top 10 Heroes, men, Former students in same class,
  known connections.
  - Mind control?
He narrows his eyes at the handwriting beneath his own, written in blue ink.

File recovered by Blindside:
- [ Suspect claimed to have no memory of working with her but later confessed to having dream-like memories of his time under her influence. Lying to protect himself from a criminal sentencing? You don’t seem to think so... ]

The note under that returns to his own familiar scrawl in response.

- >>> Is there anyone on record with a quirk like this???? <<<

- [ Not that I know of. Hate to say it, but I’m very certain he was lying. He remembered something, even if he didn’t want to tell us. But I don’t think he went into this willingly. Or at least understood what it was he was working towards. Sounds like your basic ‘villain uses others to fulfill revenge motive’ if you ask me. The hair thing is just weird. No idea what that’s for. ]
- Maybe. But why attack now? Why these targets?

- [ You’ve got quite a puzzle here...with the ghost of an angry wannabe-serial killer. I don’t like those kinds of puzzles. This all sounds Class A Type Ridiculous. Good luck. - B ]

He startles at Shouto’s sudden loud snore. Izuku’s attention on the (completely useless) investigation file lapses and returns to his companion. In sleep, Shouto loses the closed-off stern expression on his face. He’s restless, one arm almost covering his mouth. Izuku never imagined he’d be one to snore, but as Izuku heard from the few nights he slept over at his apartment, he definitely snores. Loudly.

Closing the file with an edge of guilt, he shakes the other dozing hero’s shoulder. “Hey. It’s late. We should head out.” Shouto doesn’t show any signs of stirring, so Izuku pokes him in the stomach. Shouto doesn’t stir. He pokes him again. And again. “Did you fall asleep?”

“Hmmmph.” Shouto grunts, slapping Izuku’s thigh in retaliation. His hand is warm. Izuku should stop noticing little details like that, but he always does. His voice is thick with sleep, his lips pulling apart when he speaks. “...no. I’m resting.”

“Right,” Izuku is not convinced by the slow blinks between his words. “Resting with your eyes closed and snoring.” Shouto’s small noise of agreement is lost in a sigh. His eyes slip close again. Izuku glances at the time on his phone. “If we stay any longer we’ll beat the people coming in for the next shift. But I’m not sleeping on that couch.”

“Nhng.” Shouto groans, rolling over. “What’s wrong with my couch?”

“Got enough issues with my spine already, thanks.” Not that uncomfortable sleeping positions deter him, as he winds up falling asleep outside the steps to Shouto’s apartment more often than not. His exhaustion is interfering with his ability to stay alert during the day -- and that’s a problem for Future Izuku to deal with! “Take the couch if you want. I’m heading out and finding an actual bed.”

Brow furrowed, Shouto mumbles in a quiet voice, “...stay here.” Izuku rolls his eyes. He never imagined Shouto to act so grumpy and irritated when tired. Like a kid past their bedtime.

“I’m leaving.” Izuku warns. “If you stay here, that’s your own choice.”

Shouto groans again. “Midoriya...” He cracks open one eye -- the grey one -- and blinks up at Izuku like he’s in a daze. His hair is a mess, the divide between the two colors as uneven and sloppy as his first glance at Shouto in the morning. There’s absolutely no reason for Izuku to think it at a time like this, but he does: I want to kiss him right now.
Shouto closes his eyes again and turns around to lift his head off the cushion. Thankfully, Shouto is looking the other direction while Izuku’s face warms to the temperature of the sun. He steadies his resolve and considers his response very carefully: “You’re tired, and you’d sleep better in your own bed.”

Finally rising off the couch, Shouto follows him sleepily out the door. While Izuku fetches his phone and charger by the desk, Shouto stands by the door and waits. He yawns, stretching over the couch and looking at the case file Izuku left laying out. “What case is this?”

“What case is…?” Izuku looks down. His tired brain takes a second to make the connection and flails in a panicked state to react appropriately and fails. He dashes back to the table and tries to nonchalantly remove it from Shouto’s line of sight. He fumbles with it for a moment and decides the safest place is tucked under his arm. “Ah! Right! This case, hah! It’s classified. Not important.”

His uncomfortable laughter does not convince himself either.

Shouto raises both eyebrows, all traces of sleep are gone from his face. Izuku curses inwardly. “Classified as not important?”

“Yes.” Izuku says, and he knows his answer is skittish and nervous. “Only, uh, a few heroes have access to it.” He points to the [TOP SECRET] label on the top of the file. “It’s been sealed. So no peeking!”

Todoroki, unhelpfully, doesn’t drop the subject like Izuku hoped he would. “Why is it sealed? Who sealed it?”

I did, Izuku thinks. Out loud he says, “Classified.”

Shouto rolls his eyes. “Fine.” He doesn’t appear irritated even though Izuku is blatantly lying to him. “Are you coming back to the apartment with me? Other room is yours if you want it.”

Izuku knows that he’ll end up back at Shouto’s complex whether he’s invited there or not. “Yeah, thanks.” Shouto dozes off in the elevator and Izuku places a gentle hand at his back to steer him to their train. Shouto leans into the touch, going so far as to lean his chin over Izuku’s shoulder as they wait for the next stop. More than anything, Izuku wishes he could reach out and take his hand; to hold it between his own and feel. To trace his fingers over Shouto’s palms, small raised scars across the surface and know it was real. To know all of it is real.

The next night Izuku waves off his offer to Shouto’s guest room. He’s paying for a hotel room. Might as well use it.

Near dawn, he falls into a restless dream: four lines written in the promise of blood in an otherwise innocuous envelope; the colors red and white tied together like a bow on a present. She enters his dream, drawing him in with her cold hand and he sees Shouto. Shouto doesn’t see him, walking closer to them with no sense of the danger he’s in. Izuku cries out to him: go, turn around, you’re in danger. He can’t make a sound. Her hand leaves his, and she reaches out for Shouto, who takes it in his own.

Izuku wakes on the floor, twisted in his hotel sheets and covered in sweat. He slips out and winds down familiar avenues until he comes to the glass and brick door belonging to Shouto’s apartment. The moon’s reflection dances off the glass from the upper floors. Izuku stares up and wonders which window above him belongs to Shouto. Near the top, he thinks, but he doesn’t know which one at a glance. He wonders how Shouto would react if hopped on the elevator, stood outside his door (hesitating), and knocked. He would ask: “Is it okay if I stay here tonight?” He wonders what
he would say if Shouto asked why. He wonders how he would reply: *I think about asking you to stay, even though I know you’re happier going your own way. Or, I want to know you’re safe, even though I know that isn’t something I can control.* He tucks that thought deep inside his chest and seals it up under lock and key. Leaning against the inlet by the door, he tucks his chin to his chest and waits for dawn to break.

He should tell Shouto what happened that day. The note. The apartment battle. The knowledge sits heavy and sour with the rest of his worries. But -- this lie by omission is too complex, too deep to explain in one apology. Izuku doesn’t even know how he would find the words to explain it. *Hey, Shouto, so, here’s a few things I haven’t told you: there’s this crazy villain after you who wants to kill me but I think you’re also in danger and also I didn’t tell you that you were in trouble because I thought I had it under control but now I’m starting to think that was a mistake. And I think I have a lot of confusing feelings when I’m with you and that’s becoming a problem because I don’t know what to do about it. Yeah,* Izuku grumbles to himself, *that sounds about right.*

His carefully crafted plans to *Feel Absolutely Nothing And Become An Emotionless Lump Of Soil* fall apart shortly after.

Ochaco’s presence is a welcome distraction from Izuku’s slow descent into complete madness. She texts him before she arrives, but her messages (like most of their last conversation) leaves him confused and a little guilty. He doesn’t understand the meaning until too late.

While Shouto is having his acid burns cleaned, she pokes a firm finger in his chest. Successfully cornering him in the waiting room to resume her interrogation. “So. What’s up with you and Todoroki-kun?”

“Nothing, we’re fine.” Izuku replies automatically. “Why?”

“Hmph.” Ochaco scrunches her nose, letting out an annoyed huff. Izuku fears there is trouble in his lane if she’s giving him *a face* like that. Izuku stubbornly stares at the translucent wall separating them from Shouto and hopes the medics hurry up. Ochaco studies his face in the reflection. “So you and him are…?”

Oh. *OH no. Abso-fucking-lutely* not happening. Shouto might be on the other side of the glass, but he’s not deaf or far enough away to miss the subject of their conversation. “*Ochaco, we are not doing this right now.*” Izuku hisses at her under his breath.

“Right. Later.” Izuku sighs. He bangs his head against the back of his chair. He does not like what she’s implying through this conversation. “*And you’re just...staying --*” He likes the skepticism in her voice even less. “ -- *here until he retires*?”

Izuku sighs again and admits, “I’m sticking around until Shouto tells me he’s tired of me, I guess.” If he says something close enough to the truth, Ochaco will let him off easy. Hopefully.

That answer doesn’t satisfy her. “And this has…” Ochaco squints at him. “...nothing to do with what you were doing in July?”

“*July*?” Izuku spirals into panic and then confusion. Iida knows he didn’t want anybody to know about the emergency code he ordered for Shouto. Momo swore to keep her silence over the subject. It can’t be related. Unless she’s talking about something entirely different. “*What did I do in July?*”

The light goes off behind her eyes. If Izuku weren’t already sweating, he’s sure that look alone would be enough. “*Are you two...together now?*” Izuku fails to make any intelligible words and stutters out a string of syllables that doesn’t confirm or deny any part of her question.
Ochaco eyes him, far more suspicion in her eyes than Izuku knows how to deal with. “I can tell
you’re not telling me something.” She opens her mouth, closes it as though thinking better not. He
is saved by Shouto exiting the crowd of medical staff, asking to head back to the agency to shower
and change. He feels Ochaco studying him on the ride back (and to a lesser extent, watching
Shouto with narrowed eyes). There is no evidence to prove otherwise -- but Izuku has a feeling she
is much closer to the truth than he’s comfortable with her being.

Unable to draw the answer out of Izuku through conventional means, Ochaco draws her wild card:
whiskey. Thankfully, Izuku doesn’t have the same tolerance (that being absolutely none) of his
early twenties and coasts through her drinking competition. The same can’t be said for Shouto,
who can barely walk. There’s no way he can walk to the train by himself. And he can’t leave
Shouto to get lost on the train system by himself in the middle of the night. Izuku resigns himself to
his fate of carrying a half-awake Shouto back the apartment by himself.

Ochaco stops him at the door, Shouto hanging off his shoulder. “Thanks for hanging around,
Izuku.”

“No problem. We gotta meet up more.” Izuku says, preparing himself for his next reaction:
extremely neutral, or if necessary, picking up Shouto and running for the elevator.

Ochaco smiles, turning to Shouto. “We do. I’m just glad to see Todoroki-kun cares about you so
much. At least you’re letting somebody take care of you. See you tomorrow!” She closes the door
and Izuku blinks at the white panelling for (at least) thirty seconds as his brain processes, rejects,
and then tries to process (again) what happened.

Unhelpfully, Shouto clings to him for the entirety of their train ride back to his apartment.
Squeezing Izuku in a too-tight hug, he decides Izuku is more comfortable than their seating and
leans into his neck. Izuku knows his face is burning.

“Mgmngghgnggh,” Shouto informs him, lips pressed against Izuku’s neck. He can feel Shouto’s
warm, uneven exhale into his skin.

“What?” Izuku tries to pry Shouto’s fingers off of his jacket. “Did you say something?”

Shouto leans back and almost falls off his seat. “I like your hair,” Shouto repeats. The smile looks
odd on his face. Too loose. Not like the natural smile Izuku is used to seeing from him. “Looks
really good.” He stops and thinks for a minute. Izuku practically steams in his seat. “You always
look very good.” If there’s a quirk that lets somebody instantly die of embarrassment, Izuku needs
to find it. Either to make sure he never comes in contact with it or to ensure he will be released
from the torture chamber that is his entire fucking life.

“She told me I’m hurting you,” Shouto’s smile fades. Izuku watches his reflection in the elevator
mirror. “Sorry.”

Izuku sighs. What the hell did Ochaco say to him? “You’re not hurting me,” Izuku reassures him.
He doesn’t know the context, but he knows it’s better not to ask. Or add to Shouto’s apparent guilt
over something that doesn’t exist.

“I am,” Shouto insists. Izuku ignores him in favor of pushing Shouto inside the entrance of his
apartment, but Shouto clings to the doorframe and tries to follow him out. “I’m hurting too.”

Izuku, defeated, follows him back inside. Shouto takes the couch and, after gesturing for Izuku to
join him, Izuku takes the cushion beside him. He focuses on Izuku’s face; that too intense, too
strong gaze that makes Izuku want to crawl under his seat. “Some -- sometimes I am. Sometimes,”
He takes a few attempts to put the words in the right order and huffs with frustration. “I look at you and -- and it hurts. Like right now. Hurts.” What, Izuku thinks, is that supposed to mean?

Shouto is miserable the next morning, tiptoeing around the apartment and grumpily making himself coffee and glaring at everything. Even though Shouto doesn’t give him more than a grunt as acknowledgement in return of Izuku’s cheerful good morning! As it was with the gala, he either doesn’t remember or chose to forget. Or, Izuku thinks, part of his act to keep things running like normal.

“You’re still not telling me something,” Ochaco tells him, keeping her promise to call him after arriving back home. She doesn’t sound angry; but she doesn’t sound like she approves either. He pictures her scowling in front of her kitchen, pale yellow and blue. Tsuyu and her picked out their new apartment two years ago, and he’s always liked her kitchen. He imagines her there, cursing him out, as she looks out her window to the west. “But I haven’t given up yet! I’ll find out. And depending on how bad it is, I’ll hold off on kicking your ass. Or wait until I see you at our next reunion. It would probably help if you talked to someone about it, though. Really, Izuku. Even if it’s not me. Somebody. Anybody.”

“Sounds great.” Izuku covers his embarrassment with a laugh and pointedly ignores her suggestion. “Make sure you say hello to Shouto too -- I heard he’s upset since everyone found out he’s the one breaking all the women’s hearts in Tokyo. I had no idea you two were a thing.”

“I’m calling him next,” Ochaco promises darkly. His phone makes a low beep, like his call disconnected, immediately after her ominous warning. Izuku stops walking and looks around in confusion at her contact screen.

“Did you just hang up on me?” Izuku asks it in disbelief. She did. Izuku has a bad feeling she isn’t going to let this go. Whatever she assumes -- correctly or not -- it doesn’t bode well for him. Or Shouto, as it sounds.

Knowing for certain his Compromised Feelings are part of the issue does not comfort him at all. Todoroki is not the boy from school, close and distant but familiar at the same time. He is Shouto -- closer, not as distant, but different. With a soft smile that Izuku sees him wear when he thinks Izuku isn’t looking at him. He’s too close -- sucked into a whirlpool drawing him further and further into the center. The worst part is he knows he isn’t fighting it at all. He agreed to stay in Tokyo. He knows he wasn’t happy at his office in Datomatsuo. Being in Tokyo makes him happy, or at least happier than before. Can it be as simple as that?

He doesn’t know when he will leave (if ever) and wonders...maybe he won’t. Maybe this is it.

He’s never claimed to be good at choosing what’s best for his well-being; let alone asking for anyone to help in the matter. Somehow, along the way, he forgot how to ask himself: what do I want? And that, Izuku reflects with no small hint of irony, was once a problem for Shouto as well. Until now.

(Ochaco will definitely kick his ass if he tries articulating any of this to her. He knows it’s stupid. That doesn’t make any of these feelings go away.)

Some of this slips out of his impenetrable dam of defenses. Jirou, unfortunately, is the nearest victim who was certainly not his first choice on the matter. His guard drops late at night, when exhaustion finally catches up to him, sitting next to her on a quiet surveillance patrol. The sidekicks with them long failed their task of staying up to keep watch. “Do you ever have weird dreams?” He should phrase the question better, probably, but it’s too late for that.
Jirou offers him a pained grimace. “What kind of...weird...dreams?” Her face reads: I wish I hadn’t asked, I am already uncomfortable, but you’re the one who started it.

“Nevermind.” Izuku shifts and picks up the video monitor and pretends to find something interesting in the security feed. “I just had a weird dream about -- about something. The other night.” The one where Shouto kisses him at the gala and even that memory makes him flush. He wishes his brain would let it go, but it’s been months now and he should just let it go, already. “Forget about it.”

“Was it a gay dream? ‘Cus looking at your face, I feel like it was. Was it?” Jirou asks, because she’s apparently so shameless this does not make her body instantly combust. “Was it the gay dream --?” Izuku squawks and drops the monitor. Jirou cackles. “-- oh, it was! It definitely was!”

“What the fuck are you talking about,” Izuku snaps back, once he’s recovered his breathing. “What is the gay dream?”

“You know,” Jirou props her chin onto the top of her knee, tucking her legs closer to her. “The gay dream. You know when you have it.” The joy in her expression drops into something resembling awe, or maybe shock. Or maybe he’s too tired and he’s hallucinating this whole conversation. “Wait. Was it about --?”

Izuku pulls his mask over his face. He doesn’t want her looking at his face right now. “I’m not --!”

Jirou waves off his indignant reply. “Yeah, you’re bisexual, whatever. You still had one though. When you have the gay dream, you know it.” She pats his shoulders like she’s trying to console him, which is probably the most bizarre twist to come of his conversation. “So? Who was it? I bet it was --” Izuku has never been so grateful for the emergency alarm on his pager. He forces Jirou to vow never speaking a word or bringing up any mention of the conversation again.

In the end, Izuku falls back on his safety net. Iida takes little convincing to meet for a friendly coffee meeting. “You...” Iida starts and shakes his head. Izuku attempts to hide behind the mug and lowers the cap he’s wearing. He doesn’t think anybody in the cafe noticed two Pro Heroes walk in, but he thinks the barista might be onto them. Or he’s paranoid. The truth is probably somewhere in the middle -- although the barista was eyeing them suspiciously after they sat down. “…I don’t know what to say to you. I’m at a loss for words.”

“I think the general consensus is that I’m really stupid,” Izuku replies, holding back a sigh. “Trust me, I’ve already had this argument with myself. I’m an idiot.”

“Yes,” Iida agrees, after a moment. He nods. “You are.”

Izuku puts his head in his hands and rubs the slowly fading circles under his eyes. “You’re not supposed to agree with --” Iida levels him with an expression that he doesn’t want to translate. “-- alright, fine, I probably deserved that.”

“For someone gifted with your brilliance, Midoriya-kun,” Iida shakes his head again, landing both elbows on the table. He releases a deep breath. “Sometimes, I wonder how it is that you act so irrationally.”

“I am plenty irrational, have you met me?” The joke lands flatly.

“And Todoroki-kun?” Iida asks. “What does he think of all...this?”

Izuku sinks deeper into his seat. “About the case? Nothing. But everything else?” Re: Izuku acting like a complete tool, being part of the Izuku’s Stupid Romantic Comedy Clause. If only his life
were actually the plot of a film, and if it was, it would be a tragic comedy because of how stupid and not funny it really is. “I’m pretty sure --” Oh, boy, he was definitely not as ready for this conversation as he thought he was. “-- he knows. It’s hard to say. Because apparently everyone else knows already. I know Ochaco-san is onto me. Momo-san too.” He sinks so far down that his knees touch the other side of the bench where Iida is sitting. “Jirou-san must know, too. It makes the most sense.” There’s only so many times Jirou can ask, ‘you lost? or are you looking for your boyfriend?’ before other people take notice.

Iida wraps his hand around his mug. “I feel as though I know the answer already -- but have you tried talking to him about it?” The despairing look Izuku gives him in return says everything. “Then you will have to work around a lot of assumptions you’ve already made.”

He wishes he could shrink and drown himself inside his mug. “Yeah, I know.”

“It would be much easier to ask him directly. Good communication is the solution to almost every problem,” Iida suggests.

Izuuki narrows his eyes at him. “That’s very interesting that you say that,” Iida hunches in his seat. “Because last I heard, Aoyama-kun told me --”

Iida’s face flips through several swatches of red before landing on the shame vibrant tone of his scarf. “That’s not --” Izuku pushes his mug out of the way to spare it from Iida’s hand gesture. “-- that’s not what we’re talking about! We’re talking about you!”

“If the blind leads the blind, they both fall into the ditch,” Izuku quips.

The other half of his consequences land the same week after Shouto’s official retirement. He’s sitting in the bullpen, happily letting the sidekicks ask him all sorts of weirdly-personal and unrelated questions while he procrastinates filling out a stack of unfinished casefiles in Shouto’s office (His office. It’s his office now). Momo snaps her door open and everyone in the room stops talking mid-sentence. “Tell Deku to get in my office. Now.”

“Ooooh,” one of the sidekicks calls. Izuku smiles and laughs off their teasing. “Deku is in trouble!”

He can’t read Momo’s expression at the door, but she smiles at the staff and orders them to return to work. She closes the door behind her and tells him to take a seat, turning her back to him to compose herself. Momo sits and places her hands across her desk. “You lied to Shouto-kun.” she says, her expression is so serious it zaps all the energy out of the room.

“Yes,” Izuku says, hunting every corner of his brain for a logical, reasonable, clever reply before she interrupts him.

“You could’ve told him the truth.” Momo says, after a moment. She turns around, walking to the window in her office. Izuku watches her reflection in the glass. “He told me before he left to see his mother. That’s how I knew you lied. I don’t know if you lied because it was easier, because you didn’t want to worry him -- or because you have the irritating tendency to lie when you think it will protect other people. But I don’t care about your reasons.” She takes a deep breath. “Sometimes we lie because we want to protect the people we love. I have fallen for that mistake before. I don’t wish to sound like a hypocrite, but I have done the same in your situation.” The emphasis on the last part of that sentence slaps him across the face. So he wasn’t hiding his Failure To Act Strictly Professional to everyone else very well, then. Great.

Izuuki swallows, strategically avoiding the enormous can of worms Momo inadvertently opened by
implication alone. “About this case? Or something else?”

“That. And other...things.” She hesitates. Izuku finds his mind pulling up a memory of a different conversation, only with Jirou: Momo’s been different ever since I got back from that mission about Morpheus. Don’t ask, and don’t bring it up around her. It makes her weird. Were Izuku less clever and not as aware of the odd dynamic between Momo and Jirou at work, he would’ve assumed nothing of it. But Izuku is cursed with being more clever than he needs to be, and he has a feeling something happened with whatever that was.

Momo’s voice brings him back to reality. “I had assumed you did the same with Shouto-kun because you thought it would protect him. He’s retired now. Hero work is our responsibility.”

“He is retired now.” Izuku repeats, bewildered at the strange turn and unpredictability of Momo’s train of thought.

“But,” Momo says. She walks back to her desk and sits down. One elbow on her desk, shoulders straight. “There is always the chance this all returns.” Izuku shifts uneasily in his seat. “While that’s only an assumption, something tells me there is some unfinished business -- with you.” Izuku doesn’t have any response to that, but he meets her gaze and doesn’t back down.

“If you’re planning to keep all of this under wraps --” Izuku will never understand how anybody could underestimate Creati. The intelligence and ferocity in her eyes would make anyone feel small in front of her. “-- then do a little better to keep your story straight. Make sure everyone who was involved knows to keep the details under the gag order. Don’t go dragging him back here after he’s finally got himself figured out.” Her glare softens. “You’re smart, so I know you’ll work this out You’ve never given me any reason to doubt you and I hope you never give me any reason to.” She gestures to the door. Izuku takes that as his dismissal, and stands to leave.

Her voice catches him before he opens the door. “I know you’ve been combing through that file looking for answers, but -- you won’t find answers in there.”

Izuku sighs. “I know.”

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[Video: URAVITY AND DEKU BREAK UP???
Thumbnail: Stock photos of the two Pro Heroes back to back, not facing each other. Deku has a serious expression, while Uravity has no expression at all. There is a broken hearted emoji placed between the two of them.]
Posted 8 years ago by YOURHEROTABBY | Subscribe
244k views

I know im not the only fan disappointed by the news. RIP Star couple…

BUT i have a lot of thoughts on this so SUMMARY: everyone seems to be taking this out on uravity, but can we look at everything that happened to her leading up to this point? deku explained it was a mutual break-up and said they will remain friends but the combination of long distance, work stress, and personal stress made it too difficult to manage. uravity said about the same, although on her story she said it was because she felt like they’d drifted apart and their schedules made it too hard to spend time together.

in the future im sure they could make it work if they wanted to, but it’s sad to see a beautiful
relationship fall apart because the media has an agenda to tear apart women over nothing, essentially.

i follow a lot of hero forums and apparently there’s an interview with uravity where she goes after all the media outlets and articles that called her a “fame leech” trying to climb in the polls for dating deku. that heroine is so talented and amazing, it’s disgusting what people did to her.

[Comments are disabled for this video]

Recommended videos:

Homophobic Present Mic (ASMR) - PutYourHandsUpRadioEdits
2.2M views

Tsukuyomi DARK SHADOW Merch Set Unboxing!!! - Yr0zWilliams
42k views

The Great British Bake Off ft. Sugarman - TGBBOUK
680k views

Part of his wall of lies crumbles. Shouto asks him, “Why do you call me Shouto?” Izuku, having prepared to never (ever!) answer this question, fumbles. He doesn’t lie -- but he doesn’t tell Shouto the whole truth, either.

Izuku offers him a branch somewhat resembling a reasonable response, but Shouto says “I’ll think about it” and never makes any sign of budging from that position.

(He’s selfish, but Izuku’s grateful Shouto doesn’t tell him to stop. No, he said. Shouto is fine.)

Izuku lives with the guilt of almost getting Shouto killed, again, for about a month. That guilt resurfaces as irritation when he learns what new Idiotic Deathwish Challenge Shouto has tasked himself with instead.

During a borderline Boring-ly Average morning patrol he receives the request for aid at a bank. The emergency response pulls up a list of known hostages, including the staff and individuals reported missing by their family members. He’s got his boosters on and in the sky before he finishes reading the rest of the briefing.

The officers on the ground are running around in every direction. If it wasn’t such a dire scene, it would be comical. “We can’t find them,” one of the officers informs Izuku grimly. “And we know they took two people hostage. A man and a woman, according to the witnesses inside. Looks like four unknown low-level villains. They took off from the roof, but we haven’t found a safe way to clear all the buildings in the --” The officer’s eyes unfocus. The earpiece attached to his right glows and hums, chatter from inside the device. “-- er, nevermind. The dogs picked up something on the southside, the abandoned workshop down on --”

Izuku is up before he hears the end of the sentence. He finds the building without much trouble and slides in through the upper window. Quiet steps on the stairwell, sneaking with his chest against his knees. He hears the low voice of a woman and a group of other voices and smiles.
The thieves-turned-kidnappers don’t stand a chance. He works his way through the group, clapping on quirk-trapping handcuffs and stops at the room outside of his entrance. Two figures in the smoke, stumbling towards him. Their stance isn’t defensive, too loose and unconcerned. Relieved. Not a threat to him.

Izuku calls out to them, satisfied with the success and safe return of the two hostages and stops. He recognizes the hair on the man and the realization comes in two stages. At first, fondly; Shouto, he thinks, followed by even stronger irritation. Of course. Shouto.

“This better not become a habit of yours,” Izuku tells him, once Shouto is safe and back in their apartment. “I thought I told you to stay out of trouble.” It must be Shouto’s concussion, because his eyes stay on Izuku’s face for a little longer than normal when he replies (a beat too late). Even covered in dirt, sweaty and tired, Izuku thinks: I love him.

Izuku feels his hand sway on Shouto’s jaw, tempting, but he moves on. (He is terrified.) Decides, no, not like this. If he ever has the confidence, he will act when the moment is right. Not now. Not tonight. (But, even as he pulls his hand away, he thinks, maybe I should.)

Shouto follows him into the kitchen. Izuku has his mind on dinner -- given the limited choices Shouto’s awful shopping habits provide -- when he feels Shouto’s hand on his cheek in return. Oh, Izuku thinks, and this thought feels different than before. Deeper, fuller, with an ache that pulls in his chest. I really do love him.

(He is lightheaded with relief to hear his phone sending off an emergency alert. He doesn’t want to panic in front of Shouto. He isn’t ready to reveal that thought to anyone. Especially not Shouto.)

Creati | #11 ✔ @icreati
Not to sound like Im talking about anyone in particular, but WHY am I surrounded by so many men who would rather break both their arms instead of talk about their feelings?? I think Im going crazy. I really am.
475 retweets | 8,064 favorites
4:27 PM - 15 February X1
Liked by Earphone Jack, ALIEN QUEEN, PrIsM!!!, and 4 more you follow

Kevyn (NOT a deku kinnie) @AEOVIAN
remember that one interview where creati was like “my condolences to people attracted to men. i love women. but i see no difference, love is love <3” bc i think about it a lot
4 retweets | 264 favorites
4:48 PM - 15 February X1

Mina / COMMISSIONS OPEN @elopeminsked
anybody else ever think about how pro hero deku always talks about entropy. In like every interview. he basically runs his own entropy fan club. why is he like this i love him. BUT OMG i wanna shake him & tell him “u know they’re filming u right? u know ur on live tv? Do you kno other people can See you??”
78 retweets | 603 favorites
4:58 PM - 15 February X1

Mina / COMMISSIONS OPEN @elopeminsked
Replying to @elopeminsked this is only a little bit of an exaggeration but Pro Hero Deku Is The Biggest Hero Fanboy of All Fanboys. he talks abt other heroes all the time, attention span and focus is 100% on Heroes. Entropy isn the only target of his fanboying, of course.
43 retweets | 1283 favorites
5:06 PM - 15 February X1

Mina / COMMISSIONS OPEN @elopeminsked
Replying to @elopeminsked he once went on like a solid 5 minute uninterrupted stream only about uravity. and we all know he enters a different plane of existence when somebody mentions all might, he literally HAS To talk about his favorite hero or he might explode.
51 retweets | 307 favorites
5:11 PM - 15 February X1

Mina / COMMISSIONS OPEN @elopeminsked
deku’s a multifaceted disaster. literally incapable of not embarrassing himself when his fanboy mode comes on. an adhd mood. but it’s like he thinks of entropy and [*activates secret Stupid Hours quirk that reveals your crush*]
103 retweets | 498 favorites
5:15 PM - 15 February X1

Mina / COMMISSIONS OPEN @elopeminsked
that meme where that guy pulls a gun on himself because he can’t trust nobody, not even himself... but it’s deku when he goes fanboy mode
309 retweets | 746 favorites
5:21 PM - 15 February X1

Mina / COMMISSIONS OPEN @elopeminsked
Yes i know entropy is retired but do you think that would STOP the biggest entropy fan around???
Think again
14 retweets | 62 favorites
5:34 PM - 15 February X1

It’s not like he’s completely oblivious. He knows he’s blatantly transparent to everyone else -- besides Shouto, it appears.

Rather bitterly, it seems everyone else has received the memo except for the most important person who needs to actually get it.

When all else fails, he can duck his head down and take refuge at his mother’s apartment. Inko fills the empty ache in his chest with laughter and comforting chatter of her experience with the news. “I saw your friend on the news again.” His mother raises her hand to the side of her face, the left side, brushing against her cheek and quickly moving away. She’s talking about Shouto. “I’m glad he’s safe. At least he has a hero friend like you, right?”

“He’s always getting into trouble,” Izuku says, fondness mixed in with his exasperation. “I wish --er, well, I just wish he stays out of it for a little while.” His mother makes an inquisitive noise, eyes bright. Izuku frowns. “What?”

She smiles and pinches his cheek. “You’re smiling. When you talk about that boy, you’re always
“smiling.” Inko explains. She squints at him. “If I didn’t already know you liked boys...”

Izuku drops his head to the dinner table with a sad plunk. He rolls his head over and bangs his forehead on the surface again. His mother makes an alarmed, curious noise. “I’m never leaving this chair again,” Izuku tells her emphatically. He knows he’s being slightly overdramatic. “Ever. I’m never moving again.”

All Might’s broad hand claps him on the back, startling him out his miserable spiral. “What’s wrong, my boy?”

Izuku groans into the wood and whines, “Please. Don’t ask me that.”

“Well,” Inko takes his hand and cups it between hers. Comforting, gentle; he’s always associated his mother with that feeling of unwavering support. “Instead of talking to us, maybe you should talk to whoever is making you feel this way?”

Izuku almost answers, I think I’d rather go fight a thousand evil villains, but he nods into the table. Inko pats his hand, satisfied with his response.

The apartment he returns to has an entirely different atmosphere than the one he left in. Shouto makes eye contact with him in the hallway as they pass each other and speedwalks for the stairs. Anxiety gnaws at his stomach for the following days: did something happen? Is it something he said?

Even greater anxiety: did he figure out I lied? No, he decides. There’s no way Shouto could know. Unless Momo or Iida told him without letting him know, but that doesn’t sound like something they would do.

Shouto continues to pretend he doesn’t exist anywhere near him, finding excuses to run out for groceries (liar, he hasn’t filled the fridge with anything besides the lactose-free milk that Izuku always buys) and generally avoiding him within a ten-foot radius. What does he earn from dancing out of Shouto’s way? Two bruised ribs. A lot of teasing from the agency staff. The constant feeling like somebody kicked him in the stomach.

Jirou smacks him in the middle of his shoulder blades on their ride back from the hospital (nothing broken, a victory for him) and says, “You’re a real idiot sometimes.” Izuku winces -- not from her comment -- and readjusts his jacket. “That’s okay, though,” Jirou continues. She glares at her reflection in the train window. “I’m an idiot sometimes too. Probably more times than I wanna admit.”

Choosing not to reply, Izuku sighs and leans back in his seat. Jirou plays with her earjacks and sighs, echoing his defeated posture. “We’re all idiots running around and pretending like we don’t have a clue what to do.”

“Is there a reason you’re telling me this now,” Izuku sighs, too tired to make it sound like a question.

Jirou looks at him and Izuku comes to the startling, horrifying conclusion that she knows. His exhaustion is wiped away, replaced by the mortifying realization that he’s completely exposed by the truth. “You and Todoroki aren’t the only ones doing your stupid gay chicken dance.”

Izuku, unconvincingly, replies, “I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

Jirou rolls her eyes. “Please. You’re, like, the easiest person around here to read. Takes one idiot to know one. We’ve all been there. Walking around, looking like we don’t have a clue what to do
If Jirou is going to offer her off-brand advice, it’s not like he can tune her out. “And then what?”

“That’s how life is, man. We never know what the fuck is gonna happen. It’s why sometimes all you have to do is accept it and jump in head first. No fucking idea if that will work, since it’s failed me so far. But at least you tried.” Jirou freezes and sits back up. “Oh, shit, I really’ve been spending too much time with Bakugou --!” She groans and covers her face.

Her genuine horror drags him out of his discomfort. Izuku laughs. It doesn’t make his ribs feel any better, but he remembers he’s not the only one afraid of the unknown.

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lesbianconcreati: **DEKU IS NUMBER ONE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**
[Photo: Pro Hero Deku in celebratory cape, mid-step, smiling and waving as he walks on stage in front of the Japan Heroes Billboard Chart event.]

gaydeku: CELEBRATION THREAD STARTS NOW!!

gays4allmight: F*CK YEAH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

sleepydekus: !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

atwinklinghero: 

[number2ingeniumstan: He F*CKING DID IT EVERYONE. HE DID IT

crybabydeku: omg im literally crying he really did it

todosotos: @ everyone prepare yourselves Im shifting into Hero Deku Loveposting Only From Now On Everyone SHUT UP this is the ONLY thing that matters

vividedlady: HOLY SHIIIIIIIIIIIIIIITTTTTTTt

Posted 14 minutes ago via whatwoulddekudo source lesbianconcreati

6,012 notes
Tags: #LITERALLY BEEN FUCKIGN SOBBING SINCE 10AM AND I HAVENT STOPPED YET, #HE DID IT BAYBEEEEEEEEEEERENCEEEE, #YEAAAAAANAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH, #IM SO PROUUUUDDDD
I did it, Izuku repeats to himself. The repetition helps, somewhat. Not that it can bury all of his other enormous, tangled emotions. Relief, joy and pride, and sadness, all too overwhelming. All too much at once. I actually did it. He can’t summon the same enthusiasm as the night before.

He shouldn’t be so selfish. Shoves a reminder into the front of his mind, not to be forgotten: this might not be my dream alone, for I shared it with so many others.

And yet -- But..I feel more lost than before.

With his speech finishes, he retreats away from the crowd. He needs somewhere quiet, somewhere where his brain won’t feel like it’s stretching in twenty different directions. We all have our limits, he remembers Iida telling him. We are heroes, but we are also human. If Iida were here, maybe he could convince Izuku it was time for a break. Overstimulation put him over the edge at least an hour before.

The storage closet doesn’t seem so bad at first glance. He ducks his head around the corner, certain he wasn’t followed, and closes the door behind him. For once he is grateful he isn’t as tall as his peers -- the shelving over his head would force someone else to stoop, but he can lean against the wall without worrying about hitting his head.

Even as an adult, crying always made him feel better.

He didn’t think Bakugou would come. With everything Bakugou’s been through in the past year, he’s not surprised. Even though it’s a celebration, technically, for both of them. It still stings, despite years of working towards an understanding. He was more surprised to see Endeavor’s absence. Which certainly did not go unnoticed by the press. Two of the Top 10 Heroes skipping on their own celebration for the billboard? Practically unheard of it. An insult to the billboard results and the rankings as a whole.

Izuku didn’t know what to say when asked: Why would the Number Two Hero skip his own award ceremony?

I’m sure he has his own reasons, Izuku replied, as confidently as he could. He heard a different whisper, among the other voices: Because you’re not All Might. You will never be All Might.

Shouto stumbles upon him near the closure of his emotional hurricane. Izuku is both surprised and grateful for his appearance, but in his explanation he trips over himself again. Shouto looks at him with wide eyes. He doesn’t know what to say. Neither does Izuku, and he feels like he could cry all over again.

“You’re going to change everything, Midoriya.” Shouto tells him. He says it with the rigid conviction that Izuku knows he believes it, too. It takes powerful words, Shouto told him once, to change a person’s heart. “I can’t wait to live in a world you’ve helped build.” Izuku swallows his guilt. The high emotions must be a little contagious.

I could kiss him, Izuku thinks. I could kiss him right now.

Shouto doesn’t wipe the tears away. Izuku does it for him, cradling his face between his own rough, battle scarred hands. Shouto looks at him and Izuku knows he never wants to move again. He knows time doesn’t work that way, but he wishes, for once -- for once maybe it would.
I could kiss him, he thinks again. If he wanted to, he could. He could.

He does.

(Even before it’s over he knows he made the wrong choice. And then he tells Shouto another lie.)

Izuku doesn’t often think of himself as a coward. Running away from Shouto in the hallway definitely isn’t going on his list of proudest accomplishments -- but staying there any longer makes him want to tear his skin off.

He saw Shouto’s expression before he turned his back. It makes him ache in ways he didn’t know he could ache. Too terrified of what he might say if he kept looking at Shouto’s face, his heart squeezing as he forced himself to move one foot in front of the other. Outside, he embraces the crowd and the noise with enthusiasm he doesn’t feel. He knows some of the fans lined up to meet him can feel his low spirits.

The hair on the back of his neck prickles. Someone is following him. He picks her out first: Jirou finds him near the crowd of press, but Izuku ducks under the tape and loses her in the mobs of people. He bolts before she has the chance to figure out which direction he went.

He returns to the fanline, if only to find something to occupy his mind from everything else. It takes a few moments to rebuild his composure and he walks back out with a smile. He holds it in place for as long as he can. Slow, deep breaths. Like he would use before giving a speech. All the tricks he learned over the years to keep his expression the same, never giving anything away.

A girl, no older than seven or eight, notices the frown that won’t leave his face no matter how hard he tries to keep it off. Her parents greet him in the fanline and she scurries over to his side ahead of the other kids. “Deku! Hi! Hello! Deku? Why do you look so sad? Today is the best day ever!”

He wipes the frown from his face. “I’m not sad,” Izuku tells her. He stretches his mouth into a thin smile, wavering.

“Well, you don’t look like you’re not sad. You aren’t smiling. You always look like this.” She takes one of the smiling Hero Deku stickers off her backpack and sticks it to his cheek. “Deku is always smiling because he’s always happy!”

Izuku lowers his voice and pats the same side cheek where she placed the sticker. “Sometimes heroes can be sad, too. Even when we try not to be.”

She wrinkles her nose. “That’s dumb.” Izuku blinks at her. “If you’re sad then why did you say you weren’t?”

“Er,” Izuku glances up at her parents (who aren’t paying either of them the slightest bit of attention in favor of chasing their other child in circles to keep him from getting lost in the crowd) and thinks, to hell with it. “If you say you’re not sad, you won’t feel sad anymore. I think.”

“That’s stupid,” the girl says. She points to her ‘Always Be Honest!’ Ingenium badge, the clear words engraved under the silver helmet. “Heroes aren’t supposed to lie!管理制度”

Izuku stares at her. “Uh...it’s not lying if --” Izuku shakes his head. His phone vibrates in his pocket. He ignored the last half hour of notifications but he knows he needs to check in case any of them are an actual emergency. “-- well, we don’t want to, but sometimes we do.” The girl stares back at him. Izuku scrambles to revise his word choice. “I mean -- I mean, that doesn’t mean you should lie! It’s bad! Lying is definitely bad! You should listen to Ingenium instead. Forget everything I just said, okay? Sorry, uh, but -- but I’ve gotta check on something.” Not
smoothest recovery, but he doubts a six year old will make a big deal of it. He beams at her and pushes a more genuine expression of gratitude through the cracks. “I hope you’re having fun today. Thank you for coming to say hello!”

“I am having so much fun,” she grins, forgetting his honest admission. “Today is, like, the best day ever. You’re like the best hero and you have a whole day about you now. That’s really cool.”

“Yeah,” Izuku says, his heart somewhere in his stomach. “It really is.”

Opening his messages doesn’t make the feeling go away. He feels worse looking at the mountain of messages, all of them positive and encouraging congratulations from friends and staff. He doesn’t want to read Congratulations, you’ve worked really hard you earned this! when his head feels like splitting in half. He has nobody to blame for this heartache except himself.

Dodging reporters is easier when he has the advantage of climbing up a steel beam supporting the stage. Composing himself (no tears, not anymore) he blasts himself into the sky. He doesn’t take off the cape until he’s at least a dozen miles from the event center. Another ten miles before he realizes he forgot his bag with a change of clothes. Damn, he thinks. So much for blending in -- not that he needs to dress casual for his next stop.

Izuku makes quick work scaling the west side of the building. The sun is retreating into shadows by the time he plants himself on the platform with yellow flowers poking out of the window. He knocks on the window twice; once to get attention, the second to announce his arrival. The window is unlocked, as he expected it would be, and he slides through the lower half onto the hospital floor.

All Might isn’t often in the recovery ward, but his health is temperamental, and that’s a mild interpretation of the word. Izuku didn’t rush to visit because All Might convinced him it wasn’t so urgent he needed to drop everything and run. He felt guilty all the same -- even guiltier that his visit now is only to escape from the consequences of his own bad choices.

His mother is asleep in the empty bed beside All Might. She stayed in the room overnight after convincing the staff she would remain in the lobby all night if she must. The night before he called to break the news to her and All Might, accepting their congratulations with teary grace. He told his mother last, because his composure could only last so long and he knew once his mother started the waterworks on the other end he’d crumble.

Passing his mother’s bed, he moves the empty tray at All Might’s side. “Hey. It’s me.”

All Might startles, blinking rapidly at the interruption and breaking into a laugh (which ends as a cough) at the sight of Izuku anxiously twisting his cape in his hands. “My boy, you could’ve called! We didn’t know you were coming. Your mother and I were just talking about you, you know.”

Izuku pulls over the chair from the desk and sits beside him. “You’re both always talking about me. It’s like I’m the only kid you have.” All Might laughs again. “Mom finally getting some sleep?”

All Might sighs, full of affection and hopeless chagrin. “She’s so much like you, Izuku. Doesn’t rest when she’s worried about someone.”

“No, I’m not like that at all.” Izuku corrects. “I just forget to sleep sometimes.” All Might narrows his eyes at him. “Er. How are you feeling?”

All Might pats his side. “As well as I can for someone living on borrowed time.” Izuku pushes
down the wave of sadness that flows through him at the reminder that one day -- one day, not today -- he will have to say goodbye. He will never know exactly how or when, or maybe when it is time he will know. All Might won’t be in his life forever. “I’m sorry,” All Might shakes his head. “I shouldn’t say things like that on a day like this. Today is your day, after all. You should be proud. We are both so proud of you, Izuku.”

“Yeah,” Izuku says. “I’m proud of me too. I just wanted to...” He blinks quickly and turns to look at his mother’s profile. He wants to talk to her, but she needs her rest more than his desire for her comfort.

All Might is staring at him when he turns around. “Wanted to...?” he prompts. Waiting. Expectant.

Izuku looks down at his hands. In the span of a few hours, he’s the top hero and also the master of ruining close interpersonal relationships. What an incredible tradeoff.

He wishes his mother was awake. But All Might -- All Might is his family, too. All Might was a hero. Perhaps it is best he saves this conversation for someone who can readily empathize. “When you were working,” Izuku starts, and stops. He bites his lip and tries to find the words. “When you were All Might. Did you ever think about what you wanted beyond being -- you? A hero? Did you -- did you want a family? A life?” He looks down at his hands again, rubbing the scars and thick tissue where he broke skin, over and over, all in his effort to hold onto his dream and transform it into something real. His future, and two hands covered in scars he knows will never fade.

All Might doesn’t say anything. Izuku adds, even more hesitant than his other questions, “A -- A partner? I mean, like -- before -- before mom, didn’t you think about --?” He doesn’t have time to think about how to phrase this softer. “Did you have anybody?”

“I have all of that now,” All Might answers. He takes much less time to answer than Izuku’s cautious questioning. “It did not happen right away. For a long time, after I lost my mentor, I thought I wouldn’t find a family again.” His voice is softer around the mention of Nana. “But I have you, your mother, all of my students. I have made many mistakes in my life. Before you...before I fell in love with your mother, I did not have much family to call my own. The closest I had was your class, but that is a different kind of family. I was not their parent, and I am glad of that. As a teacher, I failed my students --” All Might cuts him off with a sharp look before he can interrupt. “-- on many occasions. I would not have made a good parent, then. I was not the best teacher. I have done things I am not proud of. I have made decisions I deeply regret. Many things I regret, my son, most of which you will never fully understand.”

Izuku sinks into his chair. “That does not mean I regret all of it,” All Might lowers his voice, practically a sigh. He bends his head and leans forward, tugging Izuku’s hands from the cape. He wraps Izuku’s hands in his own and nods, his eyes drifting to his mother and back to him. “With everything I believe, I would not trade this life I have now for anything else.”

Izuku opens his mouth to speak but All Might coughs and interrupts him. “But I know that is not what you are asking. When I lived in America,” All Might explains. “There was a man I was rather -- fond of. To this day, I still come across moments of regret. I love your mother with everything I have left, do not mistake me.” Izuku blinks, processes, and hopes his expression isn’t too transparent. “I would have a very different life than the one I have now, but sometimes, I still wonder...” Hearing the longing in All Might’s voice puts a stopper in any response he could make. All Might shakes his head. “Do not let yourself wonder like I have. Do not be like me, Izuku. You are better. You always have been.”

Izuku threads his fingers together in his lap. He nods. All Might chuckles. “Did you not hear me, my boy?” He snaps his head, sincerity fading into confusion.
“Young Todoroki is waiting for you,” All Might explains. Izuku feels his face cycle the full range of embarrassment, panic, deep embarrassment, shame, and coming to a stop in the middle of *Embarrassment So Deep I Could Literally Die Right Now.* “Why are you still here talking to me? From what I heard from your mother, your friends are very concerned about how you left everything off with him.”

“Yeah thanks okay,” Izuku says, shoving his head into his hands. He releases a frustrated groan into his folded arms. Not loud enough to scare the staff outside their door or wake his mother, but loud enough that All Might startles in his bed. Izuku picks up his head and sighs at All Might’s beaming smile.

“Your mother and I do enjoy these moments, my son, you must forgive me. Love is a precious thing, and we wish only the best for you,” All Might does appear a little apologetic. “I’m sure you know -- but you must not let opportunities like this slip away. Do not live with regret.”

“I,” Izuku starts. “I...I am going to text him.”

All Might nods. “And then?”

“And then,” Izuku continues, still very grave. “I am going to find the nearest hotel so I can pass out and not make any other bad decisions.” For one night, at least.

“That sounds wise,” All Might approves. “You should get some rest.”

“And I’m ordering a bottle of whatever’s cheapest at the bar,” Izuku finishes, (sort of) joking. All Might, unsurprisingly, does not approve of that suggestion.

He texts Shouto after he leaves the hospital. Shouto -- *Todoroki,* now, maybe -- deserves at the very least to know he’s all right. He deserves to know that he’s not going anywhere, yet. He deserves to know Izuku wants to apologize, to do his best to take back what he has done wrong. He deserves so much more than that, but Izuku doesn’t think he can handle more than a text message for now.

“He’s only avoiding you because he thinks you’re upset with him,” Momo dutifully informs Izuku, the following week. Beneath her polite smile, she’s simmering with frustration. Izuku ignores her in favor of staring at the grain in the wood of her desk. He knows he’s landed himself in a week of desk duty for his (unfortunately) dangerous stunt on patrol.

Momo continues, undeterred, “So, as of now, you are resigned from duty. Effective immediately.”

That has Izuku snapping into action. “What?” He squawks. “You can’t do that!”

“Mhm. I can and I did.” Momo offers him a yellow *TEMPORARY LEAVE OF DUTY* slip. Izuku is rethinking his earlier proposition to go fight a thousand, no, a *million* evil villains instead of whatever Momo is suggesting.

“Go talk to him.” Her tones is not a suggestion. Izuku packs up his costume and spare clothes, muttering under his breath.

Talk to Shouto.

Right.

*This was a mistake,* Izuku told him. He wouldn’t blame Shouto if he never wanted to speak to him again, let alone see him. Shouto read his message, Izuku’s olive branch offering peace. Izuku was
ignored. Izuku has a feeling he already knows what Shouto is going to say to him, but he ignores
the weight in his chest and carries himself back to Shouto’s apartment.

He stops in the hallway. Shouto is looking down at his phone, completely unaware of his presence.
Izuku swallows a few times and, only after he’s mustered all of his energy into it, speaks:
“Shouto.”

Shouto picks up his head and oh, Izuku’s chest aches so full and tight and close to bursting. He
hasn’t even said anything yet, but it hurts. It’s going to hurt, he knows, having to give this up.
That’s not his choice to make, though. He will have to endure. He has to do this anyway.

Shouto says: *I know my feelings for you are different. But I wanted you to know.*

Or maybe not.

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[Introducing himself as someone’s partner is never an easy task. Less so with Shouto’s mother, as
he has some kind of already standing relationship with her. That only builds on his anxiety present
because she already knows him. Whatever she has to say, he knows, he won’t be prepared for any
of it. With everything between him and Shouto now -- still new and fresh and aching a bit with
how fast everything is moving -- he doesn’t think he’s ready. But he has to try. He has to be ready.

He knows she wants to talk to him. Leaving Shouto and his sister in the kitchen, he stops in the
middle of her garden. She follows, closing the screen door behind her. Izuku waits.

“Come sit,” Shouto’s mother says. It’s not a command, but it weighs more than a simple question.]
“I would like to talk to you.”

Izuku shuffles onto the bench beside her, hands on his knees. He keeps a respectable distance, and tries not to freeze when she places her cold hand over his own. She is quiet, gazing out over the plants clustered over the railing of her balcony and into the horizon of rooftops and lowlight.

“My son loves you,” Todoroki Yukiko says, firm. No room for argument. As sure as someone would speak of something well-established, widely accepted knowledge. “He has for a long time. Far longer than I think you know.”

Izuku doesn’t know if he should speak, too afraid to interrupt her. “I worry,” she continues. “I don’t want to worry for the rest of my life, even though as his mother, I will. I will always worry. But he makes you happy. I am glad.”

She takes his hand and turns it over. A lifetime ago, before he truly knew Shouto, before he knew anything more than what Shouto told him in closed confidence in the alley behind the arena -- before they were little more than classmates -- this was the hand where he broke each of his fingers and bears the scars of his choices. Shouto’s mother sighs, tracing the largest scar across his palm. “I know you love him.”

Izuku makes a small noise, but he doesn’t say anything. “Knowing the type of hero you are, I know you will love him with everything you are. I know you are selfless. I know you would give anything to help another. A kind hero. Very brave. I could not ask for anyone better to love my son.”

Her expression grows sharper. “But you must promise me this. I know the lives heroes live. Please, be selfish for my son. Be selfish, for me, if it means you will return to him. I should not ask, but you must promise me.” For someone who lived her life -- or what he is aware of, which he knows is nowhere as cruel as the reality -- he knows her words are layered. He understands their intent all the same.

Bowing his head, low enough to show her the proper respect and intent. “I promise.”

She squeezes his hand. “Thank you. I know much of your work you don’t control, but that is all I ask. If you are given the choice -- choose this for me.”

RISING STARS CO ✔ @STARGALA
ARE YOU READY!?!? Rising Stars #HeroGala tonight -- this year’s Guest of Honor is our #1 Hero, Deku!!!
[Photo attached: A cropped promotional sticker of Pro Hero Deku from the previous gala, caught in a trademark smile.]
929 retweets | 3,613 favorites
11:55 PM - 2 April XX

HeroWatch ✔ @herowatch
All eyes will be on the (limited) stream tonight, as expected, Hero Deku makes his first debut as the #1 Hero at the annual gala. To international fans: SORRY! The stream is only available in Japan, and there will not be an out of country stream. The stream will be uploaded later on YouTube for those who missed it.
Waiting is not something Izuku enjoys. He’s never been particularly patient -- especially not with an impulsive set of desires to stay in motion at all times -- and his patience wears especially thin when the lives of others are possibly in danger. Especially if it’s the life of his boyfriend which, in particular, wears his patience as thin as it’s ever been.

To top it off, this meeting with the mysterious shadowy figure -- the one who traced him down in alley outside of Tokyo, who left Shouto the strange letter, and the text message with only coordinates as instructions...Izuku does not like the direction this information is taking.

“I knew he wouldn’t come alone,” A gruff voice says behind him, and Izuku channels all his self-restraint into not kicking the visitor in the stomach and sending them halfway down the block.

“Don’t sneak up on me.” Izuku snaps. He doesn’t turn around, because he knows that voice. He only has vague impressions of that night, the darkness in the alley swallowing the other figure whole, the sense of wrongness from his figure. Like the person inside the coat had this feeling that
he didn’t belong there, although nothing about his outward appearance would establish any sense of alarm.

The man in the coat steps out in the light. His face is still covered by a hat and a dark hood. No mask this time, as far as Izuku can tell. “You should be more alert.”

“I’m --” Izuku remembers a crucial aspect of this meeting. “-- never mind me, why are you here? Aren’t you supposed to be giving something to Sho --” Fuck, probably not the right way to make introductions. “-- the other person you’re supposed to be meeting?” If Shouto’s at the “dropsite” and their “friend” is here, then maybe all of Izuku’s worst fears were correct. If he’s lucky, Izuku will get some action tonight -- a shame about the suit, though. And, if this does turn violent -- not something he usually looks forward to, but -- he might even get to skip the gala!

A slow shake. Izuku doesn’t drop his defensive stance, though. He’s not letting this bastard catch him by surprise a second time. “He’ll find it where I left it. And no, I thought it best I didn’t meet with Todoroki again. I could only contact him a few times before I’d start breaking rules.”

Izuku scowls. “Breaking whose rules?”

The hat tips a little; curious. Or intrigued by his question. “Rules out of my control.”

That answer seems pretty final, and Izuku doesn’t foresee a ton of wiggle room in the Answers Department for that area. “So, this journal of dangerous secrets. Care to elaborate on what kind of danger, exactly?”

“There’s always risks. For Todoroki, especially, this journal will not be safe to carry.” The man says. “It is dangerous but if he has accepted it he must accept the consequences as well. That is the price. It is the key to all the information you seek.”

Izuku blinks. “And the Board investigation?” No response. Figures. Sometimes, Izuku wishes the simplicity of underground work. Beating answers out of people usually goes a lot faster, albeit messier.

Finally, “I can’t promise the journal will reveal those secrets to you right away, but it holds answers to everything. Translating the answers, unfortunately, is rather difficult.”

“And how do we do that?” Another reluctant pause. The man steps forward; Izuku tenses, but he doesn’t shrink back. He’s the Number One Hero. He doesn’t show fear to anyone, especially not weird mask-shadows-man.

Izuku is ready to end the pleasantries and bounce away to find Shouto when the man speaks again: “I will admit I lied to you, the first time we met. And to Todoroki.”

“You’re really not doing yourself any favors here, man.” Izuku mutters.

There’s another significant pause, but Izuku doesn’t think it’s one made from hesitation. “But I had my reasons. And you must listen.”

Izuku huffs. “You really know how to get my attention, I’ll give you that. Well?”

“I needed to tell you something important.” The man insists. “Even someone like you could never take my words as proof alone.”

Mystery book, Izuku thinks. Every new chapter gets more and more interesting, and even more confusing. “Right. I’m sure you realize how that sounds like a trap?” Coat guy doesn’t look like
he’s going to defend that remark, so Izuku presses on. “And you lied to me because…?” Nope, that’s not getting a reaction. New tactic: “I think you’ll find I’m a pretty understanding guy. Try me.”

“No. Believe me,” and there’s a tension in the man’s voice when he says it that makes Izuku, actually, believe him. “There are things not even you would understand. Not yet, anyway. Someday.”

“Sure,” Izuku says, but he doesn’t drop his guard.

“The last time we met I saved your life. Would you believe me if I said that?”

Izuku shrugs. Blunt and honest, he answers, “Not really.”

“It is the truth. When you last met with Komiya…” A deeper pause.

“Who?” Izuku latches onto any semblance of information, no matter how small. “Who is Komiya?”

Izuku isn’t sure what the other man’s face looks like (obviously) but he senses discomfort based on the shift of his posture alone. “The villain you crossed paths with. The one you haven’t found. Her name is Komiya.”

That’s the most information Izuku’s picked up on from this whole wasted endeavor. “Sure. Fine.” Izuku snorts. “I’ll bite. Let’s say that part is true. But you confessed already, I am not sure I believe anything you’ve got to say to me -- why would you do anything like that?”

“I help when I can.” Another step forward, and Izuku flinches when the man raises his hand. He’s wearing gloves, too, which is rather annoying because it shows how much care went into protecting his identity. He drops an inch above Izuku’s shoulder, and Izuku tries not to be intimidated by their difference in height. While Izuku is definitely, well, broader, the other man is thinner...or so Izuku can guess. “Everything I’ve said to you is true. She is very displeased, as I intervened with her plans the last time and prevented her from completing her mission. But she will return. Soon.”

Frowning, Izuku asks, “And you can’t stop her again?”

“No. I can’t. Not anymore.” The hand raises and Izuku tries not to flinch when the glove hovers over his cheek. It’s not...pleasant, exactly, but it’s not uncomfortable either. It’s actually familiar, almost. The hand never makes contact with his skin at all, but it hesitates like it wants to reach closer. “You will need to send her away. She seeks to destroy you and everyone in her path. You must stop her before she succeeds.”

I love prophecies about death and ultimate destruction, Izuku thinks, only a little bitterly. Wish I’d get a prophecy about a surprise trip to the beach, or a vacation on the islands.

The other man fills the silence, firm, sure. “I know you, Hero Deku. I know you would never want anyone to be hurt on your behalf.” He swears it. A promise. His hand retreats, and the man’s voice returns to the same gruffness from before. “Todoroki will be returning soon. Go to him.”

Yeah. Thanks.” Izuku feels unsettled enough for one conversation. The gala is actually looking like a decent and safe place to hide for the rest of the evening. “I’ll do that.”

Stepping back into the shadows, the man’s voice chases him. “You won’t tell Todoroki about this meeting either. As you did not tell him about your full encounter with Komiya.” Izuku tightens his shoulders. “I do not blame you. It is best that he does not learn of this until later.”
Flexing his fingers, wishing Todoroki let him at least bring his utility belt, he stalls again. Izuku huffs. “Is that a threat?”

“I am only trying to help.” The other man has the nerve to sound almost amused. “I understand your frustration. I wish I could say more.”

“Yeah. Whatever you say.” Izuku turns his back and prepares to jump.

“I’m sorry.” For a moment, it’s quiet, and Izuku releases the tightness in his chest like he’d been holding his breath underwater. He’s alone, for a second, but then -- “There will be a time where you will need my help very soon. I will come, for I promise you it is the last time we meet. And the last time I offer you help.” The sound of footsteps walking in the other direction, quiet. “Goodbye for now, hero.”

Izuku never brings up the conversation with Shouto. He doesn’t know if he could bear telling him the truth about the journal. That it’s likely a dead end, that their efforts are probably in vain -- or about Komiya, and all the little things he’s kept from slipping out of his mouth. Or his own hope that the journal is something significant. That none of this is in vain. His own hope is stronger and keeps the words locked away. Or he can’t bear to say them aloud, because saying them would make them real and something to be dealt with.

It is easier, sometimes, not to say anything at all.

_That’s the funny thing about the truth, _Izuku thinks, as he watches Shouto dance with Iida along the edges of the floor. Shouto’s expression is pinched, and despite Iida’s best efforts the frown does not work itself off his face. Too deep in thought to be lured away by the promise of distraction. Troubled. Apparently unaware of Izuku’s noticeable change in attitude after they retrieved the journal. _The truth always comes out in the end._

He’s not wrong. Everything comes back around to bite him in the ass (of course). On the bright side: Shouto is saved, Izuku’s (somehow, by a miracle) alive, his friends are mostly intact, Izuku finally tells the truth, and Komiya is gone -- so he hopes. The man in the coat said so, but sometimes Izuku wakes up with a shout stuck in his throat. He rolls over, stares at Shouto’s sleeping profile, and waits for his own breathing to return to normal.

He never finds that man with the hat again. Instead, he finds a different, just as annoying and cryptic irritating jerk in a different hat. The journal is tucked away, buried behind a stack of books Shouto gathered and cut out the middle of a very large (and very dry, terrible reading) encyclopedia of law and stuck the red journal inside.

That mystery is gone, abandoned, buried. But Izuku knows where he laid it to rest, and the ground is soft. He’s ready and willing to keep digging. If he were wise, he would try his hardest to forget. But Izuku is clever, not wise, and wonders anyway. Izuku knows something happened in that room; the moment where the man’s hat lifted ever so slightly and Izuku saw his face and --

_he looks out over into a field. standing in the center, a man, crying out, howling, demanding answers from the wind and the tall grass. he can’t understand the words, too faded and far away indistinct curses, but he knows it is a moment of heartbreak. it is agony. he knows the man is himself. not himself now, but someday. someday. someday._

_a different place, a boy in a different field. the grass is trimmed, the walls and dome framed in glass offer a false sense of security. he is tired, but he is determined. he is very afraid. he is afraid, but there is something else besides fear and determination buried in his eyes. he has lived this day before. this is a day of his past. he knows this boy._
this boy -- once -- a long time ago, was him.

-- and then the memory slides away like water sliding off the front of a windshield, and it’s gone.

[Video: radio jack heroes out of context part 8: EIGHT. ive made EIGHT of THESE
Thumbnail: A still of Hero Earphone Jack in a yellow blazer, holding up a large microphone. She’s wearing bright purple headphones, half-sliding off her head. Her mouth is covered by a black bar and the words “CENSORED” across the middle. In smaller white text, the words ‘this is all part of the same dumb joke but people keep asking me to make more videos and i lost 2 versions of this because my editor crashed fuck me’ in the upper right corner.]

492k views
Posted 1 month ago by J K W | Subscribe

alternate title: earphone jack continues to be the most relatable person to grace us on this planet

this took so long and i almost gave up uploading it twice. be grateful.

888 comments

All Might Himbo King - 3 weeks ago
when the earth is destroyed i wish to preserve this video for future star travelling generations to witness because it’s the most succinct and deserving of comedy

flamepillar - 6 days ago
earphone jack: i hate gay ppl (chargebolt) so much it’s unreal
View 1 reply

HarppyHunnyC_V - 1 day ago
earphone jack @ her fellow lesbian icons prism & alien queen: my GOD these bitches gay. Good for them. GOOD for them

EllyStellyWelly - 4 days ago
Best lines by far
Tsukuyomi “The world is dark and cruel but at least goth culture exists and that makes it all worth it I think”
Chargebolt “(Cellophane) asked me out the other day and I said I was busy also I was married and he was so sad and somehow completely forgot we’ve been married for like 6 years”
Red Riot “I told this one villain I was fighting ‘Hey I am gay and trans and stronger than you, don’t try any shit’ and the villain replied ‘same’ and I let her go. She was robbing a mansion and honestly, stealing from the rich isn’t a crime if you ask me”
Battle Fist “Women (long silence) … Hot” (furious nodding from the other heroines in the room)
View 53 replies

CaprIcorNius - 2 days ago
That clip @ 10:04 omg IM LIVING FOR ENTROPY AND DEKU JUST LIKE… teasing each other and practically almost making out and earphone jack starts screaming at them to get a room and entropy looks at the camera and says “i got a room, you just happen to be in it” and kisses deku in front of her. although i could live without the absolutely horrendous audio quality of her scream. Christ alive. her voice could shatter eardrums
“I have an offer to go abroad.” Shouto says, at dinner, and there’s absolutely no lead-in or direction from the conversation beforehand that would somehow connect that statement to anything else.

“Alright?” Izuku replies, and looks at him.

Shouto makes a face that conveys -- something -- and says, “Tenya passed it along to me. For work. I haven’t had any luck with investigations on our end.”

Izuku reaches over and taps his hand. Shouto’s face softens. “You think you’re gonna take this one?”

“I’ll think about it. He’s coming over tomorrow to give me more details.” Shouto says, which isn’t really an answer, but it’s an answer Shouto would give. Izuku hums and clears the table for the two of them.

After everything, he thinks it is nice to finally hear Shouto is choosing something. He’s danced around the conversation for a while -- besides his soft, honest admission -- “I think I’d like to write.” It is good to know Shouto hasn’t given up on chasing new adventures.

“I’ll try to be there,” Izuku says. “What time?”

Shouto pulls out his phone and finds the message. He squints at the screen, even though his glasses are on the table beside him. “Six. I invited him over for dinner.”

“I’ll be there,” Izuku promises. Although it’s technically Shouto’s turn to wash the dishes, he leans on the counter and scrolls through his tablet looking at the news. He doesn’t startle after Izuku finishes, leans over him, and presses a short kiss to the back of his neck. “I’m pretty beat. Gonna head to bed.” Shouto catches his hand as he turns to head up the stairs.

“Can you stay down here a little longer?” Shouto asks, on the softer side of pleading. He looks so handsome standing in front of Izuku, even though he’s wearing Izuku’s sweatpants (too short on him) and one of Izuku’s old faded workout shirts (too big for him, which Izuku finds endearing and hilarious).

Picking up his glasses from the table and sliding them onto Shouto’s face, he murmurs; “No, Shouto.” Light, honest. “I’ve got an early day tomorrow. It’s late. You should head up too.”

Shouto shakes his head. “If I’m going to take this -- take this seriously, I have a little more work to do. I wanted to take another look at --” Izuku interrupts him with another kiss, which is one of the most effective ways to end any meaningless argument between the two of them.

“Leave it for the morning.” Izuku suggests. “It isn’t going anywhere.”

Izuku sleeps through most of Tenya’s visit. The morning after, Shouto doesn’t say anything when he sees a brand new leather journal sitting next to his bedside table. A new chapter, the pages promise. Starting something new, sworn into the fresh unwritten pages. Shouto says good morning, kisses Izuku, and reminds him to make it back for dinner on time.
one more, folks...one more.... (leave a comment and tell me if you listened to any music while reading this chapter. i always listen to music while im reading and i would love to know if any of yall do too. also because I Love Comments)

mobile translations:
緑 焦凍: オリジン - Midoriya Shouto: Origin
:))
hover text jokes/comments:
“it’s unmanly to slam doors when upset” - *kirishima voice* why are men always raising their voices and slamming doors and shit. shut the fuck up. rip to guys with toxic masculinity complexes but we are not the same
"Future Izuku" - adhd people compartamentalize time differently, in one way by treating issues as a not-present issue and often ignoring problems as a "future-self" problem. like these people are not the same person. a big mood for me, because past!writer ezra looked at this 38k word chapter and went "haha editing who? that's somebody else's problem lol" and then i remembered wait that's ME Too D:
"If the blind leads the blind, they both fall into the ditch" - more japanese proverbs. because i like them

- new hero name appearances: mirage - camie

- additional note: prior to chapter 7, the “trans midori izuku” tag was not visible on this fic. in the series it is tagged in the other works but nowhere in the first 6 chps is it explicitly stated anywhere that midoriya is a trans man. i am a strong believer that for rep to be worth something, it has to be Clear and Documented instead of vague and suggested. i never wanted midoriya’s identity to be vague. that is why i waited until ch7 was released and clearly addressed his identity before i added the tag. my only regret is i am sorry i waited so long to add this clarification. i felt it was more important to add explicit rep over implied representation. i think it’s a cop out to add the tag and then...never address it in the fic. that’s lazywriting.jpeg. todoroki, or any of the other characters who know midoriya well enough to know this, also did not address it in their headspace/narration at any point because they've known for so long they never think of midoriya’s identity unless it were to come up in specific context. the only scene where this might have come up was the filming for the buzzfeed video, but as that was from an outsider character’s pov.

- chapter 7 leaves us right off where ch6 ended. so what comes next? well… [zooms in on my final draft of chapter 8]

- i love writing midoriyas pov and will definitely do more of him for the future in other projects :D!

- if you celebrate the holidays, this is my present to you. if you don’t, then this is my
present for people who are finishing up school for vacation. if none of those apply to you, uhhh. happy birthday and i’m either very early or very late depending on when your birth date falls.
- see you next friday :)))))
Chapter Summary

There are many endings; some happy, some not, but Midoriya knows he likes this one best.

Chapter Notes

[epilogue part 2]
*pulls off another hat, revealing nothing except a wriggling stack of talented mice spinning in large metal wheels and pretending to be a human* we’re back, last round (for real this time). happy friday! (*i am a little late but it’s still the 27th in my timezone. shhhhh)*

notes on epilogue part 1:
- ch7 is a pretty wild ride. re-reading/editing it i was rlly amazed at how little tdrk & mdya interact from midoriya’s pov with each other during the arc after the restaurant scene in the first half. but i think that’s actually a good balance because rehashing everything that occurred in the other 6 chapters is boring/repetitive even if it’s from another pov. i turned to relying on midoriya’s conversations with other characters to glimpse into how his relationship w/ tdrk was changing, a lot like how chps1-6 are mostly tdrk’s pov but intermittently cross into another character's pov. idk how i feel about how that math turned out tho lmao. it's not "unbalanced" but at the same time, i crammed so much into ch7 that it was inevitable it would feel a little rushed. maybe i will come back in a year and re-add all the scenes in ch7 i deleted (i was trying to keep the word count down, lol). i saved them anyway, i might re-write them as part of the sidekicks fic i am working on. thats a problem for future writer!me, though! haha, suck it, loser!
- “ch7: before (reprise)” carries the events of the first 6 chapters except it starts a few months before the opening scene of the first chapter. this is all from midoriya’s pov, which means it’s a Very condensed stream of all the events of the previous 6 chapters. ch7 left off right before the events of the end of chapter 6, and now i will direct your attention to “chapter 8: after”.

notes on this chapter [ep2]:
- [looks at final word count of the whole fic] alright. that is a number. that is for sure...a number. all those words, huh. what a number. a number, for sure, that is. *drops to the floor in a fetal position and allows my atoms to hydronically fuse with the floorboards*
- me, a fool: haha this will be like 10k or 12k, not too long xx
- 21k later: you played yourself again
- uuuuuuughhhhhhhhhh
- UUUUUUUUGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH
downloads, but like the Fast Moving Water type)!
- whatever. it's done. it's done. it's done!!!!!!!
- this is the final chapter & end epilogue. everything else i post will be part of the futureholds series. im so sad about posting this...but im also so incredibly happy. i'm going to miss writing this & reading the new comments. this whole fic, writing, editing...im gonna miss it but i'm glad i'm done!
- the ending is very emotional. sorry if it gives you Tears (happy tears. i hope). you also get to see some gorgeous art from blirh, so look forward to that! final acknowledgements are in the end notes!
- thank you and i really hope you enjoy this last part of the “epilogue” & if you've stuck with me since chapter one im sending enormous hugs and and a big smooch. mwuah

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“You really changed my life. Thank you.”

... 

“Hey, don’t forget. You changed mine too. No need for that. Your life is a part of mine, and mine is a part of yours.”

... 

[Continued from Page 2]

Not too many years later, I found myself on a path set in certain self-destruction. It was no secret to those in my care that I was miserable as a sidekick. I remained in that role for four exhausting years. Despite the persistent questioning from my friends, from strangers, from the world, including myself: why are you still here?

It is not that I doubted my abilities. It was fear for change. Fear of choice. My doubt held me back and choked me. I did not want to admit, even to myself, that I needed change. I felt more alone than ever.

It was not until I heard the words of another that awakened me: “It is a hero’s duty to not only save others, but to save themselves.” It is astounding how a few powerful words can change a person’s heart in a moment. I left my title as a sidekick behind and moved to the center of Tokyo City with a new job offer and began anew. I moved on from Todoroki Shouto: The Sidekick Shouto, and took on the name of the hero.

My origin story as Todoroki Shouto: Hero Entropy was about hope. If you are a hero -- a true hero -- you do not reach your hand out to save another because you think it makes you look strong. You
reach out because someone needs help. I proved to myself, and to everyone else in Japan, the new age of heroes was well on its way.

But the story does not end there. My identity as a hero was so entangled in my past and in the making of my present. Yet I could not imagine it as part of my future. I could not imagine my future at all. I knew it was time for change. If I could not see my future then, I must attempt to find it. I had to make that decision for myself.

I felt adrift for a while after I retired. I didn’t know if I had made the right choice, if I made it at the right time. Six years ago I knew I needed to change, but I was not without doubt. After all, what kind of person leaves a life like that behind? My mother told me, “You’re allowed to have things that make you happy.” I decided it can be an answer to a question as simple as, “Does _ make me happy?” By answering that question as earnestly as I did, I stepped out towards a new ending. An ending to a different story of which I chose all on my own.

[Continued on Page 9] . . .

...AND WHAT COMES AFTER

[Photo 1: Screenshots of Tweets from Earphone Jack’s “liked” posts of her Twitter profile.]

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
#Deku #Herospots #CasualHeroes (Thanks, dedicated spotters!)
[Photo attached: A distant, blurry image captured of Pro Hero Deku walking out of a jewelry shop. The name on the shop is blurred out, but the windows reveal the rows of necklaces and other assorted precious metals on a glowing white backdrop. Deku doesn’t appear to notice he’s being photographed, clearly disguised. He is wearing a grey scarf and clothing that would, in other circumstances, allow him to blend into the crowd. To his left, accompanied by a tall unrecognizable figure, who appears to be talking to the hero.]
6,101 retweets | 39,244 favorites
3:11 PM - 5 January X2
Liked by Earphone Jack

HeroWatch ✔ @HeroWatch
#HappyBirthdayEntropy #YesWeKnowHesRetired #DekuAndBonus #EarphoneJack
#CasualHeroes #SoCute (source: @icreati ‘s Instagram)
[Photo attached: Todoroki Shouto, Pro Hero Deku’s boyfriend standing in front of a grand All Might statue in the middle of the Arts & Development Square in Tokyo. Deku has one arm around Todoroki’s waist. A blurry shine from the hand around Todoroki’s waist glows in the photo. Todoroki is smiling at Deku, attention elsewhere. His hair is completely covered by a large grey hat. His frames are blue. Deku’s hair is longer, not tied back, and contained in a Froppy themed beanie. The second attached photo includes Pro Hero Earphone Jack jumping in front and photobombing their moment. She’s wearing casual clothes as well, and smiling madly at the camera holder, making a peace sign. One of her gloves is missing, revealing her bare hand.]
2,091 retweets | 11,244 favorites
3:11 PM - 11 January X2
Liked by Earphone Jack and Creati | #7
Cute photo, isn’t it? :)

@radio_jack stop teasing them

EXPLAIN!!!!!!!!????!! IS THAT A RING?? IS IT TRUE?? ARE YOU GETTING MARRIED??? THE PEOPLE REQUIRE ANSWERS PLEASEEE!!!!!!!!! PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE?? Im bEGGING

Im begging

Photoshop has provided all of the answers #creatijack #SOLVED

Entrodeku is real and im alive @e_herogirl

Concept: entrodeku AND creatijack proposal. everyone’s so obsessed with the rumors abt entrodeku cus deku was spotted at a jeweler but im a GENIUS and i know earphone jack’s been making really obvious “rock” jokes on her show for MONTHS. tell me im wrong. That or they eloped without saying anything & we r all running around like chickens w/ our heads cut off

Bro wtf r we supposed to think about all of this. Ur telling me 1.) Entropy disappeared off the radar
for like 6 months (???) and 2.) comes back into the picture only to add fuel to the engagement rumor party. And Deku keeps posting sappy romantic things on his instagram story. Ok. Ok. ok ok ok ok. OK. im fine
245 retweets | 1,302 favorites
4:20 PM - 14 January X2
Liked by Earphone Jack

cammie @Eachand_Everydimension
the inherent homoromanticism of being engaged to your old classmate and hero rival
2,378 retweets | 3,644 favorites
4:29 PM - 14 January X2
Liked by Earphone Jack and Creati | #]

keepingupwithmyhero:
this week on “Things Earphone Jack (and creati, by extension) Liked”

so uhhh anybody with answers feel like explainig WHAT the fuck is going on???

Posted 1 month ago via gaydeku source keepingupwithmyhero
4,663 notes

Tags: #one day i will meet hero deku and arm wrestle him for answers. and i will win, #earphone jack is also being such a tease? Liking all of these posts? Wtf is she doing, #playing her chaotic neutral card as always i guess, #THERES SO MUCH TO UNPACK, #CREATIJACK ENGAGEMENT???? WHAT???? ENTRODEKU ALSO ENGAGED(?). #ARHGUESHFUH????, #my gemini moon wants more details but my virgo sun is telling me to calm down and be patient, #aaaaahhhh, #the gossip squad, #hero news tag

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Even the knowing looks the sidekicks at Team Idaten do nothing to dampen Izuku’s eagerness as the end of his shift crawls closer. Izuku reminds them to finish their work. This request is largely ignored. Not that any of Tenya’s staff ever listen to him to begin with. Izuku has a feeling their selective hearing is particularly aimed to irritate him, but not even Kouta’s curses wipes the smile from his face.

He hears them whispering around their lunch table. Izuku pretends not to hear them gossip. “Why is he smiling so much?” “I don’t know, who cares?” “I mean, Hero Deku is always smiling.
That’s kind of...his thing.” “Seriously, nobody smiles that much.” “If you’re so curious, why don’t you ask him yourself, idiot?”

The other sidekicks are too terrified to say anything to his face directly. Except for Kouta.

“Wipe that stupid ass look off your face,” Kouta snaps. He stabs the inside of his bento box with one of his chopsticks, sending cooked egg and flecks of rice across their shared table. Izuku understands he’s venting his frustration into a physical assault on his food, likely wishing he was throwing punches at Izuku in the sparring ring.

Izuku ignores that comment. “Ah, did Sosaki-san make you lunch again today? That’s very nice of her. Maybe you should ask her if she’d be willing to make an extra one for me.” Izuku sadly passes over his (very pathetic looking) attempt at lunch. He forgot to go grocery shopping yesterday in his excitement.

“No,” Kouta drags his bag across the table as though creating a wall between them. “Fuck off. Make your own food.”

Izuku briefly mourns at the thought of Kouta’s future press hailstorms in the future. Kouta lacks all pleasantries, as well as a friendly exterior and/or the ability to speak softly. No wonder the interns are terrified of Sidekick Torrent. Izuku holds onto the hopes Kouta’s prickly personality will fade with time. He reminds Izuku of some of his old classmates, in that way.

“That’s rather insulting to say to your favorite mentor, Izumi-kun,” Izuku scolds him lightly. “The press will never like you if you don’t learn how to say nice things.”

“Bullshit. Plenty of other heroes talk just like me,” Kouta squints accusingly at him.

Izuku sighs. It’s not worth arguing with Kouta directly. He’s a stubborn kid. “I guess you’re right. Shouto never learned how to talk nicely to reporters either.” Her perks up at the thought. “But that didn’t keep from being popular, or climbing the ranks faster than I did. He was a Top 10 Hero before he retired, you know. There is hope for you too!”

Kouta picks up his bag without another word and stomps away. Scowling so much will give him wrinkles, but he always yells at Izuku when he mentions it. Izuku’s smile returns full-force, later, as he watches Kouta begrudgingly help guide the new sidekicks around Team Idaten’s office. He even smiles reassuringly at the younger kids -- first years by their nervous posture -- and Izuku can’t help but voice his approval.

Izuku startles Kouta from his hiding spot and claps a hand over his shoulder. Team Idaten’s newest crowd of wide-eyed young hero students stare at him, wide-eyed and jaw-dropped, at Number One Hero Deku casually strolling alongside him. Kouta jumps at the contact and sends a glare in Izuku’s direction. Izuku ignores him. “Good, good! These are the new interns? We’ll make a proper instructor out of you yet, Izumi-kun.”

Kouta screams curses at him. Izuku’s come to expect that. He winks at the students. “Has Sidekick Torrent done a good job showing you around?” They bob their heads up and down, fascinated by Izuku’s very being in the office in front of them. “Wonderful. Come on, there’s still the training rooms. You can ask Torrent for your internship schedule after we’re done. Alright, kids?”

Izuku catches him handing out snacks to the interns later. Kouta accuses him of spying. “I’m just monitoring your work,” Izuku reassures him. “Good job.”

Kouta makes a frustrated low noise, like a growl, and turns away from Izuku. The tension in his
shoulders relax despite his blustering cover. “Yeah, whatever. Why are you still here? I thought you said you had plans. Your shift is supposed to be over, anyway.”

Izuku can’t resist pulling off his hat and ruffling his hair underneath. “Aw, it’s so nice of you to care, Kouta-kun,” Izuku coos, trying (and failing) not to laugh at Kouta’s indignant squawk. “And thanks for the reminder! You know how I lose track of time.”

Kouta yells, *get out of here, old man!* and forces him out the doors of the team office. Izuku is only a little offended by it. He retreats to the lockers and pulls out his bag, changing into his civilian clothes and stuffing his suit into his travel bag. He locks his office -- technically, Tenya’s office -- before he leaves.

Izuku catches the trails of Kouta snapping at the newer interns from the training gallery as he passes. “-- want to bother him right now? Don’t you understand anything, *idiots*? Go ask him tomorrow.” The sidekicks he’s lecturing ask *why where is he going.* Izuku walks faster out the door. He doesn’t need to be in the room to hear Kouta’s scowling from where he is.

He doesn’t cheat and skip the train today. Izuku already has plans.

Purchasing his ticket is the only part he didn’t plan for. Waiting in line seems longer than usual. Inside the terminal, he leans against one of the signs and waits. Scanning the crowds as they pass, looking for a familiar flash of hair before he remembers. Looking for red and white won’t help him here. He closes his eyes and settles his head against the cool metal and waits.

He doesn’t wait long. His head drops and whips around, searching for the sound of a familiar voice calling his name. “Izuku.”

Izuku turns at the source and smiles. “Hey, there you are.”

The other people arriving off the train heed little attention to the two of them. Izuku knows he can’t make a big show, but he still takes Shouto’s hand into his own and squeezes. “I missed you,” Izuku tells him.

Shouto huffs, pulling him away from the sign. “It’s only been a week.”

“You know what I mean,” Izuku allows himself to be lead towards the back of the terminal, where the trains vanish from view in the tunnel. Less crowds, but enough background noise to leave the two of them undisturbed. “This all sucks, I just…” Izuku shakes his head. “…miss you.” He finishes lamely.

“Two more weeks,” Shouto says, like a promise.

“Two more weeks,” Izuku repeats, less enthusiastic. He pushes the thought down. He looks up, grateful that despite all changes in appearance, at least Shouto’s eyes are the same shade and filled with warmth.

And then Izuku notices the hat.

Self-restraint only allows him a certain amount of distance before he urge to pull off Shouto’s brand new Deku hat and throw it onto the tracks. He doesn’t know *where* Shouto found his new identity in proudly wearing as much embarassing Hero Deku merchandise in public areas. Izuku endures because he knows it’s the only recognizable part of his appearance he can reclaim for now. Until Shouto’s probationary security clearance and re-entrance into the country is cleared. That doesn’t mean he has to like it.
It’s so unfair, Izuku thinks bitterly, that his boyfriend looks so good wearing his merchandise. All of the time. Part of it, he knows, is Shouto’s strong petty stance regarding the lack of time they have to spend together. He also knows it makes Izuku’s face turn three shades darker within the few seconds it takes for him to process what he’s wearing. Which is exactly why Shouto chooses to wear a lot of it.

“Please take that off,” Izuku lightly nudges his shoe to capture his attention. Shouto is far more distracted with the musicians outside the terminal, leaning over his seat to catch what little he can see through the window.

“Take what off.” Shouto says, without sounding like he’s asking a question at all. Oh, Izuku hates this hat. The moment Shouto isn’t paying attention he’s going to destroy it.

“Seriously,” Izuku whines. “Why are you --?” Interrupted by the movement of the train lurching forward, he pitches into the seat in front of him. It’s empty, thankfully, but his nose smarts from where his face momentarily fused with the chair. Shouto is staring at him, laughter in his eyes, when Izuku rights himself. “-- shut up.”

Turning to the window, he hears Shouto’s nonverbal I wasn’t even talking in his posture alone. “It’s the best disguise.” His response is clearly prepared and rehearsed. He was planning for this. “Nobody will look twice at someone wearing a hat like this. You have a lot of fans, you know.”

“Mhm,” Izuku hums, disbelief clear and crisp on his face. “Sure.”

Shouto takes his hand and Izuku melts a little. Maybe he can be convinced to let Shouto keep the hat if he keeps looking at Izuku like that. It’s special to have any time with Shouto these days; six months of time abroad, an overwhelming work schedule between the two of them, and four weeks of meeting Shouto under the cover of secrecy. The sparse video calls in between hardly count as real contact. Minus the first week Shouto returned, giving Izuku a chance to wish him happy birthday in person. (Tenya was not happy about Momo posting their photos online, but Izuku made sure to hide any trace of Shouto’s changed appearance from the prying eyes of the Internet. It would be more suspicious if I didn’t make a birthday post, Izuku convinced him. Your boyfriend still shared a birthday post for you while you were away.) All of this makes any moment together infinitely more precious and necessary. Like the two of them are star-crossed lovers from a dramatic fantasy novel. (“It’s all rather romantic,” Aoyama remarked with a dramatic swoon. Izuku said, “Of course you would think that.”)

That doesn’t stop Izuku once he’s off the train. He is practically vibrating in his seat, waiting for their stop. The terminal is far behind them before Izuku declares he’s had enough. This is the plaza Izuku picked: low security, no chance of being spotted by anyone who might recognize them. He kisses Shouto, slides the hat off of his head, and tosses it in the fountain’s direction without looking to see where it lands. “It’s okay,” Shouto promises, once Izuku’s finished embracing him. “I’ll buy another one.” Izuku groans. “Maybe we can wear matching ones next time.”

“That would attract more attention,” Izuku tells him, like Izuku hadn’t just thrown his hat and startled the tourists in the plaza with them.

Shouto replies, “So?” He’s smiling. He’s in a good mood today. Their visit last week was far more somber; Izuku mentioned he couldn’t wait for Shouto to see the apartment and Shouto fell into a sour mood. Izuku imagines his current living situation is nowhere as nice as Shouto makes it out to be. Tenya is far more honest, but he doesn’t complain about it either.

“What part of being undercover do you not understand?” Izuku teases. “Do you want Tenya to lecture me again about safety? Do you?”
“It’s only for another two weeks,” Shouto replies dismissively. “Once the video is out, everything will go back to how it was.”

He sounds far too optimistic about the idea. Izuku opens his mouth to tell him so, but a tremendous shout behind them startles Shouto before he has the chance. The apprehension isn’t necessary, as it turns out. Although Izuku almost leaps a foot in the air when two enormous arms wrap around his middle and lift him with startling speed. Izuku nearly punches a crater into the sidewalk. Shouto only sighs beside him and all the tension in Izuku’s body relaxes.

“I knew I recognized your voice!” The booming voice holding Izuku’s body captive preens. “Hahaha, not even your disguises could fool me!”

“Inasa,” Shouto chides, as Yoarashi Inasa strangles Izuku’s spleen, liver, and lower intestines. So much for keeping a low profile. Tenya is going to be so pissed. “He’s turning blue. Put him down.”

“Ah, you should’ve said something!” Yoarashi bellows, dropping Izuku like a giant sack of flour. “Ha, ha, you are blue!” He takes a deep breath, bows (nearly headbutts Shouto), and finishes with an exclamation: “I am very sorry!”

Izuku wheezes, unable to form a response. In an instant, Yoarashi bowls over Shouto and delivers the same treatment. “I missed you, my good friend!” Inasa cheers, releasing him after an intense hugging session. He claps Shouto on the back hard enough to make him stumble. “And you got shorter, too! I see you’ve also changed your hair. I don’t like it! This color does not suit you.”

“Izuku’s the same as it was. The hair is only temporary.” Shouto replies, exasperated. Izuku catches his mouth twitch; the beginnings of a smile. “Aren’t you supposed to be in South America until next year?”

“Aren’t you retired?” Yoarashi counters. “You’re not supposed to know about those top secret hero things anymore!” He glances at Izuku. “But I wouldn’t be surprised if your friends are still keeping you up to date with the big going ons, would I?” Izuku shrugs guiltily. Yoarashi laughs and claps a hand on Izuku’s shoulder, steering Shouto and himself towards the restaurant. “I just got back today, and it’s rather fortunate I ran into you. I apologize for interrupting, but I couldn’t miss the chance to say hello to old friends. We must have lunch together! It has been far too long, I really must insist!”

“We’re actually undercover,” Izuku tells him, regretfully. “Shouto and I aren’t supposed to -- we can’t stay out too long. I don’t know if that’s --” Shouto looks at him with the right amount of pleading and he relents. “-- er, I mean, as long as we don’t attract any attention. I’m sure that will be...fine.”

“Wonderful!” Yoarashi exclaims. Several bystanders in the plaza turn their heads at the sound. Izuku winces. Tenya is going to lecture him until his ears fall off later. “Lunch it is!”

Yoarashi and Shouto spend far too long arguing over the restaurant. Izuku feels the minutes slipping away far too quickly. He glances over at Shouto, clenching his hands at his side. Shouto must sense his aura of anxiety and presses closer to him. He takes Izuku’s hand, wordless. Yoarashi is distracted with the task of apologizing to the pedestrian he bumped into. (Loudly.)

“What’s wrong?” Shouto asks quietly.

“Nothing,” Izuku answers quickly. The response is instinctive. Shouto narrows his eyes at him. Izuku thinks it’s so odd how different the expression looks on his face. The warm tones of his hair lessen his intimidation, somehow. “Okay, okay. I just -- wanted to spend more time with you.”
Shouto’s expression opens. “Ah. I didn’t realize the time.”

“Yeah,” Izuku says, regretfully, pulling away. “Well. Can’t be helped. Until next week, then?”

Yoarashi takes renewed interest in the companions he abandoned. Shouto’s reply is cut off by Yoarashi clapping them both over the shoulder. “Right! Are we ready? The restaurant should have a table for us by now!”

“Eh,” Izuku says, glancing at his watch. His mouth pulls down into another grimace. As nice as it is for Shouto to see his friend, it’s interrupted the last few minutes Izuku has with him. “I’m kinda late for another...thing...already, but I’ll catch up with you later.” His phone buzzes in his pocket and he opens it with another wince. His agent is pissed he’s late for another studio meeting. The woes of being Number One, he supposes.

Shouto is looking at him. Izuku hates the thought of another week filled with radio silence. He has another thought, except if he goes through with it...Tenya will skip the lecture entirely and kill Izuku instead. Whatever. That’s a problem to worry about later. Izuku asks, “How’s dinner sound?”

The close-lipped smile Izuku receives from Shouto in return makes it worth it. “Dinner would be wonderful!” Yoarashi agrees. “What say you, Shouto? You and I can get lunch and meet up again later! Right, Midoriya?”

“That’s fine.” Shouto says. Izuku glances up and steals the glimpse of a teeth behind his smile. “Like I have any other choice.” Yoarashi laughs so hard he falls over, pulling Shouto down with him by accident (or, more likely, on purpose).

Izuku’s phone rings in his palm. The emergency signal lights up on his work phone. He sputters out another sigh at the incredible timing of it all. He’s going to be so late for the studio meeting. Shouto laughs under his breath and kisses his temple. “I’ll see you at dinner. Try not to do anything too dangerous and worry your boyfriend. Text me later?” His face asks a different question: You can trust Yoarashi and I to stay out of trouble for a few hours, right?

“I’m sure.” Izuku pocketed his phone, grinning. Yes, he answers, squeezing his hand and dropping it. “Dangerous? Doesn’t sound like me at all.” He breaks into a run before Shouto answers, and Shouto’s voice is lost in the whistling wind against his ears.

Shouto texts him a location pin as promised. Izuku opens it immediately upon exiting his (horrendous) media management meeting with his press agent and manager. Both are severely unhappy with his avoidance from large media promotions, but Izuku more or less told them to suck it up for the foreseeable future. He bullies his manager into only allowing one event for the next month, but it’s probably the most important and nerve wracking event he’ll ever speak at. Not that either of them would know it, but his hands shake when he signs the release form.

He weaves his way into the packed restaurant Shouto directed him to, scanning the seats for Yoarashi’s hat. He towers over all the other patrons. Shouto is less recognizable, hair dyed a dark bronze as part of his undercover disguise. Combining the hair and glasses, he’s practically unrecognizable without his attention-grabbing features. Not at all like the boy he met all those years ago at school. Shouto refused to cover his scar. Without the striking hair color combination atop his head Shouto’s presence is, as a whole, far less noticeable.

Izuku slides into the booth across from Yoarashi and next to Shouto. Neither occupant notices his entrance given how silent and smooth it is. Izuku catches the tail end of their discussion, but nothing before it.
“I feel as though I’ve missed so much after being away for so long,” Yoarashi admits to Shouto. “I can’t believe how much has changed since I left! But I am happy to be back home. I have greatly missed the company!” Shouto snorts like he made a joke. “Oh, why that face, Shouto? Haven’t you missed your dear friend?”

Shouto, lacking all emotions in his face, says, “As they say: absence makes the heart grow fonder.” Yaorashi bends over like Shouto has dealt him a fatal physical blow. Izuku’s never understood Shouto and Yoarashi’s relationship and he isn’t going to start now.

“So cruel, Shouto!” Yoarashi cries, crocodile tears welling at his eyes.

Izuku pokes Shouto’s arm. Shouto glances at him and smiles, but his focus is elsewhere. Izuku pulls his face into a pout. “Aren’t you going to say hello?” Izuku teases. Shouto rolls his eyes (rude!) but he leans over and gives Izuku a proper kiss.

Izuku tries to ignore Yoarashi’s despairing wail at the sight of them. His efforts are in vain. Yoarashi pounds his hand against his chest and mourns aloud, “And to think, your cruelty would even grow beyond not telling your dearest of friends your enormous change in relationship! Are we not friends, Shouto? Do you not care for our friendship at all?” Right. Yaorashi was dealing with a crime ring down in South America while Shouto and him were figuring things out. Yaorashi didn’t seem particularly surprised to see them together, either. He wonders if Yaorashi guessed, or assumed based on his (relative) closeness to Shouto before Izuku came back into the picture.

Although, Yoarashi surely heard Shouto call Izuku his “boyfriend” earlier, didn’t he? And Shouto kissed Izuku before he left. That can’t be right. Unless he’s really that oblivious, or --?

“It’s wonderful!” Yoarashi continues. He slaps the table with enough force to shake it. Izuku jumps a foot in the air off his seat. “My friends are engaged to be married! I’ve got to respect that kind of fiery commitment!”

Izuku tries to regain control over the topic, but Yoarashi does not appear to care despite his interruption. “Wait --” Izuku tries to regain control over the topic, but Yoarashi does not appear to care despite his interruption. “-- we’re -- we’re not, uh...”

“I can only hope my friend Shouto is not so cruel as to forget to invite me to the ceremony!” Yoarashi beams. “You will invite me, for sure, won’t you Shouto?”

“I can only hope my friend Shouto is not so cruel as to forget to invite me to the ceremony!” Yoarashi beams. “You will invite me, for sure, won’t you Shouto?”

“Uhhhh,” Izuku interrupts louder, coughing into his fist. “Sorry, sorry. We’re not -- we’re not. Uh. Getting married, that is. We’re not -- we’re not engaged. It’s -- those are all rumors.” That’s a little bit of an oversimplified statement, but he has to start somewhere. “But we’re not. It’s all part of, er, publicity. False publicity, I mean.”

Yoarashi slams his head on the table. “My sincerest apologies for assuming--!”

“Inasa, stop hitting your head on things. You’re going to break something.” Shouto barely looks at him after his reply and feigns deep interest in the painting on the other side of their booth. Izuku
sighs and leans back in his chair.

"I was ring shopping for All Might," Izuku explains. "He sort of, um, misplaced the ring my mother got him. We went to the same jeweler to replace it. A couple of paparazzi saw us in the store and assumed I was the one shopping, and…"

"…a lot of assumptions were made." Shouto finishes. He turns away from the window and settles for his Neutral Displeased face that Izuku knows means he’s Actually Not Pleased At All. "Izuku’s mother and All Might try to stay as much out of the public eye as possible, especially about their relationship. So Izuku didn’t correct them. He decided it was best to let them speculate."

"Most people know it’s all gossip. So. That’s it.” Izuku glances at Shouto and wonders why his boyfriend’s expression has to be so unreadable now, of all times. The whole subject sets Shouto on edge for reasons unknown to him. Shouto wasn’t even aware of it until their meeting prior to this, having limited access to the Internet in -- wherever -- he’s staying. But Izuku isn’t an idiot. He knew the uncomfortable expression on Shouto’s face after he told him runs deeper than just some rumors blown out of proportion. Like Shouto doesn’t like the idea of people talking about them getting married, someday.

Izuku’s stomach turns a bit at the thought. Maybe he’s being unfair. Shouto wasn’t even back in Japan when the rumors started, he’s probably annoyed at all the attention. Or maybe he just doesn’t like the thought of getting married to -- no. Nope. No, he’s not doing this. Not right now at least. He scatters his train of thought with a shake of his head and buries it.

“Well, you must be thinking about it!” Yoarashi says, earnest, excited. Izuku draws himself back from daydreaming and decides to take renewed interest in his food. “Your future together?” Izuku isn’t sure what he should say to that. Sure, they’ve dated for a while. The long distance wasn’t easy, but what Yoarashi is suggesting -- it’s too difficult to say. Yoarashi, uncaring of the righteous fury on Shouto’s face continues, “Shouto told me he--aaauugh!!!” Startled by Yoarashi’s sharp cry of pain, Izuku drops his spoon. Shouto is too busy glaring at Yoarashi to pay any attention to him.

Izuku blinks at the two of them. He has a feeling he missed something but neither offer an explanation. Yoarashi withdraws his hand from the table and very obviously rubs his knee with a scowl. Shouto looks vindictively pleased with himself. Izuku drops his gaze to the table and decides: best not to know.

Long after Yoarashi’s loud -- well, everything -- is out of sight, Shouto turns to him and ducks his head into Izuku’s shoulder. The street is empty and dark and quiet. The two of them blend into the shadows and duck out of the glowing haze from the restaurant. “Hmm?” Izuku intones.

“Did you…?” Shouto asks, but he never finishes his question.

Izuku tightens his hand around his waist and sighs. “Yeah. All signed. It’s done.”

“Good.” Shouto doesn’t say anything like, I’m proud of you, or, I know you will be amazing, you’re going to be amazing. Izuku doesn’t think he could handle hearing that, either. Technically, it’s all on paper. He hasn’t fulfilled his side of a promise yet.

Silence. Finally, Izuku confesses, “Feels weird.” A deeper sigh. “You know? For so long I…” Shouto doesn’t say anything, pressing closer into his neck. “...I don’t know what I’m going to say.”

“You have time,” Shouto says. “And I’ll be there, if you want.”

Izuku smiles. “Thanks.” He holds Shouto’s hand all the way back to the train. Izuku’s stop is first.
Shouto doesn’t kiss him goodbye and he squeezes Izuku’s hand with a sense of finality. Until next week.

It is worth breaking protocol and spending the extra hours with Shouto, even though Tenya vehemently disagrees. Izuku is overwhelmingly grateful Tenya’s still restricted to video calls and therefore he can’t actually reach through the screen to strangle Izuku in his chair.

“You did what!!!” Tenya yells. Izuku knows only half of his outrage is directed at him. Shouto makes an amused face from the other side of the video call. Tenya puts his head in his hands. Izuku laughs and adjusts his phone so he can see their faces better.

“Stop worrying so much,” Shouto reassures Tenya. On the other side of the call he reaches out and pats Tenya’s shoulder. “You know we’ve done far more dangerous things.”

Izuku’s phone, even at full brightness, can’t make out the details of the dark room behind them. Izuku imagines they’re underground, somewhere, but it’s dark and empty looking wherever it is they are.

“I’m sure Aoyama-kun would appreciate it if you added a few extra hours to your visits,” Izuku suggests. He can’t help but tease Tenya a little. “He’s been complaining to me about how much he misses you --”

“-- you’re both so ridiculous!” Tenya settles, rubbing his temples with his fingers. “You need to take this serious! What if you were seen?”

Izuku knows his frustration stems from a real and genuine concern. It is only for the sake of Tenya’s blood pressure (and also because he doesn’t really want to worry Tenya too much) he promises, “We won’t do it again.”

Tenya doesn’t look like he believes him (which is fair) but he resigns himself with the fact that there is nothing to be done.

Shouto tells him Tenya is just as irritated by the lack of contact as they are. “I think, after we’re back, he’s going to swear off undercover work forever.”

“A shame,” Izuku says honestly. “Then who am I supposed to trust to keep you out of trouble when you’re off -- off doing whatever it is you’re doing?”

Shouto levels him a flat look. His glasses are a little crooked. Izuku takes back his earlier comment about Tenya reaching through the screen: he would give anything to be able to reach through and move them back into place. (The long distance thing is maybe turning him a little sappy. Izuku is grateful he doesn’t know anyone with a mind reading quirk for this exact reason.) “I think I’m also going to swear off undercover work.”

“Wow,” Izuku blinks. “That bad? You didn’t make it sound like things were that, uh. Awful over there.”

“You have no idea,” Shouto swears, in a tone that means Izuku definitely wants to know but Shouto definitely isn’t going to tell him.

Izuku watches the little counter at the bottom of Shouto’s screen tick closer to zero. Everything is on a time limit between the two of them these days. How irritating. He presses the screen a little closer to his face and wishes, like he had earlier, he could keep holding on for a little longer. “You’ll be able to call tomorrow, right?”
“Tomorrow,” Shouto agrees. “Good night.”

While abroad, Shouto always wished him good night. Izuku returned him with a good afternoon. Time zones were funny like that. Izuku is glad he can reply, “Good night” and go to sleep with the comfort that Shouto is closer. Still a little out of reach, but close enough. Close enough.

Two weeks. Only two weeks. That reminder still doesn’t chase away the empty feeling in his apartment or the ghost of six months silence where he expected another space to be filled.

[Video: ♥♥ /// ♥♥
Thumbnail: Black and white frame of Deku dipping Todoroki Shouto in a dramatic kiss, with the colors of the gay pride flag overlaid over the black and white photograph.]

Posted 8 months ago by CryBabyDeku | Subscribe
1.9M views

the song is everytime we touch by cascada ^^-^ i love my #OTP i hope u enjoy the video!
EDIT: i cant fucking do thisbnakjsdskls

Comments 1.1k

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i fucking hate you for this
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Sailor Artemis - 2 months ago
I hate gay ppl so much it’s unreal
Edit: im joking obviously i am also gay. Chill
View 24 replies
For the first time since his school days, Izuku bolts awake at 6am with enough energy to fuel a small powergrid. He showers, changes quickly, and attempts to make breakfast. He burns his first two attempts. The last isn’t so bad; although his eggs are a little runny on his plate.

Over the next hour, Izuku’s downstairs neighbors grow irritated enough with his energetic pacing and hit their ceiling with something heavy. “Sorry,” Izuku calls down. Their new apartment is an older building, updated with newer furnishings and appliances. Except for the structure, which creaks and moans at random intervals with displaced weight. Izuku’s pacing probably isn’t helping.

He tries to watch tv but his stomach is fluttering too much and he can’t focus on the screen. He bolts off the couch at the sound of a double knock.

Izuku opens the door with more force than necessary, but he installed a safety latch to prevent such disaster (re: bashing a hole in the wall with the handle, again). Not that it matters. Tenya and Shouto are pink-cheeked from the cold. Tenya is rubbing his hands together to regain warmth. It doesn’t matter that he saw Shouto the week prior. He’s here and this time he’s staying. His hair is back to the color Izuku recognizes. Izuku has a thousand different things he wants to say but his mouth opens before he has a chance to decide: “You must be cold.” Shouto kisses him before he makes it all the way through the door. He barely pulls back enough to let Izuku breathe. Lightheaded, Izuku asks, “Aren’t you cold? Let me close the door.”

“Russia was colder.” Shouto answers, and kisses him again.

Izuku grins. “I imagine it was.” Tenya clears his throat behind them. Izuku pulls him in with his free arm and drags Tenya down into a side hug. (He’s only a little bitter that he has to stretch on his toes to accomplish it.) “Welcome back! Officially!”

“Very grateful to be back,” Tenya agrees. He takes polite interest in the room beyond their entrance. “I see you finished decorating?”

Izuku nods, a quick bob of his head. “Yeah. You want a tour now or -- uh, later?” Shouto doesn’t take his gaze away from Izuku’s face. Or show any sign of curiosity regarding their new apartment. “Um. Shouto?”

“Yes,” Shouto replies, a little delayed. Izuku taps his cheek with a flicker of concern. Shouto blinks and rights himself back to normal.

Tenya excuses himself after a brief tour. Izuku hugs him before he leaves. He had six weeks to visit Shouto for a few minutes, but he hasn’t actually seen Tenya in person for six months. “Please don’t leave again,” Izuku tells him tearfully. “Your staff is very mean. Izumi-kun bullied me every day while you were gone.” The first time he met Shouto at the train stop he cried for half of it. Izuku knows he’s coming close to a repeated incident.

Tenya sighs and pats his shoulder. “I won’t leave again for a while. I believe that’s enough adventure for one year, at least.”

“Oh several,” Shouto mutters. Izuku squeezes his hand. Tenya ducks out with a promise to return for their official welcoming party in the evening. Izuku figures Tenya has his own boyfriend to greet.

Shouto takes notice of the apartment on the second tour. He frowns at the flooring in their
bedroom, flexing his toes as he grows accustomed to the feeling. “Did you -- did you replace the wood?”

Izuku shakes his head. “No, couldn’t get permission from the landlord. But tatami isn’t that hard to install, so I kind of --” He lets out a small, panicked noise at Shouto’s sudden drop onto the floor. “- - Shouto? Seriously, are you okay?”

Shouto smiles, despite Izuku’s anxious questions. “You -- you were thinking of me when you decorated.”

“Uh, I mean, it’s our apartment,” Izuku kneels down beside him. A few frantic mumbles spill out to fill Shouto’s uncomfortable span of silence. If only Izuku knew why Shouto kept looking at his face with that unrecognizable expression. “Why are you talking so weird? Did you hit your head? Although Tenya would’v told me that. Did something happen before you came? No. Tenya would’ve told me that, too. Shouto?”

Shouto pulls up his hands and traps Izuku’s cheeks between them. He leans forward and drops his forehead to Izuku’s throat. “I’m happy to be home.”

Izuku, feeling rightfully confused and overwhelmed and happy at the same time, pats his back. “Me too. I’m glad you’re here.”

Shouto more or less returns to his normal cool exterior by the time they arrive at Team Idaten’s welcoming party. Momo pulls Shouto in a tight hug that lasts for so long Jirou starts complaining about Shouto stealing away her fiance.

“I would be honored to date Momo,” Shouto says, with a flawlessly executed deadpan. “Because I am so incredibly in love with...women.”

“Shut the fuck up,” Jirou snaps, and steals Shouto away from Momo to hug him too. “If you tell anybody about this, I’ll end you.”

Aoyama successfully pushes a birthday crown on both Tenya and Shouto. He beams, highlighter momentarily blinding Izuku from halfway across the room. “Now it really is a party!”

Tenya protests, of course. “My birthday was in --”

Aoyama shoves a plate of freshly prepared cake (courtesy of Satou) and silences him. “Which makes it even more important because you weren’t here to celebrate with us!”

Izuku ducks out of the party early, waving off their friends attempts to convince him to stay longer. Shouto is leaning more and more into his side as the night drags on. Although it’s technically within his limits, he doesn’t fancy literally carrying his boyfriend halfway across the city.

Shouto sleeps in late. Izuku is not surprised by this turn of events. He is a little more surprised to see Tenya at their apartment door again in the morning. “It’s nothing urgent,” Tenya assures him, although the serious set of his jaw lets Izuku’s imagination wander. “I needed to talk to Shouto-kun about something, ah, from our trip.”

Waking up Shouto is a different kind of difficulty. He voices his disapproval, but Izuku convinces him to stumble out of their room and greet Tenya. Izuku makes tea for the three of them, catching every other word from their conversation at the door.

Coming back mid-way through, Shouto bites out, “-- and that’s within their rights? Is that it?” Izuku freezes. Unsure if he should go back to the kitchen or approach, despite the uncomfortable
tension in the air.

Tenya exhales heavily. “An unknown party has requested we remove all speculation regarding Japan’s Board of Heroes from the unreleased documentary.” He makes significant eye contact with Shouto, part of some unspoken agreement between them. None of this helps Izuku figure out what the fuck they’re talking about. “They are threatening to drop a lawsuit and restrict the viewing entirely with a full censorship ban.”

Shouto’s expression doesn’t change. “I see.”

Tenya gestures helplessly. “There is nothing else to be done. Rest assured, most of our efforts did not go to waste.”

Izuku whispers to Tenya, “What does that mean?” and is ignored by both Tenya and Shouto.

“I suppose I was too optimistic we could get this far,” Shouto says at last. It sounds like he’s reached the point of acceptance, except for the unhappy twist at the corner of his mouth. “Did the producers tell you? Or someone else?”

“I have another source that warned us this might happen,” Tenya answers, meaningfully. Izuku wishes he could tell them to slow down and explain but clearly that’s not happening! He folds his arms over his chest and narrows his eyes at the two of them, like glaring hard enough will force the words out of them. “The video will still be released, of course. With minor edits.”

“Minor,” Shouto repeats, a bitter edge in his voice. “Of course. Thank you for telling me, Tenya.” Tenya bids them farewell. Izuku closes the door with a quiet, good night, and turns to Shouto.

“Do I get to know what that was all about, or…?”

“I’ll explain later,” Shouto says. “I’m not trying to hide anything from you. I promise. I’m -- tired.” He closes his eyes and rubs his eyes under his glasses. Izuku lets him return to bed and sleep the next ten hours (what the fuck) and wakes him up again for dinner.

“Why am I so tired,” Shouto complains, face pressed against the couch arm. Izuku, playing with the long ends of his hair, stops and coos at him. He breaks into laughter at Shouto’s attempts to slap his hands away.

Izuku catches Shouto’s first airing on television at the supermarket and immediately takes out his phone. The video quality isn’t very good -- as is any video recorded secondhand from a different screen -- and immediately posts it to his Twitter.

*My boyfriend looks pretty good on the news,* he writes. Then he closes Twitter, pops into the nearest Internet cafe, opens the full video, and watches the entire thing in one sitting. It’s not exactly a feature-length film by any means, but it’s long enough that Izuku’s coffee goes room temperature before he’s halfway through.

Shouto is waiting for him when he’s home. “I assume you saw it already,” Shouto guesses just from the look on his face.

Izuku nods. Shouto opens his arms and tucks his head into Izuku’s shoulder. “I’m glad Tenya was with you,” Izuku starts. “That all looked pretty, er. Awful.”

“No more awful than the things I used to see everyday,” Shouto assures. “Come on. I ordered dinner for us, you don’t have to cook tonight.”
Izuku’s curiosity is stronger than the rest of his attention span. He sneaks glances at Twitter as they eat despite Shouto’s attempts to force his phone away. “Everyone’s saying nice things about you,” Izuku shows him some of the top messages on his feed. “I think they’re all very impressed. I am too! I guess you’re a real reporter now, hey?”

“I’m a journalist,” Shouto corrects. “And this is only the beginning.”

[Video: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/FROM INSIDE RUSSIA’S MISSING SHELTER JAN X2 [FULL] (ENG/SP/FR SUB)
Thumbnail image: The video title in dark bold font, with a shadow of grey silhouettes encased in the letters.]
Posted 14 hours ago by TBSI Breaking News| Unsubscribe
1.9M views

INSIDE RUSSIA’S MISSING SHELTER [JUNX1-DECX1]: A small team of journalists, internationally recruited Pro Heroes, and researchers uncover the haunting and troubling truth behind a ring of linked missing persons cases in the northern reach of Russia.

Subtitles are available in videos in which the owner added them and in certain videos in which YouTube automatically provides them.

Los subtítulos están disponibles en videos en los que el propietario los agregó y en ciertos videos en los que YouTube los proporciona automáticamente.

Les sous-titres sont disponibles sur les vidéos pour lesquelles le propriétaire les a fournis et sur certaines vidéos pour lesquelles YouTube les fournit automatiquement.

[Read more]

Comments 2.6k

DyDyDynamite - 5 hours ago
what can i say except: holy shit this is so horrifying
View 5 replies
> realOfficialboy - ditto
>> marylouihou - i think the more terrifying conclusion this video ends with is that this only one they /found/ in russia, but all of the evidence points to other countries having similar cases that havent even been discovered yet. What the fuck

s_streetracer - 10 hours ago
2 types of comments on this video. First type: holy shit this is so fucking stupid
second: IS THAT INGENIUM AND ENTROPY????????
View 17 replies
> Businss Nunya - i thought i recognized ingenium’s voice, seeing him without glasses is so startling. entropy’s hair tho wtf
>> lizardBreaths - seeing him in brown hair made me physically uncomfortable. I HATE it

YuVinny Funeu - 3 hours ago
i recognized ingenium’s voice right away omg

HQ CATS IN HATS - 1 hour ago
so this is why entropy basically disappeared off social media for months??? He was hanging out in
There are other dragons to be slain. With Shouto’s return abroad, an enormous amount of encouragement from his parents (and friends, of course) Izuku slowly shapes together his plans for his own monster battle. Metaphorically. Although Izuku is reminded of how he felt the day of his #1 Hero Ranking Ceremony and how he thought he’d much rather go a few rounds with Ryukyu, the dragon hero, instead. (Izuku is sure he was in so much shock and awe that the only reason he didn’t feel as nervous leading up to it was his body was too overwhelmed to feel nervous. This time he has no such luxury.)

Yes, Izuku’s not as terrible at public speaking as he was at the start of his career. Yes, he took so many public speaking classes to beat the anxiety with practice over intangible fear. Yes, Izuku still thinks he prefers dying over this anyday.

Everything is fine up until the moment he walks into the backstage area. Izuku takes one of the waiting room chairs and puts his head down, which does not go unnoticed by the other heroes who walked in at his side.

Kirishima approaches him first. He’s good like that. “How do you feel?” Kirishima asks, one lip tugged higher at the corner in a smile.

“Like I’m seriously about to throw up all over you,” Izuku tells him, honestly. Which is probably not something Kirishima wants to hear.

Asui nods seriously. She is far more sympathetic than the others. “That’s fine.”

“I’ll film it,” Jirou offers. “I’ll play it at Eijirou’s wedding party. Bakugou will think it’s hilarious.”

“I threw up twice, right before,” Kirishima confesses proudly, ignoring her. “So it’s fine. And no, Kyouka won’t do that. I’ll make sure it doesn’t get added to our wedding video.”

“Not helping,” Izuku moans and puts his head between his knees. “That is so not helping.”

Kirishima takes pity on him, finally, and drops into the chair next to Izuku. “Everything you’re feeling right now is completely valid. Even if you decide to skip out today, I’m still super fucking proud of you, man. You made it this far. That’s enough. It’s more than enough.”

Aoyama helpfully interrupts to shove a bucket between Izuku’s knees. “Aooh! Poor man! Are they harassing you already? What did they say?” Izuku shakes his head miserably. “Mon cher, do you want anything else?”
“I could go for a drink,” Jirou answers for him. Izuku whole-heartedly agrees with that sentiment. Aoyama scoffs in her direction. Some of the glitter in his hair scatters onto the floor and the shoes of the nearest victims. Ignoring the mass of glitter covering her boots, Jirou continues, amicable, “Hey, man. I’m just teasing you. He’s telling the truth, y’know. First time we did this? It was fucking incredible. Eijirou swaggered in, acting like he was about to go slay god or something, and then bam! Panic attack. I had to carry the whole conference by myself.”

“Be nice. It wasn’t as bad as you make it sound,” Asui chides. “And don’t take all the credit for yourself.”

“Right, sorry. You were fantastic too, Tsu. Point is,” Jirou amends, lowering her voice to something approaching gentle. “You’ve got us, alright? We’re pros at this now. Leave it to us. We’ll help you. Don’t worry.”

Izuku picks up his head. He takes a deep breath. Kirishima knocks Jirou with his elbow. “Stop trying to steal my thunder.”

“I’m sorry, who was voted most inspirational speaker of the year? Hm, I think it was --” Jirou twirls her ear jack with her finger. “-- I think it was Earphone Jack? Isn’t that right?” Kirishima yanks her other ear jack and only lets it go after she yelps.

“Ignore them,” Shiozaki advises solemnly, on his other side. “Once you start speaking it is easier.”

“That’s right,” Asui agrees with a croak. “And almost everyone in the audience is there to support you.”

Izuku’s stomach stops turning over, at least, and staggers to his feet. Kendou offers her hand to steady him, an added silent support besides Asui. “Alright. I’m ready.”

Jirou pumps her fist. “Hell yeah! That’s the spirit, dude!”

“If only there were a separate conference,” Shiozaki muses. “What a blessing that would be.”

“Hey! That’s rude!”

Tokoyami speaks for the first time since they sat down. Izuku almost forgot he was in the room with them, given his aura that more or less blended in with the shadows. “What a mad --” Tokoyami starts. Everyone’s head snaps up. Jirou jumps over a chair to tackle him, but she’s too late. “-- banquet of darkness.”

His friends are so dumb. Izuku loves them.

“We’re heroes, dude,” Kirishima reminds him. “We are literally almost dying everyday. You’re gonna be fine.”

Kirishima is right about that -- the almost dying part, definitely. But also the ‘everything will be fine’ message Izuku repeats himself over and over again as they take their seats on stage. He doesn’t miss the way a small ripple of confusion runs through the audience as he takes his seat next to Kirishima at the end of the table. Asui takes the other seat on his left and offers her hand to him under the table.

“Thanks,” Izuku’s smile is weak, but it’s there. “But I don’t need --?”

Asui explains, “It’s not for you.” She doesn’t say anything else until her introduction and hands the microphone off to Izuku.
Izuku’s hands are sweaty. Truthfully, he is slightly disgusted -- and comforted, oddly -- that the microphone is already a little damp with sweat from the hands it is passed from. “Er,” Izuku waits for the room to quiet in the moments after Asui’s applause. “Hi, everyone. I’m -- I’m Deku. Uh, well, I’m The Number One Hero in Japan.” A few encouraging people cheer from the back. Izuku imagines if he were to catch a glimpse of the last rows, he would see his own crowd of family and friends in the seats there. Tenya is there, somewhere, as well as Ochaco. Momo, of course, and Shouto. His whole class is here, if not all physically -- but in spirit.

“My personal name is Midoriya Izuku,” he continues. “I am bisexual, and I am a proud trans man. I’m honored to be a special guest at this conference. It is nice to meet you all, and I hope you will take care of me today!”
Most of his prepared tissues, rather surprisingly, end up in Shouto’s hands. Shouto insists, “I am not crying, stop handing me tissues” even though he is clearly having an emotional moment. Izuku favors not to argue with him otherwise. Izuku realizes he dramatically underestimated how many tissues he needed for this event (yes, he’s also crying, Momo’s vows were so genuine and heartfelt he started sniffling before she was anywhere close to finishing -- but that’s not the point). Shouto quickly finishes the tissues Izuku and Tenya offer him and goes quiet for a while.

Shouto regains his voice sometime after the ceremony, before Jirou changes into her bright silver suit and serenades Momo with a rock’n’roll ballad that shatters Izuku’s eardrums. (He made the mistake of sitting at the table next to the speakers.) Shouto looks out over the party and says, quiet, “I...I think I’d like something like this someday.”

Izuku is still trying to recover from his dramatic temporary hearing loss. “Huh? WHAT? Did you say something?” Izuku asks, unsure if he heard Shouto’s words correctly or not. He is suitably annoyed after Shouto dodges the question, pretends like he hadn’t said anything at all, and vanishes. Izuku finds him an hour later steadily working through the champagne on the back table. The high emotions in the room are to blame, he decides. He also spots Aoyama sobbing and hugging Jirou as they dance together. “There will be a lot of weddings this year,” Asui comments thoughtfully. “It seems a lot of people are talking about it.”

“She’s not drinking them. She

“About what?” Izuku presses his palm to his ear in hopes of stopping the ringing. He winces.

Asui eyes him with a hint of uneasiness. “Marriage.” She glances at Ochaco and her blush turns a little green.

“Ah, congrats, then,” Izuku says, earnest. Asui blinks. Izuku mimes zipping his lips and taps them. “I mean, haha, I have no idea what you mean! Momo-san only moved their wedding date later because Shouto was abroad. I don’t think anyone else is getting married this year.”

Asui tilts her head, considering. “I think some will surprise you.” Ochaco interrupts their conversation and slings two drinks over onto Izuku’s side of the table.

Izuku glances at the drinks. He hopes they’re for someone else, because he’s not drinking them. He pushes them back to Ochaco, who pouts. “Aw, just try them!” She glances at her girlfriend’s apparent silence. “What are you two talking about?”

Sparing Asui from embarrassment, Izuku answers for the two of them. “Weddings.”
“Oooh, I see,” Ochaco winks. “Why, are you looking for inspiration?” She nudges her girlfriend. “Hm? Are you?” Asui sinks deeper into her chair. Ochaco grins. Asui drops off into shy silence. Ochaco, evidently bored, hops over to Izuku’s side and drapes herself over his back. (Izuku comes to the conclusion she’s a few too many drinks in for this early hour of the evening.)

“What about you two?” Ochaco’s jaw digs into his shoulder. “Shouto-kun and you haven’t talked about it?”

“I really haven’t thought about it,” Izuku replies. “I’m happy how things are.”

“But you’re not opposed to it,” Ochaco fills in. Izuku thinks of Shouto’s face, the openness, the want on his face as Jirou and Momo exchanged their vows and promised everything to one another. “Izuku?”

“I guess not,” Izuku shrugs. “I’d be okay with it.” It’s far from the life he thought he’d have at nineteen.

Some of Asui’s words must be part prophecy, or part of her omniscient vision of the future. Izuku opens up two different engagement invitations for Ashido and Hagakure, and a second for Kaminari and Sero.

“I thought they were already married,” Shouto replies, when Izuku shows him the invitations.

Izuku chuckles. “Kaminari-kun and -- yeah, I think they’re making a joke. But if they’re throwing a party, I think it’d be nice to go.”

Tucked between their other bills is a scrap of paper with only a date, an address, and a time. Izuku feels his blood pressure rise a significant amount from the character signed at the bottom. “Not this shit again,” he complains. Shouto looks over his shoulder and hums, noncommittal.

“I’m sure our friend has some news for us,” Shouto says diplomatically.

Izuku groans. “That’s exactly what I’m afraid of.”

Perhaps Shouto’s assumption is a little too generous. Keeper doesn’t give them news about much, really, except that the hero committee is watching them as closely as ever. “Great, thanks for the update,” Izuku pulls at the strings of his hoodie. Not all of their meetings with Jackass In A Coat 2.0 are useless, but Izuku is leaning towards the conclusion this is one of their more meaningless ones.

“I also attempted to find your other -- friend,” Keeper explains. “I wished to tell you what I found.”

Izuku perks up in his seat, interest reclaimed. Shouto’s expression doesn’t change, but his hand tightens on the grainy counter. Izuku hates this glum tea shop. He wishes Keeper would stop picking such morbid places to tell them horrifying new details about why the Board of Heroes is out to end Izuku’s existence. And other fun, blood-chilling facts.

“I could not find anything,” Keeper starts, and frowns. Izuku sputters and makes a rude gesture with his hand. Keeper pulls his coat to the side. “At first.”

Izuku’s eye twitches. “And? Then what?”

Keeper’s confidence falters. “I’m not sure if it’s related. This villain you mentioned, Komiya -- I could not find anything related to her, either. I only noticed, from a record passed along to me that the area you mentioned your final battle took place was recently acquired by a new set of buyers.”
Oh, Izuku is going to --! On his behalf, Shouto prompts, “And?”

“There are four names I could track on the list of potential holders,” Keeper continues, grave. “All four belong to current members of the board. With her involvement there, the other man you mentioned -- it’s very strange. But I don’t believe many things in life are a coincidence.”

“It has to be a coincidence,” Izuku tells Shouto, later, back in their apartment. “I don’t see how any of that could be connected.” The information still bothers him, somehow.

Shouto shakes his head. “No evidence. Hard to say.”

“Right. Right, of course.” Reassuring himself does not help him rest easy that night. Or the night after.

Creati | #9 ✔ @icreati
My wife is so HANDSOME!! And Im MARRIED!!
[Photo attached: A crisp, gorgeous shot of Pro Hero Creati in a stunning white and red wedding gown. Pro Hero Earphone Jack is wearing a matching white suit with red accents, hair slicked back and posing confidently beside her wife.]
14,922 retweets | 37,090 favorites
1:09 PM - 8 April X2
Liked by Earphone Jack, Todoroki Shouto, DEKUデク, Luminesce, thetapehero, Red Riot! | #8, and 11 others you follow

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
B-)))!!
> [Retweeted: icreati’s wedding Tweet.]
2,495 retweets | 11,309 favorites
1:39 PM - 8 April X2
Liked by Creati | #9

Luminesce ✔ @lumistar
。.:*(。ω₀ \。)。.
[Photo attached: A rather dramatic shot of Pro Hero Luminesce dancing with Pro Hero Earphone Jack. Luminesce’s makeup in the photo is as bright as the glitter on Earphone Jack’s suit.]
4,736 retweets | 15,888 favorites
1:48 PM - 8 April X2
Liked by Earphone Jack

WenierBri @j_grist
bro 20X2 is such a fucking blessed year there’s so many good things happening. gale is back. Ingenium is back from his hiatus. deku came out. Creatijack is married. Im sobbing sm
64 retweets | 266 favorites
1:57 PM - 8 April X2

Alien Queen ✔ @alienqueen
Dm me for forbidden video of Earphone jack crying over their wedding video and explainibng why her wife is the most beautiful woman on the planet
1,008 retweets | 6,701 favorites
Todoroki Shouto ✔ @tshouto
you don’t need to dm me for that forbidden video i will gladly share it
[Video attached: A blurry, vertical shot film of Earphone Jack in cartoon cat pajamas waving a tablet in front of her face, caught in streaks of motion.]
4,082 retweets | 12,118 favorites
2:27 PM - 8 April X2
Liked by Alien Queen, GALE HERO!!, Uravity, and SHADOW OF THE NIGHT

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
Replying to @tshouto ur lucky im in such a good mood otherwise i wld hv u shadowbanned for public libel & slander against me
944 retweets | 3,276 favorites
2:29 PM - 8 April X2

Todoroki Shouto ✔ @tshouto
Replying to @radio_jack i’m surprised you know what those words mean
944 retweets | 3,276 favorites
2:34 PM - 8 April X2

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
Replying to @tshouto ofc i do, who do you take me for
604 retweets | 2,677 favorites
2:36 PM - 8 April X2

Todoroki Shouto ✔ @tshouto
Replying to @radio_jack
[Photo attached: An unattractive close up of Earphone Jack’s face.]
1,101 retweets | 3,302 favorites
2:36 PM - 8 April X2

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
Replying to @tshouto o u really wanna do this? are u sure? bez i assure u i have way more blackmail material on u than u do on me
1,101 retweets | 3,302 favorites
2:39 PM - 8 April X2

Todoroki Shouto ✔ @tshouto
Replying to @radio_jack unacceptable. i will call my lawyer
1,101 retweets | 3,302 favorites
2:41 PM - 8 April X2

Earphone Jack ✔ @radio_jack
Replying to @tshouto lets go baby i know the law
1,101 retweets | 3,302 favorites
2:42 PM - 8 April X2
Izuku thinks -- or, he has a pretty solid theory, at least -- that Shouto is hiding something. He has a few solid pieces of evidence to back up that theory. He doesn’t know what to title this theory, other than *Weird Things Shouto Does That I Don’t Know How To Explain* and leaves it open-ended.

1. The last family dinner, during a round of All Might’s familial ribbing about their relationship, Shouto’s reaction startled him. Izuku worried he might be choking. His boyfriend turned three different shades of white, followed by a familiar and more understandable dusting of pink, then a darker pink, and excused himself to use the bathroom. While it wasn’t an *extreme* reaction for most people, Izuku is well versed in Shouto’s body language and it set off every alarm in his body.

2. Izuku sometimes reads Shouto’s diary (*Journal*, Shouto clarified. *Diary*, Izuku said. *It’s my work journal*, Shouto insisted. *Where you write your feelings*, Izuku corrected. *Diary.*) from time to time and there was a rather large redacted section that crossed his mind as odd. And secretive. And very unlike Shouto. Izuku asked him, but Shouto acted like he had no idea what Izuku was talking about. *I crossed out some errors,* Shouto explained, *So I would know not to include them in anything else.* Not that Izuku believed him for a second.

3. Tenya is far more considerate than usual, which isn’t completely out of character, but Izuku is acutely aware of times when Tenya is keeping a secret. He has a few nervous tics that give him away immediately. There are few coincidences like these in his life; which means Tenya *knows* something. When Izuku mentioned Shouto’s strange behavior, Tenya changed the subject or redirected the question back to Izuku. *What evidence do you have,* Tenya asked, while they pretended to examine furniture at an antiques gallery while hunting down an elusive thief with a short-range teleportation quirk. *You know,* Izuku said, *he’s keeping stuff from me. Acting on edge.* *You wouldn’t know anything about that,* Tenya asked, while they pretended to inspect the expensive dishware. *Maybe you should ask him about it,* to which Izuku replied by throwing his hands up and stomping away to pretend he was inspecting the expensive dishware.

What are these particular pieces of evidence meant to tell him? Izuku doesn’t have the faintest idea. Mood soured, he carries the weight of this feeling he’s *missing* something and does his best not to let Shouto sense his irritation.

Unfortunately, nobody thought to warn Shouto about the suspect with a Foghorn Quirk chilling in the holding pen until after Shouto walks into his office. Even Izuku, unknowingly, ignored Shouto’s earlier texts in favor of pulling out his crime board and staring at case files. He’s not avoiding Shouto’s texts. He’s taking a break from his phone to focus on work. Definitely not upset. (He is. Which is actually, in an ironic way, very hypocritical that Izuku is mad about Shouto having a secret after Izuku lied a considerable amount regarding the Komiya case. But that’s history, and Izuku’s been the patron of truth since then. Well. Most of the time.)

Too distracted with the board, it takes several moments of Shouto clearing his throat before Izuku realizes there’s another person in the room. “Oh, hey. Didn’t know you were coming in today,” Izuku greets him. “I think my phone died.” He frowns and pulls off the yellow string connecting the stolen jewelry to a series of robberies of the same description and moves it to the middle of the board. Something about the first one didn’t match the others. He needs to see the original case files to be sure, but...

“IZUKU,” Shouto says, with far more force than he ever applies to his own voice. Izuku winces and turns around. “CAN YOU HEAR ME?”

“Yeah, my ears are working just fine. How are yours?” He doesn’t keep the humor out of his voice, but he doesn’t think Shouto needs to hear it to know he’s amused.

Shouto glares at him. “THIS IS NOT FUNNY.”
“It’s a little funny. The same thing happened to Tenya. Our morning meeting was very interesting.”

“HOW DO I FIX THIS.” Shouto’s exasperation bleeds too close to uncomfortable, and like that the humor is gone. “IZUKU.”

“Well, eh…” Izuku’s eyes return to the board. He really needs that case file if he’s going to get anywhere near cracking it open before the weekend. He looks at his watch. Half hour before the records office closes. He can make it if he’s quick. Gloves in hand, he reaches for his phone and keys. “I’d say you’ll be back to normal in about an hour. It’ll wear off on its own.”

“IZUKU.” Shouto tries to growl, but Izuku only smiles and kisses his cheek before he races out. “I NEED TO TALK TO YOU.”

“We can talk later! I’ve gotta run. You’ll be back to normal by the time I get back. Then we can talk, alright?” Izuku is out of the door before he gets an answer.

As he hops over the downtown, towards the financial district, he reflects that maybe his annoyance is bleeding out in his attitude. He remembers the promise he made, the one they both made at the very beginning. No jumping to conclusions. No making assumptions. Clear, truthful communication. Izuku is an adult! He can’t suddenly drop all of that maturity just because his boyfriend is acting like a...like...

Glancing down at his watch, Izuku mutters “Oh, no, no, no.” He lowers his leg off one edge of the building and channels all of his force into it as he leaps. The stone crumbles a bit under his foot, but that kind of damage won’t be visible unless somebody likes climbing onto their own roof.

The door isn’t (technically) closed by the time he slides into the records room, out of breath and winded. “Woooo, haha, okay.” He slaps his badge up on the counter and slides the case number under the window. “Sorry for dropping in at the last minute. Busy day.”

The clerk doesn’t look appeased at that weak excuse, and Izuku winces. He takes the file, waves in thanks, and leaps the second he’s off the steps. He takes the longer route back to Team Idaten; it’s dusk, and that’s when the night shift rolls over. Patrol hours for him. This is where he catches the most petty criminals in the act of petty crime. (And a lot of the time, doesn’t put them on file if he’s able to talk them out of it. Especially kids. He’s got a soft spot for kids.)

Izuku straightens, tucks the file under his arm, and takes off in the opposite direction. One hand on the file, Izuku continues his slow journey home.

Shouto is waiting for him at the door of Team Idaten. Izuku offers him a soft smile, promising to leave the case file on his desk (like he’s supposed to, not bring them home and continue working after hours) and says goodnight to Tenya. He feels bad leaving Tenya to finish signing off on the daily reports, but he has his own over dramatic boyfriend to worry about.

“You ARE VERY frustrating,” Shouto tells him. He glares out the window of their train. Izuku’s estimate was a little off.

“I do my best,” He pats Shouto’s thigh to comfort him. “What was so important that you needed to talk to me about?” Shouto doesn’t answer. He looks at Izuku, open and expectant. Izuku shifts in his seat. He looks like he wants to say something and can’t find the words. In the end, he doesn’t say anything at all.

Maybe he needs a little help. Izuku asks, “Is it about me?” Shouto nods slowly. “Uh, alright. Is it about work?” A quick shake. Izuku is fairly surprised at this. He knows Shouto’s new contract is
not working out as well as he hoped. Most of the time he spends talking about his new job is filled with complaining about his coworkers. “About -- something else? More personal?” Hesitant, Shouto nods. “Do I get any hints?” At that, Shouto smiles and shakes his head.

Fine, Izuku thinks. He’ll figure it out on his own.

The “evidence” doesn’t lead him anywhere in particular. At first, he assumes it’s his own brain overthinking and drawing conclusions from nowhere. Tenya, certainly, does not disprove or approve this theory either way. Neglecting to explain his thoughts to Izuku, he throws an entirely different curveball.

Tenya drops a pair of tickets on Izuku’s desk after Team Idaten’s final staff meeting of the week. “Here. These are for you.”

Izuku rubs his eyes, pulling at the tender skin beneath them. The characters on the ticket take a few moments to right themselves. Izuku looks at the ticket, then Tenya’s open and pleased expression. Izuku squints. “What is this.”

“Plane tickets,” Tenya explains, unhelpfully. “For your upcoming vacation.”

“My vacation,” Izuku repeats flatly.

“Yes!” Tenya agrees with an enthusiastic nod. “Your vacation! I believe you’ve earned one, wouldn’t you say?”

Izuku gets the distinct and deep-rooted suspicion he’s walked right into a trap. “...Right.”

“Your itinerary is arranged already. Your flight leaves tomorrow.” Izuku blinks at him. “Shouto will be joining you, of course, so please enjoy your time off! I have everything in order. Your request for leave has already been submitted and approved. So there is no need to worry.”

“You are a very bad liar.” Izuku tells him. He shakes his finger at Tenya as he walks out the door. “And I can tell you are up to something. Did my mom put you up to this?”

“Nothing of the sort!” He really is a very bad liar. “But even the Number One Hero needs a vacation, Izuku-kun, and this will be a good opportunity for you to relax!”

Izuku’s protest falls out of his mouth in a sputter. “I don’t need to take a vacation! The updated rankings came out -- two months -- I think -- two months ago. You know I have to stay on top of everything for the next quarter. Besides, I took a vacation in…” His mind comes to a bit of a halt there. “…uh. I took a vacation back in. Back in, um. I think it was --?”

Tenya slaps a hand over his shoulder and guides him out the door while Izuku has a small (very contained) internal panic as he tries to remember the last time he took a day off. “Everything is all set. I will pick you two up at your apartment tomorrow and drive you to the airport. I recommend a good night’s sleep because I know you get nervous in airports!”

Izuku rounds on him and defends, “I do not.”

Tenya pushes him out the door with one mighty shove and smiles at Izuku’s quick turn of indignation. “Good night, Izuku-kun! I will see you at seven tomorrow!”

“I,” Izuku starts, tersely, and fails to come up with a good enough retort in time. The door closes and Izuku glares at him through the glass. Tenya waves at him and makes a point of locking the door. Traitor.
His phone rings in his pocket, and he picks it up without glancing at the screen. Forces his voice back to normal, all strains of irritation gone. Heroes don’t sound bitter when they take up a call for rescue. That would be very unprofessional. “Hero Deku here.”

“Wrong phone,” Shouto sounds tired on the other end, but his next words are amused. “You sound exhausted. Tenya told me you fell asleep at your desk. Again.”

“How rude of him. I am a very private man,” Izuku says, and remembers he can’t stand in front of Idaten’s office door all night. He talks as he makes his way to the train stop. “Also, did you know about this?”

Shouto hums. “About what?”

“My surprise vacation --” Even his brain, wired on nothing but coffee and an hour of sleep (courtesy of the power nap he took on his desk) can put those pieces together. “-- oh, I’m an idiot. You set this up.”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about.” Shouto replies. Izuku scowls into the phone. “So, dinner plans? I was thinking takeout.”

“Is this because I’ve cancelled our date night every night for the last two weeks? Is this your grand plan?”

“I cancelled plenty of them on my own, so you’re not entirely to blame.” Nonchalant as ever. Izuku huffs curses under his breath. “Takeout, yes or no?”

Suspicious. Still dodging the question. Izuku tries a new tactic: playing along. “I’ve had takeout every night this week. I’ve still got heartburn from that -- whatever that was we had.”

“Heartburn? Are you old?” Shouto teases.

Izuku glares a hole in the wall of siding in front of him. “Shut up. I’ll pick up food on the way home. We’ll make dinner.”

“Don’t buy too much. We’re not going to be home for a week.”

“Sure. No problem.” Izuku tucks the speaker against his ear and shoulder as he digs around for his wallet. “Can you tell me where we’re going at least?”

“That would ruin the surprise. What are you making for dinner?”

Avoiding the question won’t work forever. Izuku also knows he’s not going to get anymore answers out of Shouto who seems determined to keep the veil of secrecy. “Whatever takes less than five minutes to make.”

“Fine. What time will you be home?”

“Uh…fifteen minutes or so? Why?”

“See you then.” Shouto hangs up. Izuku removes the phone from his ear and stares at Shouto’s contact fading from the screen.

Maybe Shouto was right about this whole vacation business. Izuku hasn’t felt this relaxed or carefree for a while. Izuku knows when to accept he’s lost, but spending more time with his boyfriend is not a bad consolation prize. Vacationing with Shouto is great! Hawaii is beautiful! The
Izuku already has his spare suit halfway on before he replies. He gestures with his free hand at the screen, which is now displaying the words EMERGENCY: CODE RED on the bottom of the screen in a band of white and red. The text is alternating between English, Japanese, and a series of other languages Izuku doesn’t recognize. “Kelp monster! Eating people!”

Shouto tosses down his bag, filled to the top with beach supplies. He glares. “We’re on vacation --”

He yields into Izuku’s kiss despite his clear resistance to the idea of Izuku leaving without him. Izuku chirps, “Love you! Be back before lunch, bye!”

The kelp monster isn’t a person at all, but rather large mounds of kelp gathered from the shore manipulated by someone with a fine-tuned quirk that activates organic matter. Izuku rambles on (for too long, probably) the local tv station about the fascinating qualities of a quirk, and the resemblances to Pro Hero Vivid Lady’s quirk from his home country. Nobody else appears as interested in the topic as he is, which is fine! The glazed-yet-awestruck eyes surrounding him nod along. The locals enthusiastically thank him for his assistance. (Or at least Izuku assumes so. He can’t worry too much over the language barrier and heads off with a wave.)

Making good on his promise, Izuku showers (again) and wraps up with the local law enforcement by noon. Shouto prepares for The Beach, Again, Round Two and rolls his eyes at Izuku’s humble animated storytelling.

“I watched you fight on the news,” Shouto lays out their towel and props himself up next to the umbrella.

“Oh yeah?” Izuku leans into his shoulder and grins. “How’d I look?” He’s not above fishing for a well-deserved compliment. Shouto offers him a passive expression of disinterest through his tinted lenses (while trying not to smile). Instead of answering, he shifts and lets Izuku fall face first into the sand. Shouto laughs, chuckling into his hand.

Izuku pops his head up and throws his swim goggles at Shouto’s head. “Shouto!”

“Yes,” Shouto replies, innocently folding his clothes into a neat pile on his towel. “Something wrong, Izuku?”

Izuku tackles him into the sand. Away from their towel so their belongings aren’t covered in a faint layer of sand until the end of time. Shouto lets them roll a few times, face tucked into Izuku’s shoulder, the sound of his laughter scattered among the sand they kick up along the way.

Izuku lands at the bottom, Shouto’s knee pinning him in place at the base of the low sand dune. He picks himself up on his elbows and looks down. Izuku smiles up at him. “What? What are you looking at me like that?” He channels his best impression of Ochaco’s familiar teasing. “See something you like?"

He expects Shouto to shut him up (in his usual way) but Shouto just keeps. Staring. And he doesn’t move. Izuku waits for him to say something and is met with silence.

“Izuku,” he says after a moment. Izuku spares a brief moment to wonder if Shouto hit his head on
something on the way down. He has a...*weird* look about him. “I -- can I --?”

Izuku realizes what’s wrong with his face. “Ah! Your glasses!” With a cry, he rolls his head to the side and spots the arms sticking out of the sand. With his free hand, he frees them and offers them back to their owner. “Sorry, I wasn’t thinking!”

Shouto freezes. Izuku takes that as permission to slide them back onto his face. And tucks some of his longer hair behind his ear, because his boyfriend really is very handsome. “Izuku,” Shouto tries again. He has a little wrinkle between his brow, like he’s thinking deeply about something and doesn’t know how to put it into words. At least that’s the description Izuku’s put together, because Shouto keeps looking at him more and more often with that unrecognizable expression.

Izuku prompts, “Yeah?”

Shouto doesn’t say anything for a long time. “Can I ask you --?” There’s something in his eyes that’s pleading, heavy and warm, but Izuku tilts his head at him quizzically. Another moment passes. Izuku has a feeling he’s missed a signal, or a clue, or something important in this exchange. Shouto drops his head down onto Izuku’s collar and lets out a sigh. “I -- nevermind.” He raises his head and replaces his earlier expression with a loose grin. “You have sand in your hair.”

Izuku balks. His mood shifted so suddenly that Izuku feels like he got snatched up by a current and left out in the middle of the sea. “I have -- what?”

Shouto dodges his indignant cry with a graceful subject change. “I want to go swim.” Without further prompting he takes off across the sandbar and directly into the water.

Izuku lays there for a moment, trying to gather his bearings, and yanks himself upright. “What was that about? *Hey!* Where are you going? Get back here! *Shouto!*”

[Photo 1: Pro Hero Deku and his boyfriend Todoroki Shouto, arm and arm in front of a sign for *BEACH* and an arrow pointing towards the water. Deku is in a pair of orange swim trunks and squinting, while Todoroki has tinted shades. He’s wearing a pale pink shirt and yellow flower patterned trunks.

Photo 2: Laying flat on a sandbar, Todoroki appears to be sleeping or otherwise oblivious to the giant silver blue crab sitting atop his head.

Photo 3: An ill-timed shot of Deku attempting to stand up on a surfboard and sliding off the other end.

Photo 4: Delicately placed over Todoroki’s head, a vibrant arrangement of flowers is woven into his hair. Deku’s flower arrangement is less organized, but just as colorful.

Photo 5: A low angle shot from the bottom of a tree, Deku lounging (comfortably?) from atop a palm tree. His expression is proud. From the shot his vibrant green Hawaiian print with coconuts is visible against the clear blue backdrop.]

Liked by iida.t, thetapehero, froppy, rredriot, uravity, and 35,918 others

herodeku:
the beach really is the best place for us! @tshouto

new things I learned:
1 - Hawaii is beautiful
Sometimes Izuku forgets he isn’t the only overworked person flickering between consciousness and deep unconsciousness during high workload. He finds Tenya in such a state, having lost his battle for the latter, asleep on the couch in the break room.

“I think that’s our cue to head out,” Izuku tells the staff (whispering as low as he can) in the next room. “Enjoy your early weekend.” The sidekicks look at him with wide eyes, deep purple circles under the ones he knows are nearly finished with their terms at school. “Didn’t you hear me? Get out of here. Go watch a movie or something. Do a facemask. Plan something fun with your friends. See you next week. Goodbye.” After explicitly threatening each staff member with the punishment of reorganizing their filing system for a week, Izuku pulls a blanket over Tenya and turns off the lights.

His next plan of action is calling Aoyama and informing him of his pick-up delivery. Aoyama arrives within the hour. He folds Tenya’s glasses and tucks them into his over the shoulder bag (it’s silver. and covered in sparkles. it’s hideous and Izuku loves it.). One glance over at Izuku, he stretches and molds himself onto the couch next to Tenya. Tenya doesn’t even stir. He really must be exhausted. Even with Izuku offering to extend his Team Idaten contract into the next year, Izuku feels like he’s doing the job of four other people. “My friend, you may as well head home and enjoy your weekend as well. I will wait for him to wake up.”

Izuku already has his bag and a change of clothes ready before Aoyama finishes speaking. “Sounds great to me, see you next week!”

Cheerful, encouraged by the knowledge he gets to leave work early (which is such a rare occasion, he considers marking it a recognized holiday), Izuku doesn’t race home as he would on other
nights. He takes his time, content to sink into a pleasant doze on the train and land at his stop for home. Maybe, he and Shouto can go out somewhere! Meet up with friends! Do some of the things they keep talking about and never find time for! Maybe even try to go out to eat at a fancy restaurant again without being kicked out! (Their last attempt was met with failure, but it wasn’t Izuku’s fault! It’s not like he’s an actual villain magnet, there happened to be a small parade of villains on scene. Izuku dealt with them and kept all of the civilians safe to great success. Their dinner was unfortunately ruined.)

Those plans are quickly stalled the moment he steps into the door. Shouto is asleep on the kitchen counter, glasses bent at an awkward angle, one hand still holding a pen against his journal. “Shouto,” Izuku pokes his cheek and receives a groan in return. He makes another noise, but it’s too indistinct for him to make any words out of. Izuku pokes him again. “What was that?”

“Tired,” Shouto replies, the only recognizable string of syllables out of his sentence.

Amused, Izuku taps the crooked frames in the center where it meets Shouto’s nose. “I see that.” Shouto groans and fixes his glasses. He straightens in his chair to look Izuku directly in the eye, deep eye bags and all. Despite his present exhaustion, Izuku allows himself to admire his handsome boyfriend. Shouto explains through a large yawn, “Ran around all day chasing some story that didn’t even make the cut. And then I had to put in overtime to finish the story for tomorrow’s deadline because nobody else in the office wanted to do it.”

“Sounds like you had a rough day,” Izuku summarizes.

“Jirou was right,” Shouto says mournfully, as Izuku helps him up the stairs. “I should’ve started a vlogging channel instead.” Their trip upstairs takes longer than usual; on the account of Izuku laughing so hard he can’t walk up the next four steps.

“No fancy restaurant date for us tonight,” Izuku informs Shouto, regret lining his voice. “Another night.”

“Another night,” Shouto agrees tiredly. Izuku is a little surprised to find out another night in Shouto’s mind means quite literally the next night. They don’t clean up too bad; Izuku even tames his hair enough to pull it back in a loose bun.

Shouto doesn’t talk much over their meal, which isn’t altogether unexpected. Their waiter seems content to hold off on handing them the check and insists they stay for dessert. Izuku accepts. If Shouto doesn’t eat it, he will.

After their water is finished serving them a plate of some...fancy looking chocolate thing Izuku doesn’t recognize, Shouto shifts in his seat. Izuku snaps his gaze back to his boyfriend and smiles. “Are you going to eat yours?”

Shouto, preferring not to respond with words, takes out the leather bound journal Izuku gave him before he went abroad. Izuku is familiar enough with it. He holds it out and offers it to Izuku, who waits patiently for an explanation.

“Here. I want you to read it.” At Izuku’s questioning head tilt, he clarifies. “All of it. I mean -- you didn’t finish reading the whole thing.”

Izuku eyes the thickness of the journal with justifiable concern. If anything, it looks like Shouto’s filled in even more pages since the last time he chanced a peek inside. He opens the first page and flickers across the first entry, dated the day after Shouto’s departure. Izuku smiles at the familiar
We landed yesterday.

There’s not much here, mostly snow. We’re by a mountain I think. A few miles out is the sea.
The town is very small, Tenya is the tallest person around here by at least a meter and a half.
You’d fit right in.
We met the crew inside the

Shouto’s hand reaches out and covers the rest of the passage with his hand. Izuku glances up at
him and wonders at the high flush on his cheekbones. Did Izuku miss something? He trips over his
words, too, which is another unexpected addition to his flustered appearance. “I -- I didn’t mean
right now.”

“Why not?” Izuku fakes a pout. “You gave it to me.” He lets Shouto tug it back without a fight.
Something in Shouto’s face flickered into panic and Izuku isn’t cruel. He teases him a little,
though, because he’s not flawless. “Why, something you don’t want me to read in there?”

“I --” Izuku enjoys the few opportunities he has where his boyfriend is truly without words. “-- I
just -- later. I wanted you to read it at the right --”

SCCHHHRRRRWHAM!

The sound of screams and groaning metal completely derail their conversation from there. Izuku
pulls Shouto out of the way from a wall of falling dishware and shoves him into the next row of
tables. “There’s a villain on the balcony!” A patron cries out.

Izuku shakes his head. “Oh, that’s wonderful.” He shifts under their makeshift wall of protection
and dares to turn his head over the corner. He doesn’t see any villain, but there’s a haze of smoke
coming from the downstairs that don’t strike him as particular inviting. “Well. That’s another
round of bad luck for us.”

Shouto has a very different opinion. “Is this -- really?” Shouto grunts, annoyed. “Again? Did you
set this up?”

“Me?” Izuku says, incredibly offended by the very accusation. One look from Shouto shuts him up.
Only for a moment. “I mean, despite the odds of us getting ambushed by two separate villain
organizations in the same month, while we’re on a date, at a fancy restaurant. Those odds are very
low. It does almost seem planned, actually. Somebody really doesn’t want us to have a nice night
out. I guess, if you put it that way, those statistics are working against me --!” Another panicked
scream interrupts his muttering.

Shouto looks at him and drops his hand holding Izuku’s shoulder in place. “Go,” he says,
exasperated. “Be careful.”

“You know me! Deku, the Careful hero,” Izuku settles back into his easy, confident grin. “I’ll try
not to get us kicked out of this restaurant too!”

He doesn’t get kicked out, but his dress suit is decently demolished. The owner is so grateful for
the aid he gifts Izuku with a full years worth package for his entire chain of restaurants. Izuku finds
Shouto outside with the other civilians, picking his way through the crowd of first responders.

Izuku forces his way through the small crowd of officers and beelines for his boyfriend. “That
wasn’t how I expected date night to end,” Izuku tells him, ducking his head in apology.

“It’s not your fault,” Shouto says, with a well, obviously not edge in his tone. He sighs. “It’s not
how I -- not how I thought it would end either.” Izuku stares at him and waits for an explanation but Shouto eludes nothing about that off-hand comment.

Shouto takes his hand and quietly requests, “Can we go home?” Izuku agrees without hesitation. Enough excitement for one evening. Shouto doesn’t even bother changing out of his dusty suit and collapses face first on their bed.

“You didn’t even do any fighting,” Izuku prods him with his bare foot. He hops from one end of the room to the other to shove his ruined suit in the RECYCLE CLOTHES pile, which is a sad collection of all the nice clothes Izuku consistently ruins by running into fights without proper gear.

Shouto groans into the mattress and offers no coherent response. He doesn’t sound exhausted. Frustrated, if Izuku were to guess from his deep sigh. Izuku rolls him over with a little manhandling and falls onto the mattress next to him. “Hey, what’s wrong?”

His boyfriend opens his eyes. “Nothing.” The glare Shouto sends skyward does not convince Izuku as such. He shuts his eyes again. “I’m tired.”

“Mhm, okay.” Izuku helps him peel off the first layer of his suit. He untucks the journal Shouto kept in his jacket and flips it open. “Can I read your diary now?”

Shouto snatches it out of his hand before he completely finishes the question. “Not right now.”

Izuku stares at him. Then the journal. Back to Shouto’s neutral face. “...Okaaaaaaaaaay?”

“I’ll read some of it to you.” Shouto compromises. He flips open to a page near the end of the journal. “But only the parts I decide.”

Izuku smiles, crooked. “Alright. I love a good bedtime story.”

Shaking his head, Shout corrects. “It’s not that kind of story. And it’s not finished, I haven’t edited most of it.” He adjusts his glasses and brings the journal closer, angling it away from Izuku’s gaze. He clears his throat a few times. “This is a story about change. There a times I wonder….” Izuku wiggles in closer to steal some of the warmth from his side. Shout doesn’t seem like he’s inclined to move or let Izuku burrow under the covers so this is the best he can do.

“...the ending is up to us to decide --” Izuku frowns at the familiar phrasing. He picks his head up and knocks his forehead against Shouto’s chest. Shouto pauses and lowers the journal.


Shouto looks at him with that look that Izuku can’t translate. “I must have remembered it incorrectly. Tell me again,” Shouto suggest. Izuku studies his face. His lip is curling a little.

“You said it wrong on purpose,” Izuku guesses. “Are you seeing whether or not I’m paying attention?”

"You’re right. I remember the second time you told me,” Shouto nods, far more satisfied than he has any right to be. Oh no, Izuku thinks. He’s going to do something unbearably sappy. “I am the author of my own story --” Izuku throws a hand out to cover his mouth. He feels Shouto smile into his fingers.

Even with Izuku's attempt to silence him, Shouto continues, "-- and control every part of it, including the ending --" Izuku presses his hand tighter against his lips. "--mmmngggfffhhhh."
"Stop," Izuku insists. Shouto is unlikely to miss how deeply his face is burning. Embarrassment doesn't even begin to cover it.

"How romantic, Izuku. I don’t know how I didn’t fall for you right away," he teases. Izuku lets out an embarrassed whine.

"I regret ever telling you I said that." Izuku lies.

Shouto smiles. "No you don't."

"No," Izuku agrees with a sigh. "I don't. It wasn’t just for you, either, y’know? I think we both needed to hear it. Too bad you forgot."


“Hey, don’t forget. You changed mine too. No need for that. Your life is a part of mine, and mine is a part of yours.” Shouto is looking at him with that face again. Izuku ducks his head deeper into his sweatshirt to hide the rest of his face. “Or something like that. Hey, stop it! Don’t make that face at me!"

In an act of cruelty, Shouto ignores him. Izuku shoves his face deeper into his pillow and groans. “You’re awful!” Not even Shouto’s relentless teasing can draw him back out. He doesn’t pull his face away from the pillow until Shouto demands a good night kiss. "I don't know if you deserve one," Izuku says, only for Shouto to gently kiss his forehead.

"Alright," he says. "Then I'll wait until I do." Izuku kisses him to shut him up, because if he keeps saying sappy things Izuku is afraid his own heart might give out.

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Trending

9 Incredible Facts About #1 Pro Hero Deku: Moderate Edition
If you’re looking for the most Rare Deku content, check out “#19 Astounding Facts Only Diehard Fans Know About Pro Hero Deku” if you’re an elite fan.
Posted on May 10th, 20X2, at 2:39 p.m.

1. His Real Name Is Midoriya Izuku.
[Pictured: A picture of a worn Polaroid on a wooden desk; a younger Hero Deku in his U.A. school uniform sitting on the steps to a house, with a woman standing behind him. She’s rather similar to him in appearance -- his mother. The picture is older, aged looking, but their faces are still clear and Deku’s smile is as bright as ever.]

> This one’s pretty easy, but you’d be surprised by the number of fans who only know him by his hero name!

2. He’s One Of The Most Legendary Heroes In Recent History.
[Pictured: Pro Hero Deku in full costume & celebration cape on a podium. He’s smiling and raising both arms, victorious.]
Source: https://phj.news.com/20X1/03/21/heroes/photos/deku-is-number-one/
>QUICK HISTORY: he’s one of the fastest rising heroes in history by ranking at #5 after his first season. He’s one of the youngest heroes ever to make it to the Top 10 under 20, and under 30 as #1 as well! There’s a reason he’s represented Star Heroes of Japan for over a decade and counting.

3. We Love A Talented And Bisexual Pro Hero.
[Pictured: A small gif of Hero Deku sitting next to Todoroki Shouto, from the legendary “A Message From LGBT Pro Heroes & Deku Answers Your Questions! - Sponsored by LGBTJP & ForwardJapan” video. He’s smiling and laughing. Someone edited an overlay with the colors from the Bisexual Pride Flag over the gif.]

>Fans will never forget his casual #ComingOut over an Instagram live video, or the time he flustered a newscaster by blatantly flirting with them & mentioning his search for a wife (or a husband). And of course there’s The Video that put him in the spotlight with other proud LGBT heroes…we didn’t forget his boyfriend either, promise!

4. He Is A Proud Trans Hero, Too!
[Pictured: Staged between fellow heroes Froppy and Red Riot, Deku sits behind the TRANS ALLIES & HEROES conference bannered table, microphone in one hand and a relieved smile on his face.]

>This is pretty recent news to the hero world, but we couldn’t be prouder of his accomplishments and bravery! He’s also the first #1 hero who identifies as trans in world history!

5. His Hero Name Has A Meaning You Wouldn’t Expect…

>The characters in his first name (Izuku) possess the kanji for “Deku” (in some contexts, the meaning is a rather unflattering term in Japanese) which is the source of his hero name. Although Deku cites he was bullied throughout his school career for it, he reclaimed the name and changed the meaning to align with a more confident term that sounds very similar -- “Dekiru” (“to be able to do something”). He credits his fellow hero Uravity for his change of heart regarding the name.

6. He’s A Cancer And That Surprises Nobody.
[Video attachment: “The Cancer Experience ft Deku”
Thumbnail: Hero Deku rubbing his eyes with the sleeve of a fancy dark suit. The background is composed of water droplet emojis and the sobbing emoji. There is a lower res-low opacity filtered image of a closer still of Deku’s face caught in mid-sob overlayed over the entire image.]

>Yes, we’re a little early this year, but we want to wish Hero Deku Happy Birthday all the same! Going on 30 and beyond! And, fittingly, his birthday falls in the middle of Cancer season. Not reinforcing any pre-existing stereotypes, but Cancers tend to be on the...sensitive side of the astrological chart. Video credit to MINICHARGE92 on Youtube.

7. He Owns Literally Every Piece Of Hero Merch That Exists.
[Pictured: A proud Deku lounging in the center of a Hero Merch shrine. He’s wearing as much hero merch that he can possibly fit on every inch of his body. The merchandise ranges from: Earphone Jack headphones over a glittery Luminesce hat, Uravity tank top under a black Tsukuyomi hoodie with a beak hood, Red Riot themed joggers, Alien Queen slides, Ingenium leg warmers, a Dynamite bracelet, Vivid Lady scarf, Battlefist gloves, Fusion socks, and so much more merchandise that it can barely fit in the frame.]

>Word on the street says he’s got a long running competition with Red Riot as to who can collect the most merchandise...

8. He’s Happily Dating Another (Ex)Hero And Never Lets Anyone Forget It.
If your heart didn’t flutter a little during that live show then you’re either heartless or you’re lying. I think I can make a pretty good assumption that almost anybody would love to be swept off their feet by this handsome hero. Todoroki Shouto is one lucky guy...

9. One Time He Made Fun Of Us For Writing These Surprising Fact Lists For (His Now Boyfriend But Then Pro Hero) Entropy And We’re Going To Make One To Embarrass Him.

Buzzfeed staff writers strike back. Pro Hero Deku hates Buzzfeed Celebrity Fact Lists: The Real Fact. (S.O.S I’ve been trapped in the staff room for over 11 days. The site content manager won’t let me out unless this post goes viral. Please send help!!!!!!!)
Little encouragement is needed for Izuku to accept he’s way past his limit. Kouta more or less manhandles him into a cab and yells, “Get out of here!” He’s a good, considerate kid. Even though he threatens to beat Izuku out of existence should he try to return to Team Ida in the next week.

Izuku is ready to collapse onto his bed and lose consciousness for the next sixteen hours when he gets home. The thought of sleeping in a nice, comfortable bed is the only thing keeping him upright as he makes his way up the stairs. Except there’s already something there when he walks in and it doesn’t show any signs of an early night in Izuku’s horizon.

His suit and vest are laid out on the bed, with his white shirt iron-pressed and hanging from the bathroom door. The light is on in the bathroom, and the shadow from within reaches the edges of the rug. Echoes of light water running from the sink.

Izuku sets down his bag and slowly removes his hero suit. He finds a clean pair of pajamas and pads into the bathroom. Shouto is brushing his teeth in one of the sinks. His head is down when Izuku walks in. He either heard Izuku come in earlier, or his mind is on a completely different planet because he doesn’t react to Izuku’s hand gently brushing his spine. He’s wearing his dress clothes too -- white shirt, unbuttoned, and his pants are buttoned but his belt is hanging loose in the hoops.

Izuku waits for him to finish before he speaks. “What’s the occasion?”

Shouto rubs his face with the towel on the counter and turns to face him. “I thought we’d go out for dinner tonight.”

“Did I miss our anniversary, or…?” His mind takes a second to process the date and double check he didn’t actually miss anything important. Like their anniversary. It’s July, right? Maybe mid-July. Definitely not their anniversary. Wait. July. “...did I forget my birthday?”

“No,” Shouto replies. Izuku’s flash of relief is short lived. “That’s the day after tomorrow. Did you forget? You’re turning thirty.”

“Hnnrrhgnrhgn.” Izuku says reflexively. “Don’t say things like that.”

“What,” Shouto says, and the grin that slips out means his next words are probably not going to be words Izuku wants to hear. “Like your age? Are you feeling old, Izuku?”

“Shoutoo,” Izuku whines.

“You need a shower. We can’t go out like that.” Shouto pushes him towards the stall, ignoring Izuku’s attempts to pry his hands away. Izuku’s body protests the thought of stepping back outside their apartment and doing anything besides enter a deep REM state. Shouto reads the expression off his face and huffs a laugh.

“I thought we would go out to dinner tonight,” Shouto repeats his earlier statement. “But honestly, I’m exhausted. And you look like you’re about to fall into a coma.”
“You’re the best boyfriend. Seriously.” Izuku is so relieved that he can’t stop a few tears from slipping out. His overtired brain decides it’s time to take a break and more or less, shuts down completely. Shouto helps him into the shower, and after he’s fit clean enough to sit on their bed, helps him out. He hands Izuku his toothbrush and Izuku stares at it for a beat, before wincing, “I can’t feel my arms right now. Could you, uh?” Shouto sighs like Izuku asked him to do something ridiculous, but he does so without complaint. Izuku knows he’s being overdramatic on purpose, the smile pulling at the corner of his mouth gives him away.

“You have the day off tomorrow,” Shouto comments mildly. He ties Izuku’s hair back for him with an elastic. “Are you going to sleep in the whole day?”

Izuku sighs longingly at the thought. “That’d be nice. But no.”

Shouto’s hand stills in his hair with a small surprised noise. “Oh. Tenya didn’t tell --?” He shuts his mouth, cutting himself off.

Izuku tilts his head back and pokes the confused frown at the corner of his mouth. “Tenya didn’t tell me what?”

“Nothing,” Shouto dismisses. This only serves to make Izuku more curious, but as is, he’s too tired to interrogate him further. Shouto helps him slide into bed and Izuku is asleep before Shouto finishes saying “good night.”

Izuku doesn’t forget the oddity of their late conversation. He more or less figures it out when he wakes to Tenya, Ochaco, and Asui at his door in the morning.

“Oh no,” Izuku moans at the sight of balloons. “Please don’t make a big birthday thing.”

Smirking, Ochaco pushes herself into the apartment and ties the balloons to one of his dining chairs. “I promise not to make a big birthday thing.” Ochaco’s smile does not match her tone. “But it’s not a birthday party, I swear! We’re just having a -- a small thing! Think of it like another class reunion!”

“It really isn’t meant to celebrate your birthday,” Asui agrees. “Our classmates felt that because so many people missed the reunion earlier this year, we deserved another chance to get-together.”

“Exactly!” Ochaco claps her hands together. Izuku believes their sincerity and excitement. He narrows his eyes at Tenya, who remains silent and stubborn in the face of Izuku’s prodding.

“Why aren’t you saying anything?” Izuku accuses. Tenya’s eyes widen, briefly, but he shakes his head.

Ochaco makes herself at home in their kitchen and starts poking through their cabinets. “I see you two finally figured out how to cook.”

Izuku forgets his earlier annoyances and drags her out of his kitchenware. “I always knew how to cook! Shouto’s the one who --!”

“Oh, yeah, speaking of. Where is he?” Ochaco pokes her head into their living room. “He’s supposed to come too. I mean, he’s the one who kind of arranged this whole --” Tenya makes a frantic gesture with his hand, as though signalling Ochaco to stop talking. Ochaco cuts herself off with a cough. “-- er, I mean, of course he’s coming! Because he’s a part of our class. Obviously. Hah. Right, Tsu?”

Asui gives her a knowing, dispassionate look. Ochaco nudges her and she croaks, “Right.”
While Ochaco doesn’t specify exactly what “a small reunion” means, Izuku changes into comfortable clothes. None of his uninvited house guests comment on his casual attire which means it isn’t entirely inappropriate to wear at...wherever they’re going. They must be going somewhere, he reasons. Izuku knows their new apartment is nowhere near large enough to host their whole class. If Ochaco’s comment was any indication, Shouto had a hand in whatever is happening. He doesn’t get a chance to ask Shouto about it either. Izuku woke up to an empty bed and assumed he left early in the morning to finish a last-minute edit to an upcoming story. Now he knows that wasn’t the case.

Tenya remains tightlipped during their drive north. Ochaco entertains herself in the front and provides awful navigation tips. Asui swaps seats with her after they make a third wrong turn and helps Tenya locate their actual destination.

Ochaco fiddles with her phone. “The others said they’ve arrived, but they aren’t finished setting up. So we can, er, explore for a bit.”

Izuku’s first thought is: green. Flat. Then, later: sand. Tenya pulls up in front of a restaurant and Izuku is steered away from the entrance by Tenya’s firm shoving. “I don’t like surprise parties,” Izuku tells him. Ochaco and Asui follow behind them, voices soft and cautious.

“Not a surprise party,” Tenya replies, which is literally the first thing he’s said to Izuku all day. He slaps away Izuku’s teasing poke at his side.

Izuku pokes him again. Tenya sighs, exasperated, but he doesn’t push him away. Ochaco runs to catch up and tackles the two of them from behind in an unexpected hug. “We should walk around the grounds a bit,” Ochaco encourages. “Tsuyu said she’s going to head back and help -- er, set up. There was apparently a food incident.” From the expression on her face, Izuku doesn’t need to ask for the names of the culprits. She hugs Izuku’s arm and leans the rest of her weight into Tenya. “C’mon, I’ll find us a nice spot.” Ochaco entertains him with details about Ashido’s upcoming wedding. Izuku is not an idiot. She’s distracting him from something.

A half hour passes. Ochaco retrieves her phone and declares it is time to return to the restaurant. Izuku is surprised by the lack of actual decorations. The restaurant their class picked for this reunion isn’t large, but it’s big enough to house twenty or so energetic heroes. Izuku notes his clothes more or less blend in with the rest of their attire. (Except for Aoyama and Momo, who are wearing glittering accents.)

Tenya and Ochaco, who were sticking so close to him they were practically his shadows, take the opportunity while he’s distracted and completely disappear. Izuku accepts birthday wishes from the faces he sees near the front, Ojirou, Ashido, and Shouji -- before venturing deeper inside. Jirou drags him into an argument with Kaminari about something music related and Izuku slips out of reach before things get too ugly.

He doesn’t have to put much effort into searching for his boyfriend. Shouto comes up to him before the appetizers are set out, tapping the crook of his elbow and gesturing for him to follow. “I haven’t seen you all day,” Izuku says, relieved. “Where have you been?”

Without answering, Shouto gently guides him away from the restaurant and further from the entrance. Back to the sand and trees Izuku sat beside with Tenya and Ochaco. “I had a few things to finish,” Shouto answers, after a long beat of silence. His gaze flickers back to Izuku. “I didn’t mean to worry you.”

“It’s fine,” Izuku says. He takes Shouto’s hand, squeezes it, and grins.
Pulling him through the garden, Shouto leads him towards the edge of the greenery before the
earth turns into sand and stretches into the shoreline. At one point he lets go -- running up the hill
that looks out over the water and the garden from behind. Izuku chases after him, laughing and
calling his name. Shouto stops at the top of the hill, turning and smiling and for a second, Izuku
swears all the air and the wind stops at the same time. He makes his way up the rest of the hill,
while Shouto sits down at the bench at the top.

“We’re gonna miss dinner,” Izuku comments, sitting beside him after he catches up. “The others
are gonna wonder where we went.”

“I told Tenya where we were going.” Shouto says, very cryptically. “They’ll know not to expect us
back for a while.”

Izuku hums and looks out at the water. As the sun slowly descends under the waterline, the last
rays dance over the water crests. Like a painting, Izuku thinks. The sea breeze embraces him and he
closes his eyes. Shouto leans into his side, and Izuku leans into his warmth. He isn’t sure where he
left his jacket, but he’s sure to find it back with the others.

He opens his eyes and breathes out, pausing to listen to the water rushing into the side of the rocks
below before retreating back into the tide. “This place is nice.”

He thinks Shouto makes a noise of agreement. His shoulder is warm, too warm to be natural. Izuku
smiles; Shouto knows he’s cold and too stubborn to ask for the jacket still around Shouto’s
shoulders. “I thought you might like it,” Shouto replies. Izuku leans in, chasing his warmth and the
sound of his voice. It might be the wind, or maybe the picturesque nature of the garden and sea on
the backdrop of the sunset, but Shouto’s voice is quiet. The kind of quiet reserved out of respect for
something so beautiful, so pure, that speaking too loudly might break the spell.

A spell, Izuku thinks. He feels warm, and not just from the excess body heat Shouto is giving out.
A warm kind of happy. Content, he realizes.

“I really like this place,” Izuku declares, quiet. Shouto doesn’t reply, but he knows Shouto hears
him. The garden buzzes behind him, full of life and the faintest quality of flowers mixed with the
salt in the air. He thinks missing dinner would be more than fine. He could stay here forever,
Shouto at his side. If he could bottle this moment and stretch it to the end of time, he would.

But he doesn’t have that kind of power, and he doesn’t want that kind of control. That kind of
power is too much for anyone to possess. The sun dips lower, casting a golden glow over the
flowers and stones at his feet. The lighter side of Shouto’s hair captures the sheen of gold over the
rest of the scene, and Izuku finds he has no words left to fill the space between them. He lets out a
breath and enjoys the peace.

He doesn’t disturb the moment until movement catches his attention. Shouto leans away from him,
drawing Izuku out of the trance-like restfulness he slipped into. Brows drawn, a sense of
concentration on his face, Shouto retreats. Izuku slides out of his arm so they have room to face
each other. With that kind of serious look, he knows Shouto has something to say.

Shouto shifts, pulling his journal from his jacket. “You bought me this journal.” Shouto says, after
a moment of considerate silence. “When I told you I needed something to write in while we chased
after impossible secrets. After I told you I wanted to take up the pen in journalism.”

“I did.” Izuku says. Suspiciously, he adds, “You’re talking weird again. Is everything okay?”

Ignoring him, Shouto places the journal into Izuku’s open palms. “Open it.” Izuku obeys the odd
request. He thumbs through the familiar leather and worn pages, flipping through the start to finish.
“It’s full.” Confusion bleeds into his tone. “You finished it?”

“Almost. There’s a page left, but I’ll need a new one. Soon.” Shouto glances at him. “Would you mind picking out a new one for me? For work?”

Izuku sets the journal down beside him. “I mean...sure. I guess. But, seriously. What’s up? I know you didn’t bring me out here to look at the scenery and to tell me about your diary.”

Shouto’s voice is soft when he answers. “No. I wanted to show you something.” He reaches his other arm into the other side of his jacket. Izuku peers over his shoulder to see the content inside, and his confusion turns to bewilderment as Shouto pulls out another journal. “I have -- I have something I need to tell you. Or ask you, actually.”

The tenseness in his jaw, however, starts to fit the pieces together. For the first time since sitting down, Izuku realizes Shouto’s knee is bouncing with unbridled energy. The rest of the conversation is laid out before him as clear as the dusk sky above him.

“Shouto,” he says quietly. “Oh...”

Shouto hands him the notebook, and opens it up to the first page. “You said that we’re all the authors of our own lives. We make our own choices, we write our own stories.” His hand trembles against the page, an action almost missed if it not for Izuku’s own hand wrapping around his. “Izuku. Can I ask you something?” His eyes are wet, and bright as the glow of the sun across the water, and Izuku thinks, I love really do love this man. I want to spend the rest of my life with him. This moment, right here, one hand clasped in the other, he sees the future before him spread out before him. Twisted and long, winding in all different shapes; but more importantly he sees the moment the whole plane shifts. The future bends, becomes anew.

Shouto moves again, but he doesn’t remove his hands. He slides off the bench and drops to the ground, one knee on the soil and one foot still on the ground. The first page is opened in front of him. Izuku’s chest aches. He wonders if Shouto can feel his pulse racing from where his fingers
rest against his wrist. Voice thick, Shouto asks, “Are you going to read it?”

He doesn’t look down at the page. He already knows the words written down there don’t matter at all. He will read them later, surely, but at this moment they don’t matter at all. Instead, he leans down and presses his forehead to Shouto’s, never tearing his eyes off of him. (He’s crying too, but that’s sort of a given.)

“Yes.” Izuku says, even though he knows that’s not the question he’s answering at all. “Yes.”

Shouto smiles, even though Izuku is definitely ruining this very romantic and thoughtfully well-planned moment. “Izuku, will you help write the rest of this story with me?”

...[Continued from Page 8]

One day I transformed into Midoriya Shouto: the man who had nothing to prove. With it came a freedom, I think, from everything the old family name represented for me.

For now, this final name change is everything I have hoped for. That is an important part of my new story -- but it is not entirely “Midoriya Shouto’s Origin Story” either. That story belongs to Midoriya Shouto and Midoriya Izuku, and that is a story for them alone. What I share here is only a glimpse at a much larger mural that encompasses my experiences and the love I witnessed and felt that goes beyond words.

Midoriya Shouto’s origin story is about happiness. It is not about forgetting my history, or trying to rewrite it. Who I was and who I will become are not entirely separate beings. It is about reclaiming a future I was destined for and deciding to find a way to shape it into something new. Something better. It was about finding a future I could be happy, wholly, completely. I decided to write my own story. I decided to write my own ending.

Even if you believe your future is set in stone -- it isn’t. I was created for hero work. I am here to tell you that none of that mattered in the end. It does not matter where you come from or what you believe you are destined for. We are not bound by our blood. We are not bound by any story written by anyone other than ourselves. We are not bound by the powers we possess, or the powers we dream we could.

Our lives are made of our choices, not destiny.

- Midoriya Shouto

...
alternative ch8 summary: five times todoroki tried (and failed) to propose and one time he succeeded :)  

mobile translations: none

*pulls off my final hat to reveal two large bottles of champagne, raises them over my head & smashes the bottles together, sending glass and champagne flying* WOO we r done babey! if u stuck with me 4 the whole ride: ur amazing & i love u. if ur new here: i love u! if u leave a comment/kudos my love 4 u will expand until it encompasses the length of the universe & that isnt a dramatic exaggeration

thnk u to blrb for ur BREATHTAKING art of the last scene [tumblr / twitter] !! (sorry it’s taken so long to actually get around to letting u share it oops) ily also thanks for sticking out all my rambling bullshit [collage below of basically everything blrb saw while i was editing & running into his dms to cry about it]

- what did tenya and shouto do in russia? Well, Thats For Me To Know And You To Find Out. Eventually. This is my onion fic series where everything is revealed through LAYERS upon LAYERS of content. some mysteries deserve the time & care to be solved

- re: “entrodeku everytime we touch amv”
last note on this chapter:
> re: midoriya’s story as a trans man continued from ch7 -- largely based on a series of stories from “coming out twice” which explores trans people’s experience about coming out later in life. in “second interlude” i also mentioned these stories because they played a large part in how i wrote him as a character. i am not cis but i am also not a trans man, so i intentionally did not write The Trans Guy Experience for midoriya. this is all part of that inter-community dialogue about representation & writing stories With trans characters but not About their experience being trans if you are not trans yourself. if i have offended/incorrectly portrayed him as such, i will never refuse your criticism or comments because i respect my trans allies above all else.
- in this fic i didn't specify the other identities of the trans heroes besides the ones in midoriya's class. to clarify tho: i didn't write aoyama as a trans man bc of that Inter Community Dialogue i mentioned re: trans men speaking up about why not to hc aoyama as a trans man. i really love the nonbinary yuuga headcanon tho so i included it in here too. /end

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
- my gratitude to my friends & everyone that sent encouragement to me. i was so happy reading the comments & feedback, i reread them often and smile!! :) my hugs
will be arriving in the mail shortly!

FINAL WORDS:
(basically this is where I come out from the idiot box and talk like an actual author)

I don’t know where to begin. I have so much to say -- but I could write for ages about how this entire “chapter” changed me & my future besides the one discussed inside this fic. I was inspired by a simple idea -- a dialogue sequence between Midoriya & Todoroki I imagined that suspend the canonical (expected) trajectory and suppose a world where Todoroki isn’t a pro hero. I wanted to explore a direction where he decided to make his OWN decision and pursue something else.

Chapters 1 - 6 complete the arc of Todoroki’s self-discovery and growth. In contrast, Chapters 7 & 8 is a story in it’s own that was necessary to explain the other side of events outside of Todoroki’s world. It felt incomplete to allow Todoroki’s arc to end without discussing Midoriya’s arc as well. (Not to say there aren’t so many other characters that make this story what it is: Yaoyorozu, Iida, Todoroki’s mother, Uraraka, Jirou, etc. being among the other larger roles.)

_Do What You Will, If That’s What You Want_ is a story about coming into who you are as a person: opening up to all the people in your life who love you, allowing your own love to be shared in return, and -- most importantly -- making your own choices and actively seeking out your own happiness.

Thank you for coming along on this journey with me. See you all again soon!

- ezra (stanzas)

[full extended cut of The Final Acknowledgements available here on gdocs]

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End Notes

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  + tv tropes page

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