Lock and Key

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Lock and Key

by [autochryostalize](http://archiveofourown.org)

Summary

Bakugou made a choked, gravelly noise before croaking out a low, “You can’t be serious.”
His fingers ached to blow up everything in the room.
“I’m sorry, young man, but you can’t change reality! This sometimes happens.” Recovery Girl clicked through his file, adding a new symbol in a previously empty slot.
A pair of eyes discreetly locked on to an explosive blond plowing his way forward, parting people in his path. He recognized the kid, of course. Anyone in the underbelly of society would recognize him, after the publicity of both UA’s Sports Festival and the events leading up to All Might’s fall. The uniform he was wearing cast away any doubts about the young man’s identity.

It was a bit of a surprise that the little firecracker presented as an omega.

Or: there are certain types of evil that seemed too distant, archaic violations and perversions that would never actually threaten bright-eyed heroes-in-training in the clean, modern world...but sometimes those evils aren’t as distant as one might think.

Notes

Please mind the tags and warnings! This fic features heavy themes, abuses in various forms, multiple instances of graphic sexual content of the non-con variety, and bad guys with terrible ideologies. Please refrain from reading if depiction of these things upsets you or if you are not of age.

This work is up-to-date with the manga (circa the cultural festival arc), so anime-watchers, beware of spoilers. The fic is set a bit after that (everyone has provisional licenses) but it's not necessarily going to be consistently canon-compliant after that due to the time of writing/posting.

Additional relationships will be added in the future. I just...haven't quite decided yet.

I made a blog to better communicate with people--check it out at autochorystalize.tumblr.com as well as on twitter: @autochorystal

Also, please take some time to check out some awesome fanart for the fic!! I keep it tagged at "lock and key fanart" on the blog!
“What the f—what did you just say?”

Bakugou gaped at Recovery Girl, upper lip twitching in barely contained rage and some other concoction of emotions he didn’t want to address. Normally, he made something of an attempt not to be so disrespectful to the old woman, but his control was slipping.

She just laughed lightly, gathering up various pamphlets and sample packets from around the office. “I said, you’re experiencing the symptoms of pre-heat. You should have your first heat in the coming days. We usually have students go home during their cycles, especially when they first present, but take note of the heat-rut rooms on campus for the future.” She thrust the armful of materials into Bakugou’s tense hands, smiling pleasantly. “We will inform your parents and add your second gender to your forms. Your teachers will be notified of your absence. You shouldn’t need to miss more than two or so days, but call if you think you need more time.”

“I’m not an omega!” Bakugou insisted, voice just short of cracking. Maybe saying it loudly and aggressively would somehow make it more true. “Check again, old hag! It’s a mistake!”

“I’d have to be pretty senile to make that mistake, young Bakugou,” Recovery Girl chirped, already moving on to pull up Bakugou’s file on the computer.

“But—that can’t—have you fucking met me?” Bakugou stood, dropping all of the items in his arms to gesture at himself.

Recovery Girl clicked her tongue and looked him over. “You’re one of the most emotionally volatile youths in the building, not to mention flashy and unreasonably defensive. I know all the silly, ‘soft-spoken’ stereotypes, but I’ve seen plenty like you over the years. You presenting as an omega doesn’t shock me in the slightest.”

Bakugou made a choked, gravelly noise before croaking out a low, “You can’t be serious.” His fingers ached to blow up everything in the room.

“I’m sorry, young man, but you can’t change reality! This sometimes happens.” She clicked through his file, adding the symbol for omega in a previously empty slot. “But after a while, it will become easier for you to control your scent and mask the signs, if you feel uncomfortable with others knowing. Most kids your age have barely begun to smell the pheromones of second genders, so I doubt any of your classmates will be able to distinguish who is what for some time.” She turned to Bakugou, smile soft and reassuring. “It’s not uncommon for heroes to keep their second genders private, regardless of their presentation. This shouldn’t hold you back in the slightest.”

Bakugou stared at her, anger seeping somewhere deeper into him as she talked. Other emotions threatened to demand his attention, things like shock and dread and shame and betrayal, and putting a lid on that minefield almost circled back to making him calm. She nodded, turning back to the
computer to save his file and update it across the network.

“Make sure to take all the materials with you! They’ll help. Congratulations, and good luck!”

And with that, Bakugou numbly picked up the pamphlets and packets, threw them into his bag, and left for home.

---

Bakugou was not calm.

Bakugou was seething.

His trek home was a warpath, full of stomping and grinding teeth, and everyone left him a pretty wide berth even in the busier areas on his route. He caught a few of them glancing at him with scrunched-up noses, which only served to piss him off even more. Not only was he not an alpha, which everyone had no doubt he would be, but everyone could tell...they could smell it on him. He always told himself that he didn’t give a shit about second genders or any of the drama and bullshit that came with it, but that’s because he knew what he was going to be. And now that he wasn’t that, suddenly the entire image of himself, of his future, of the way others see and relate to him, all of that was up in flames. And he was pissed.

Sure, he expected that he was presenting when he walked into Recovery Girl’s office. He had been feeling a little off for a few days, and the past month had been filled with an awareness of weird, faint smells and ghost sensations that he’d never noticed before. Those smells gradually became nearly unbearable, loud and demanding, and he still wasn’t quite used to being assaulted with scent whenever one of his other presented classmates got riled up. He’d be irritable, a little achy, and randomly more pissed off than normal at only select people for seemingly no reason. It was especially obvious when he got mad at Kirishima, one of the few people he could actually stand, over something stupid for the third time in a day. Kirishima presented as an alpha (and made sure everyone in class knew about it) about two months ago, joining others like Yaoyorozu, Mina, and Sero, so he figured he was getting pissed at the guy because he was about to present as an alpha and was being territorial or whatever the fuck.

But no, apparently it was just some omega bitchfit.

He knew half the class hadn’t even presented yet. It was obvious when someone did, given that they would miss a few days of class to get through their first heat or rut. He knew that everyone would know that he presented, and everyone would ask questions. And he’d have to say, out loud, with his own mouth, that he was an omega. They were going to have a goddamn field day about it too, all at his expense.

Someone passing him on the sidewalk made eye contact with him, and he barely restrained himself from screaming at them to eat shit and die...Or, he thought he did, except the way they jumped and jogged away from him meant he probably actually did scream out loud. Whatever, serves them right.

He mulled over what Recovery Girl said, trying to think of a way he could tell his classmates to fuck off and never ask again without making it obvious he was hiding an omega status. If they weren’t going to be able to smell the difference between an omega, an alpha, or a beta until they got more practice, that might give him enough time to mask any and all signs...but at the same time, why the fuck should he care? Why did he care? It didn’t change the fact that he could still kick all of their asses, and does so routinely. It shouldn’t matter.

But...did it? How much effort would he be willing to put into keeping it a secret, for how long? And
would that be the kind of weakness he was willing to let some stupid, outdated notions force on him?

He scrubbed at his hair, snarling as the useless chain of thoughts failed to become productive. He glowered at the world, resolutely deciding that this wouldn’t change anything, and if it did, he’d destroy whatever tried to hold him back. None of this extra bullshit mattered anyway, as long as he was at the top.

He didn’t feel any less pissed off, but at least this anger felt familiar. Fuck the world, go to hell, and die. He set his shoulders and finished the last leg of his journey home, planning how he was going to avoid having any sort of obnoxious “talk” about sex ed and secondary genders with his parents, taking no note of the world around him.

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A pair of eyes discreetly locked on to an explosive blond plowing his way forward, parting people in his path. The air wafting from him had an obvious scent of pre-heat, but it was twisted with the slightly off-putting sourness of youth, like the taste of a fruit that wasn’t quite ripe yet—he probably presented pretty recently. Clearly, he wasn’t too happy about it.

The owner of the gaze smiled and casually pushed away from the wall he was leaning against, following without any sense of urgency. He didn’t want the omega to catch wind of his rather prominent alpha stench, and he had time, after all. Normally the jobs he took required a brief period of intense planning and activity, and the rest of his days were spent waiting for word of another promising hit to come through the pipelines. That left a lot of time for other...hobbies.

He recognized the kid, of course. Anyone in the underbelly of society would recognize him, after the publicity of both UA’s Sports Festival and the events leading up to All Might’s fall. The uniform he was wearing cast away any doubts about the young man’s identity.

It was a bit of a surprise that the little firecracker presented as an omega. The man could hardly believe it when he first spotted him. He was having such a boring day up until this point, but that lingering scent of pre-heat made it suddenly delightful.

In the modern day, all a hero needed was a flashy quirk to get all the spotlight, pushing people around as they pleased. There was no order to the mess, no sense of hierarchy or respect for the way things were meant to be in the world. However, with the celebrated beta All Might fallen and the rise of powerhouse alpha Endeavor as number one hero, things were about to change. Villain activity was stirring, and uppity little breeder punks with impressive quirks who were used to ignoring the proper status quo would no longer be acceptable. It would be irresponsible to turn away from such a golden opportunity to re-educate the next generation of heroes.

The man tagged just far enough behind to remain unnoticed until the agitated omega turned towards the doorway of a rather impressive house. With a quick note of the street and number, the man turned away, making a few plans for tomorrow. He had time, and there was no need to rush when all the doors in the world were made for him to open.

Chapter End Notes

There's a few things about the omegaverse that I've changed or played with, but hopefully that becomes obvious through the narrative. Please leave a comment if anything is unclear or if you're interested in more details about a certain part!
So...this fic is gonna be a lot of bullying Bakugou, but I do want to include recovery and seeking help as a big part of the narrative, so if you're looking just for pure non-con pwp, this might be a little more than you're looking for (tho there is def non-con smut, so if that's not your tea, you might want to opt out as well). There's also going to be a lot of themes relating to gender-based prejudice and violence, individual ability vs stereotypes/social roles, and villainy that comes from bigotry...and I think the omegaverse is an interesting stage to use for these topics. Hopefully it's very obvious that the ideologies of the villains are pretty far in the realm of messed up. We'll see.

Also: the timeline is left vague, but it's set at some point after everyone gets provisional licenses...so assuming a little further along than the manga currently is (chp. 184).
Bakugou remembered some details about heats from the formal classes they were given in middle school, but most of his expectations came from the small amount of porn he’d seen or lewd jokes from classmates. Neither prepared him for the actual event. He expected it to be, well...sexy, or at least have arousal at the forefront some of the time. While he did feel a needy but mild ache between his legs, most of his experience featured cramping, irritation, and a feverish flush that made him feel sweaty and sticky everywhere. His senses were in overdrive, every scent or light seeming too much, and his mind was hazy, incapable of focus or concentration.

In short, he felt like an uncomfortable dumbass, and he hated every second of it.

The pamphlets said that these symptoms would lessen as he got older, but that knowledge did nothing for Bakugou right now. He holed himself up in the house’s heat-rut room, aware enough to be disgusted that he had to use the same place as his parents (“Quit bitching, brat, that room is the cleanest in the house with all the disinfectant it gets.”). His parents couldn’t leave for work fast enough, double-checking and either giving him instructions to call at the slightest thing or telling him to suck it up like a goddamn adult, and only after repeatedly shouting for them to fuck off did they finally go.

He waited another half hour before even trying to get comfortable in the room, too paranoid that one of them would come home and either bust in because they forgot to tell him something or hear him through the walls. Neither were reasonable fears—he’d already locked the door, and the padding around all standard heat-rut rooms were thicker to block scents and sounds. He didn’t even know what they would risk hearing at this point.

But as he finally stripped off his damp clothes and crawled on the crisp, clean sheets of the room’s bed, he couldn’t help but feel a little jumpy. His mom bought him a couple of items from a line called ‘My First Heat Aid’ on her way home last night, much to his complete horror, and he felt like there was some cosmic force judging him as he grabbed what looked to be some sort of complicated mid-sized dick-shaped object and some slick-consistency lube.

Despite not feeling sexy at all, he was under the impression that doing something with his libido would help the other side effects of heat...although he wasn’t quite sure if that was true or just a stereotype. The pamphlets were too modest, and he would blast his own dick off before he asked his dad. He glared blearily at the packaging before pawing at it, sweat and a lack of coordination making the task take longer than it would have otherwise, and stumbled to the small connected bathroom to
clean the new, intimidating dildo. He would’ve expected a “my first fake dick” to be a little smaller, and he discovered pressing the button at the end made the base inflate into a faux knot. Bakugou didn’t know if he wanted to experiment with that just yet.

He did feel the dull ache in his torso grow more insistent as he prodded at the toy, and a few little twitches of interest...but more than that, he felt drowsy and sluggish. He flopped himself onto his back on the bed, holding the toy in his hands and spreading out so sweat couldn’t pool along the bends of his joints. Scowling faintly at the ceiling, he laid there for a while, feeling weird and brainless and hot, and after dozing a bit, eventually willed his heavy limbs to just get this stupid body-discovery process over with. He’d never really inserted anything into himself before, and even though the ache seemed to resonate inside of him, deeper with a whispered demand to be filled, he started by dragging his hand over his dick. It didn’t do as much for him as he hoped, shivers traveling up and back to his empty core, and after a little while he gave in to the new demands of his heat-dumb body with a resigned huff. He felt around for the lube, globbing a generous amount in his hand and spreading it over the toy before tentatively reaching his hand down between his legs. He already felt pretty wet with both slick and sweat, and he exhaled shakily as he slipped two fingers into himself, eyes fluttering shut and a self-conscious dusting of pink on his cheeks.

It didn’t really do much in terms of relief, but he did feel some heat pool lower in anticipation. It was easy to move his fingers, stretch himself a little, and while he still didn’t feel anything like how omega pornstars made it seem, he did start to relax into it. With his mind foggy and disoriented, the sensation felt almost like an anchor, and after a few minutes of lazily fingering himself, he slid the toy between his thighs and eased it in.

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The wiry alpha waited until nearly midday to approach the target house, confident that everyone he watched leave in the morning wouldn’t be returning anytime soon. The entire neighborhood was quiet, adults at work and children in school, but even so, he took care to remain as discreet and out-of-sight as possible as he walked up to the door. It was locked, obviously, but that was one of the things that made little excursions like this so much fun: people were so easy to lull into complacency. It was satisfying watching the securities they trusted crumble.

The door opened with a smooth click, just like they always did. He didn’t have a flashy quirk, but people always overestimated the importance of bigness, of show. For a villain like him, a quirk that gave him the ability to unlock, open, and reassign any lock regardless of what sort of mechanism held it closed was far more profitable. When thresholds were made meaningless, all it took is a little practice and a few useful skills, and anything and anyplace in the world is suddenly yours. He could just walk in like he was meant to be there all along.

So he did.

The house was clean, posh and modern, but he didn’t give a shit about that. He idly ran his fingers over the walls as he took a slow tour to find the room he was looking for, letting his alpha scent hang thick behind him, uninhibited by blockers, scent suppressants, or neutralizing bodywashes. He wanted it to be obvious he was here, a primal statement tainting a modern farce. It didn’t take him long to find what he was looking for.

The heat-rut room was also locked, which was a relief. People let their guards down when they think there’s a barrier between them and everyone else. It would give him the edge when he approached the inhabitant. He paused, considering his next step carefully—he might be confident, but he knew the newly-presented omega behind this door had enough firepower to knock him on his ass without even thinking about it. His goal here was to remind the cocky bitch where he belongs in the world,
and it would be pretty embarrassing if the hero-in-training got the drop on him first.

But he knew that the early heats and ruts were especially volatile, leaving the first few cycles vulnerable to those more experienced. There was a reason so many generations in so many societies mated omegas off early, even though contemporary idiots acted like that wasn’t the way the world should work. The biology of secondary gender went deeper than any quirk, and as long as he was careful, he had nothing to worry about.

He quietly released the lock and opened the door, glancing in through the small crack before going further. The scent of young heat filtered through the opening, musky and inviting except for that lingering sour twist, reassuring him that, as hoped, his target was probably drunk with hormones. He breathed it in deep, letting it stir him up, urging the release of his own pheromones as he observed the room inside.

The omega inside was naked, sprawled across the bed, eyes closed and brow lightly furrowed as he slid a heat aid in and out of himself. His movements were slow and uncoordinated, impeded by the drowsy haze he was in, and it was doubtful he’d notice much of anything, let alone what was happening at a supposedly locked door. The alpha swallowed a pleased hum, not wanting to alert the blond of his presence, before quietly slipping into the room, shutting and locking the door behind him with practiced movements.

He moved quickly. Once he was in the room, his own scent began to permeate the space, and the omega’s brow furrowed a little further as he started to pick up on it. The alpha crossed the room in a few long strides, giving the blond just enough time to crack his dazed eyes open before grabbing him by the hair and pulling him to the edge of the bed, shoving his face into the crotch of the man’s pants. The omega gasped, squawking out a slurred, “Whaddafuck-” before his expression distorted into a sort of confused alarm, and he flushed red down to his chest as he was bombarded with the foreign smell of unmasked mature alpha arousal.

Before Bakugou could coordinate his limbs to struggle, the alpha reached down and covered the hand gripping the toy with his own, stuffing the dildo back inside of him. The older man set a fast pace of pumping the toy in and out, holding Bakugou’s face where the alpha scent was strongest, and Bakugou gasped again sharply, twisting and trying to pull free from his grip. It didn’t accomplish much, his movements disoriented and weak from the sudden onslaught of sensations and hormones adding to his already feverish state, and the most he was able to do was draw his knees further up and paw at the hand in his hair.

The alpha chuckled, low and smug, as he watched the powerful upcoming hero flounder uselessly while attempting to pull away. He kept his grip in the omega’s hair as he moved to down the bed, wrenching the toy away and tossing it off to the side. Keeping an eye on the kid’s hands, he climbed onto the bed and slid one thigh between other other’s legs, shifting to position himself for some freedom of movement and using his free hand to fumble at the zipper of his pants.

He didn’t think letting his guard down for such a brief moment would be enough for the omega to accomplish anything, but the pheromones were apparently not quite doing as much as he had hoped. The kid was still dazed, out of it, but he was starting to panic, and he pushed at the alpha pinning him, trying in vain to dislodge him. It took Bakugou a bit to get enough wits about him to engage his quirk, and when he pulled his arms back to prepare a blast, it took longer than normal as he fought to control his wobbly limbs. It was just enough time for the older man to catch on, and he lunged for Bakugou’s wrists, pinning them with almost no resistance above the other’s head. Bakugou bucked and squirmed, snarling as wild but weak explosions erupted from his palms, and the alpha growled as he worked to contain the distressed omega, knowing that he couldn’t get anywhere or possibly even escape if he didn’t take control of the his earlier advantage, especially if the explosions got any
more violent.

After a flash of hesitation, the alpha surged forward, putting his body weight on Bakugou’s wrists and wrestling them both into one hand. With his other hand free, he gripped the blond’s hair once again, roughly pulling his head to one side before leaning down and inhaling along the side of the exposed neck. Honing in on the right spot, he pressed his lips against a swollen gland, and then bit down, hard and deep until he tasted blood on his tongue. The omega shuttered, panting harshly, before all the strength drained from his body, eyes glazing over as he went limp.

Chapter End Notes

Don't be surprised if I end up editing this more in the future.

Also, for potential villains out there: if you're really bent up on the notion of power but you gotta position yourself to take advantage of very specific natural weaknesses, scenarios, or timeframes to gain an upper hand...your notions of power are probably pretty bunk and you might just be a bigot
Chapter Summary

“We can improvise. I’ve been looking for a project.”
Bakugou didn’t know what the fuck he was talking about. He didn’t understand anything.

Chapter Notes

Cw: rape, graphic sexual content, creepy non-con pillow talk, panic attack, mentions of vomiting

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Bakugou felt like he was underwater, everything muted and weightless, like he wasn’t sure which way was up. When that guy bit him, it sent a feeling like hitting your elbow through his entire body, pins-and-needles followed by numbness. He registered movement around him and blinked rapidly to try to focus back on the real world.

There was a low hum from above him, and Bakugou tried to turn his head to look. It was like trying to see through clouded glass, but he could make out the man hovering over him, expression impassive as he sighed. “Fuck. Well, that didn’t go as planned.” He brushed his thumb over the bite, and Bakugou twitched at the sensation, the touch clear despite the unresponsiveness of his limbs. “But maybe...” The man hummed again, a look of contemplation crossing his features. “We can improvise. I’ve been looking for a project.”

Bakugou didn’t know what the fuck he was talking about. He didn’t understand anything. One moment, he was sinking into a clumsy jerk-off session, and the next this guy just materialized in his room out of nowhere, rank scent hitting him like a train. He had trouble moving, trouble activating his quirk or putting any power behind his blasts or his movements, and then the guy bit him. He was reeling, feeling an uncomfortable dissonance between his internal panic and his forced bodily calm. He wanted to scream, to thrash around and kill this bastard, but his body felt wrong, too heavy and distant.

“Aw, don’t look at me like that.” The man brushed sweaty bangs away from Bakugou’s forehead, looking down at him with a condescending smile. Bakugou watched him, slowly gaining focus and seething as much as he could with his limited movement. The man looked to be older, late twenties maybe, not especially bulky in size for an alpha but still fairly tall, and his short dark hair was styled but still somehow looked oily. His smile widened when the aura of irritation coming off of the omega increased, and he began to shift, diverting his attention elsewhere. “Should’ve stayed still.”

Bakugou could feel the man lean back, and it was with a growing sense of dread that he realized he actually couldn’t do anything to stop him. He didn’t know what the guy did—he heard all sorts of things about how alphas could control others, but he knew half of that shit was complete garbage. His own parents were an alpha and omega pair, bonded equally to each other, and he never saw
anything like that between them. It never really seemed like something people actually did, just more second-sexist bullshit, but yet...he couldn’t will his arms to move, and his quirk felt out of reach, and his mind couldn’t wrap around any thought or plan long enough to be useful. His heart was hammering in his chest, and he tried to force out a ‘what did you do to me,’ but all that came was a quiet, half-formed syllable.

“Shh,” the alpha purred in some fucked-up parody of comfort. The fabric of his jeans were rubbing against Bakugou’s thighs, and after a few seconds, Bakugou felt him run his hand down the back of his leg. Bakugou shivered, feeling nausea and a sort of heavy coldness run through him, and he tried again with a croaked, “Stop..” which was left unanswered. The man shifted, moving Bakugou’s hips, and Bakugou jumped when he felt the alpha’s cock slide between them. One of his thighs was still pinned under the man, and the other was slung over his legs where he was using it to maneuver Bakugou where he wanted.

“You were playing with yourself, right? Got yourself nice and open for me.”

Bakugou swallowed, suddenly feeling like he was choking on saliva, and he was able to minutely shake his head. He was starting to feel like some of the control was beginning to return to his muscles, but it was just little twitches, it wouldn’t be enough--

“This should be fine, then.” And with that, the alpha lined himself up and sank in.

It was slow, but he was bigger than the toy, and it burned. There grew a deep, hollow pain through Bakugou’s gut that sent waves of a strange ache up his spine and behind his eyes, hot and gnawing like a threat that he would pass out. He wasn’t even sure if it was actual pain or a residual from panic, but he tried to move away, gasping out a slurred, “Wai..wait...sto-p--” The alpha actually responded to that, pausing for a second to let Bakugou suck in a few shaky breaths, but he didn’t wait long before continuing.

“I know, baby, it hurts,” the alpha cooed, making Bakugou want to howl and snarl and kill him for looking down on him like this, but he could only try to keep his breathing even, face scrunched up in discomfort. “Just hold on. I’ll make it good for you, I promise.”

The alpha wasn’t fully seated yet before pausing again, drawing out slightly, and rocking back in with a shallow thrust. Bakugou’s breath hitched, and he twisted as much as he could to bury his face against the sheets, willing it to be over with. The alpha paid him no mind, starting to move his hips in a slow pattern, working himself deeper and letting Bakugou’s body grow accustom to the intrusion. His shallow thrusts grew longer, and after a bit their hips were meeting as he pushed in, buried up to the base.

Bakugou felt disgust roll through him as the pain dulled and his body’s slick began doing its job. His face felt hot, his heat’s subtle whisper of need from before returning, and the movement of the cock dragging against his walls began massaging a dull build inside of him. It felt like a coil tightening, a pressure cooker of what was probably pleasure, and Bakugou hated it. The alpha started to pick up the pace, fucking into him with a steady rhythm that rocked his body, and Bakugou knew he was making little noises but he couldn’t seem to stop while he was trying to catch his breath.

The room was filled with the sounds of their shallow panting, the creak of the bed, and the slaps of their hips meeting, and Bakugou tried to focus on anything but that. The control of his limbs was returning, but it felt like wading through mud, and the only thing they seemed good for was bracing himself against the thrusts and his own growing arousal. The alpha grunted, shifting the two of them lightly to adjust the angle, and snapped his hips back in a fast pace, leaning forward. He ran a hand through Bakugou’s damp hair.
“That’s it. Knew you’d take to it,” he murmured, words syrupy and deep. “You like this, yeah? Fuckin’ love it.”

Bakugou did his best to put as much venom as possible into his glare, despite his lidded eyes and heavy flush. “Die.”

The alpha responded with a low laugh. He leaned forward a little more, breathing over Bakugou’s ear. “You can’t hide it. You were made for this.”

Bakugou grit his teeth, feeling rage and shame war inside of him. “Shut up.”

“Who would’ve thought UA’s big, bad star pupil would be such an easy little breeder, hm?” His breath was hot against Bakugou’s neck, and he made a point to groan low, snapping his hips faster as if for emphasis. “Fuck, I’m glad I found you first.”

Bakugou twisted his shoulders away from him, trying and failing again to activate his quirk. He made a guttural sound of intense frustration that hitched with the alpha’s rough treatment, hating how his body moved to arch back into the thrusts, how his thighs were beginning to tremble. “I said shut the f-fuck up.” He was breathless and lightheaded and wanted this man to just finish and leave.

“Makes me want to ruin you,” the alpha murmured, as if he didn’t hear. His breathing was harsh and uneven, and he leaned it to press his tongue at the bite he left, sucking a hickey at the abused skin around the gland. He moaned again, guttural, and his thrusts started to become more urgent and erratic. “I think I will. Re-train you right. Make you my own little omega slut.”

Bakugou’s face felt hot, and his body felt like a spring, tense and vibrating and on the edge. He didn’t realize he’d screwed his eyes shut until he felt a prickle of damp heat burning at the corners. He couldn’t get away from the sensation of the cock inside of him, building him up, and he gripped the sheets as he tried to swallow the keening upturns in the sounds of his voice. It was only a few more seconds of messy thrusting before he felt the knot growing at the base of the alpha’s dick, working its way inside, and Bakugou felt another wave of cold panic. He tried to squirm away, to pull himself off of the cock buried inside of him with what weak energy he could summon, but the alpha pinned him down with the full weight of his body, forcing the knot in with a low groan. The man shuddered, and Bakugou felt overwhelmed and too hot and on the edge of some terrible climax, panting and writhing. He could feel the alpha start to spill inside of him, and he was making embarrassing, desperate whining noises in protest but he didn’t even care anymore, it was too much and he didn’t want it--

The alpha sunk his teeth into Bakugou’s neck once again, but it felt a little different this time. He still felt like his body was becoming weak and weightless, but instead of the pins-and-needles static, it was like the release of a dam, his orgasm crashing through him as he relaxed around the too-big knot he’d been stuffed with. He moaned, breathy and thoughtless, tense before his muscles collapsed and he sunk into the mattress, twitching.

The alpha was heavy on top of him, but it didn’t seem to matter as he sunk deeper and deeper, until he wasn’t aware of anything at all.

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Bakugou didn’t know how long he was asleep (passed out?) before he felt the mattress dip and a hand run through his hair. He hoped so much that it was just his mom, that everything before was a sort of fever dream, but he couldn’t will his eyes to open just yet. He was so drowsy, exhausted in a way he didn’t quite understand, and even his loud emotions felt muted and far away.
He felt someone move him, roll him onto his stomach, and a weight behind him, between his legs. The air was thick with an erotic musk, but it made some part of him uneasy, made him want to shake off this half-awake state he seemed stuck in. The presence around him re-positioned again, up his body, and the mattress shifted as they braced themselves around his shoulders. He felt someone move his head, almost delicately, and then a soft kiss to the expanse of neck left unbitten.

“Hey, sweetheart,” a voice, low and husky, murmured against his skin. Bakugou tried again to crack his eyes open, shifting lightly against the sheets. They were soft...felt nice against his skin. He was still too hot.

“You were so good for me. Took it like a champ,” the voice continued, and Bakugou felt something like an aversion to it. He felt hands move along his sides, over his shoulders. “I know it’s a little too early for you, and I would’ve let you sleep more, but I can’t stay long.”

Good, some part of Bakugou’s brain echoed from far away.

“I wanna go one more time before I leave.” Bakugou felt someone—that alpha—nuzzle him, exhaling too close to his ear. “Wanna see if we can make this take.”

The weight behind him, between his legs, shifted, and Bakugou felt a cock slide between the cleft of his ass. He growled in objection, sliding his legs up in a sleep-drunk attempt to dissuade whatever was going on. The alpha was sucking at his unmarked scent gland, nipping lightly.

“Might be more trouble than it’s worth, but I’ve been so bored. Keep me entertained, yeah?”

Bakugou wanted to try to garble out some sort of weak retort, but the cock behind him was sinking back in, smooth and easy, and there were teeth sinking into the side of his neck. He was already halfway under, and that’s all it took for him to fall back into deep unconsciousness.

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Waking up was disorienting, and it felt like it took hours longer than it normally would. Bakugou felt like his systems were turning on one-by-one, like he was aware of only one sense at a time and incapable of reflecting on any of them. His cheek was pressed against the sheet without a pillow, and his elbows were bent to allow his hands to rest next to his face. His fingers twitched and smoothed over the fabric idly as he blinked sleep from his eyes. He was on his stomach, which was weird because he usually slept on his back. Maybe that’s why he felt so heavy.

Eventually he was awake enough to bother with movement, and with a sigh, he pushed himself up—and abruptly stopped. His back ached, and his thighs felt weirdly sore, and suddenly he was aware. He sat, frozen, staring ahead as memory and realization crashed back into his mind, and at some point he started to shake, breathing too rapid and skin prickling. His mind raced, thoughts and feelings flitting in and out without letting him latch on to them, and he whipped his head around, suddenly terrified that maybe he wasn’t alone. The room was empty, but that guy got in somehow the first time, right? How long had he been unconscious? The clock on the wall said it was a little after 3pm, so it couldn’t have been that long, right...?

He didn’t know what to do. He was stuck to the spot, different options warring in his mind, too loud: No one can know about this. Everyone would know. He wasn’t safe here. What if the guy was still in the house? No one would respect him if they knew. He couldn’t let anyone know. They’re going to be able to tell. Would this happen again? Could anyone just do this to him now? What if the guy comes back? Is he tainted somehow? What if he caught some sort of disease? What if he got pregnant--
It was the last thought that finally vaulted him out of bed, grabbing his phone on his way to the bathroom. He knew the guy had knotted him, knew what that could mean, and that with everything else roiled his stomach. He barely made it to the toilet before he was heaving, falling heavily to his knees as his abused body spasmed in protest. After unloading the contents of his gut and willing the last cramping to subside, he lowered himself to sit with his back against the wall and gasped for breath, sweaty and hot and miserable. He let his head fall back against the tile, a sob wrenching from his throat as he curled in on himself.

There was too much that could go wrong, and he felt an awful sense of crushing shame, but the consequences of keeping this hidden were terrifying. His neck probably looked like hell, too, and the room probably smelled like a biohazard….his panic-addled brain recognized that even the process of planning to try to hide everything would be too overwhelming right now.

He sat there, sucking in air and collecting himself for what could have been five minutes or forty. After the cold of the tiles finally sank into his body and he felt like he could survive, he picked up his phone, dialed, and waited.

“...Mom?”

Chapter End Notes

Who is this guy? What is he planning? What is that thing he keeps doing to knock our angry protag out? Find out next time on Dragonball Z!!!

But seriously tho, sorry Bakugou. It's time for the Intervention of Authority to see if we can keep our boi safe. Hm.

Also: Thank you all for your wonderful comments!! I'm sorry for not replying, but I don't think I can anonymously and I'm shy :x I read and really appreciate all of them, though, and if you have any direct questions, I'll be happy answering them in the end notes in the future!

Also also: I've been updating a lot recently, but I'm not sure if I'm going to be able to maintain that schedule. Don't be disheartened if updates take longer in the future. It's all kind of touch-and-go.
The act of a coward

Chapter Summary

“I understand this is frustrating, Ms. Bakugou, but these questions are important for us to move forward with the investigation. I have to ask even if the answers seem obvious.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“There were no signs of force entry into the house?”

The officer directed the question to Bakugou’s mother, and for once he sat quietly, letting her do the talking for him while she could. After the hours spent getting to the hospital and undergoing the examinations required for a rape kit, he felt drained, and he just wanted to be out of the center of attention for a while. His emotions were contained as if in a fragile glass box, ready to crack and spill over if he wasn’t careful. He was used to feeling that with anger and pride, used to feeling like his control might slip, but that was okay when it was rage—he didn’t like the vulnerability and unease he felt bubbling under the surface in situations like this.

Mitsuki’s voice was tight when she responded. “No. The door was still locked when I got there, and none of the windows were fucked with.”

“You’re sure you locked the door when you left in the morning?”

Mitsuki snorted. “No, I left it open while my son was in heat upstairs,” she replied with cutting sarcasm, a sharp alpha scent of impatience seeping into the air. “Yes, it was locked. Alarmed, too.”

The officer jotted down her answers before giving an apologetic nod, his soothing beta scent responding to and neutralizing some of her annoyance. “I understand this is frustrating, Ms. Bakugou, but these questions are important for us to move forward with the investigation. I have to ask even if the answers seem obvious.”

Mitsuki sighed heavily, gesturing for the officer to continue. They had been placed in a wing of the hospital designed for issues relating to second-genders given that Bakugou was still on the final stretch of his heat, and she almost felt bad for the poor man having to deal with what must be a caustic onslaught of unpleasant odors coming from the family. He didn’t seem too fazed, however, and Mitsuki couldn’t help but wonder if he had to deal with problems like this often.

The officer turned to Bakugou. “I’ll need you to answer the rest of the questions. Is that okay?” Bakugou hesitated, then nodded, and the office pulled up a chair and lowering himself opposite of the teen. Bakugou felt a little bit of relief that he wouldn’t be lorded over during the interrogation.

The tension in the room made him want to flip a table. His mom watched the officer like a guard dog through a fence, and he could feel the presence of his dad off to his side, silent and far more intense than he’d ever experienced before. He didn’t know whether he wanted to tell them to fuck off and let him deal with this on his own or to push them in front of him and let them protect him and deal with this clusterfuck of a situation for him while he slept.
“Did you leave the house at all today?” the officer asked.

“No.”

“Did you talk to or interact with anyone on the way home yesterday?”

“No.” Bakugou paused. “Wait, yeah. I told someone to fuck off and die. It wasn’t the same guy, though.”

“Why did you say that? Was there an incident?”

“No, he just...was there.” Bakugou shrugged, and he heard his mom snort.

The officer raised an eyebrow before considering, expression serious. “You’ve been targeted by villains in the past, correct?”

Bakugou didn’t like where this was going. “Yes.”

The officer wrote a bunch of things in his notebook, and it had to be more than the information Bakugou gave him. Bakugou fidgeted in his seat until the officer continued. “Was the heat-rut room also locked?”

“Yes.”

“Do you recall how he entered?”

“No, I didn’t see him until he was already in the room.” The questions were getting closer to the event, and he silently hoped they wouldn’t become too personal. He didn’t want to talk about it, especially not when his parents were in the room, but he knew he should. The whole thing was stressing him out, and he wiped his sweaty palms on the cloth over his thighs.

“Did he use a quirk at any point? And if so, could you describe it?”

Bakugou paused, running over details in his head. At the time, he was out of it, his perception distorted, but he was good at picking up on people’s quirks and felt like he’d have spotted something. He shook his head. “No.”

The officer nodded, brows furrowing as he reviewed what he had so far. “Okay. I know this might be hard, Bakugou, but I would like you to give an account of events as you remember them.” Bakugou tensed, heart rate starting to ramp up as his eyes flicked to the standing figure of his mother. She kept her protective glare trained on the officer, who held up his hands in reassurance once he caught on to the teen’s heightening stress. “It doesn’t have to be a detailed recounting. Just the most important points for now, particularly regarding your injuries.”

Bakugou’s hand twitched as he felt an urge to cover the bandages on his neck, but he kept still. Drawing in a deep breath, he nodded, staring pointedly at his lap and not at anyone in the room. “I, uh. Was lying down...” He felt his face heating up, not sure how many details he needed to give, whether he had to mention the toy or why he was distracted. The silence stretched out, and he decided that it was a heat and they would figure it the fuck out for themselves. “I didn’t see him come in. He came up to me and...” His eyes flicked to his mom again, then back to his lap. “He grabbed my hair, pushed me...pushed my face against his crotch. Smelled rank as fuck, and I don’t know, it was a lot, I felt weird...” It sounded so stupid once he said it out loud. He shifted again, clenching and unclenching his fists.

“I tried to blow his face off, but he pinned me. Then he bit me? And I went numb after that--”
He heard a low growl to his side, and he glanced at his father. Masaru was hunched, arms crossed, normally mild-mannered eyes dark with rage. Mitsuki glanced at him before giving up her watchdog post to stand next to him, placing a hand on his shoulder. She caught Bakugou’s eye and gave a reassuring nod for him to continue.

Bakugou swallowed, looking back at the officer and then down at his hands. “And...that’s it. Before he. Knotted me or whatever.”

The officer jotted everything down, and Bakugou could smell the calming aroma of beta pheromones waft off of him. “He knotted you once? Did he bite you again?”

“He...yeah, he bit me. And then I passed out, I think. I think he bit and knotted me again after that, but I don’t remember much.” Bakugou’s palms were too sweaty, and they started smoking before he noticed. He hastily wiped them on his hospital gown again.

The officer seemed to notice. “Your quirk requires activation for use, right? It's not passive or automatic?”

Bakugou was a little confused at the change in topic, but he nodded.

“We’ll keep that in mind.” The officer made a note in the margin before looking up and catching Bakugou’s lost expression. “Mate-bonds and second-gender interactions often effect quirks, with activation- and evocation-type quirks being especially susceptible to interruption.” He turned to include Bakugou’s parents in the discussion as he close his notebook and tucked it away. “And until we have a better idea of who the attacker was and what his motivations are, your safety is going to be a concern. We’ll want info like that to ensure we can do what we can to give you protection.”

“I can protect myself,” Bakugou snapped, irritation spiking. “It’s not like I’ll let some asshole get the jump on me again.”

“Katsuki.” Mitsuki’s voice was low, different from how she normally chided her son. “He’s right. We need you to lay low until we know more.”

“Why? I’m not a fucking kid, I have my provisional license-- you think I’m stupid enough to let some shitty rapist get close enough to do anything?”

Mitsuki sighed, opting to turn to the officer rather than argue with her son at the moment. “What are our next steps?”

The officer was standing up, packing to report on the information they gave him. “We will contact U.A.’s principle and nurse staff about keeping Bakugou on campus during his heats and staying alert during off-campus activities. I also recommend you discuss contraceptives with your family doctor or Recovery Girl. Maybe scent blockers for outside of campus as well.” Mitsuki seemed apprehensive about this line of advice, and the officer bowed his head, almost apologetically. “We don’t have a lot of information to go off of right now, and until we know whether or not this was an organized or targeted attack, it would be best to remain cautious. We will keep in touch with any updates.”

Bakugou seethed but remained quiet as he watched his mom walk the officer out, voices trailing off into the hallway. As soon as his mom returned, he sat up, growling at her, “I’m not going on fucking house arrest because of this. If you think I’m going to just stay inside the dorms all the time, you’re a goddamn idiot.”

“Shut up, brat.” Mitsuki’s voice held no real edge as she sunk into the chair vacated by the officer. “No one here thinks you’re incapable of taking care of yourself. It’s just...these aren’t normal
circumstances, and we just want you to be safe, okay?”

“I’m fine! It’s not going to happen again~”

“Listen to your mother,” Masaru cut in, voice low and allowing no room for argument. “You don’t understand the situation.”

Bakugou gave a noise of indignation. “What don’t I understand?”

Masaru sighed, intensity melting into something more conflicted. He shared a glance at Mitsuki before continuing. “I’m not sure what your schooling has taught you about second genders, but if it was anything like it was when we were growing up, there’s probably a lot you don’t know yet. I guess this is as good a time as any to discuss it.” Masaru straightened, shifting and moving closer to better converse with his son. Bakugou was often embarrassed to admit it, but his father’s steady presence was like a balm, and even his father’s omega scent that he couldn’t fully detect until recently was something that felt familiar and comforting, like returning home after a long time away. He found himself begrudgingly decompressing.

Masaru folded his hands and struggled to find where to start. He began, “As you probably know, your mother and I are mated and bonded, and have been for years.” Bakugou rolled his eyes, not really interested sitting through a ‘when two people love each other very much--’ talk right now. “This is important, Katsuki. Please listen.” Bakugou sighed and focused. “Bonding and mating help solidify our relationship, make sure we can depend on each other and will be there for each other, and protect each other...and ourselves. It’s a rewarding experience, and a sign of our commitment to our partnership.

“But there are people who abuse that.” Masaru’s eyes were sharp again, dark and intense. “When biting during intercourse—don’t make that face, Katsuki, we’re all adults here—the purpose is to relax your partner during knotting, which can be potentially painful otherwise. It also intertwin...
reached his hand out to take his son’s in a silent plea. Bakugou’s chest rattled with an emotion he didn’t want to acknowledge when inhaled, and he broke the eye contact to nod his head.

“...Fine.”

---

There was one final meeting with the nurse on staff before Bakugou was discharged. He was given a number of medications to take, some precautions against pregnancy or disease and others temporary samples until he could get full prescriptions for scent suppressors and contraceptives. The nurse was plump and sweet, explaining each item patiently (too patiently—Bakugou interrupted her more than once to get her to hurry up). When everything was accounted for, she handed it all to Bakugou, who promptly handed it off to Mitsuki because he was dangerously close to falling asleep on the spot.

“The last thing is just the matter of the bites. We would recommend a check-up in a week or so, but if you go to U.A., I’m sure Recovery Girl could fix those up for you in a jiffy.”

A look of hopeful contemplation crossed Masaru’s face, and he asked the nurse, “If the bites were healed, would that affect the mating bond?”

The nurse hm-hm-hm’d thoughtfully. “Perhaps to some degree, but I doubt it! Most of the longer-term side-effects that people attribute to mating bonds are due more to interaction with saliva, pheromones, and other shared bodily fluids rather than the bite itself.” Bakugou grimaced at the implications of ‘shared bodily fluids.’ “I wouldn’t worry too much, though! Bonding doesn’t tend to take as easily during the early heats.”

Bakugou shifted, touching his neck where he felt the throbbing heat of one of his bite marks. “How do I know if it took...?”

“If you experience any nesting impulses, greater-than-normal changes in mood or abnormal anxiety before or during heats, excessive territorial impulses, or unreasonable or inappropriate desire to seek your mate, let Recovery Girl know.” The nurse rattled off the information with a practiced ease. “She may be able to help some of the symptoms, but as long as you don’t scent your mate or involve yourself in other bonding activities, the bond will fade in three or four heat cycles. Regardless if it took or not, you can expect a change to your personal scent which may or may not respond to scent blockers and may last two to three weeks.”

“Ah. Ok.”

The nurse beamed at the family. “Any more questions?” When they all shook their heads, she prompted Mitsuki to sign her son out of the hospital and reminded them to contact a medical professional should they have any future concerns.

By the time they walked out of the hospital, it was dark. Bakugou hated missing class, but for once he was relieved that he could stay home one more day. His parents said they would take the day off as well, which he begrudgingly admitted to himself that he was grateful for, and their car had barely turned out of the parking lot before he drifted into sleep.

Chapter End Notes

I didn't expect this chapter to turn out like this, but hopefully it doesn't drag too much...I
kind of enjoyed writing some Bakugou family interactions, or something like it anyway. Soon we'll be getting to school time and interactions at UA, so for those of you waiting for that, just hang in there.
A problem for a few days (or weeks) from now

Chapter Summary

He was expecting a number of questions, but that wasn’t one of them.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Bakugou was perched awkwardly on a stool in Recovery Girl’s office, painfully aware that it was far too soon since the last time he’d been there and for all the wrong reasons. The only reason he should be there was because he was doing some cool hero shit and got scuffed up in the process, not...this. Judging by the way Recovery Girl was straining to keep her positive demeanor, he guessed she felt the same way.

A quick peck to the cheek, and all signs of the assault were erased as if it had never happened. He felt a small weight lift from his shoulders—he was paranoid the entire walk to campus, and even though it was way too early in the morning and he was wearing a scarf to cover his neck, it felt as though anyone could look at him and guess he was hiding something. Now all he had to worry about was his scent and not giving himself away by acting weird, and no one would be the wiser. Seemed simple enough, but the buzz of anxiety and a budding stress headache reminded him that pretending to be normal might be easier said than done.

It didn’t help that, along was being tired already from the past few days and waking up early to get here before class, Recovery Girl’s quirk drained some of his dwindling energy supply. Being exhausted and strung out was not a good combination for acting like everything’s fine and normal and not fucked up. At least he’d had some practice with this after the nightmares from the sludge incident and the jarring emotional minefield after Kamino Ward, but this felt somehow even more intimate, something that changed the very composition under his skin. He at least hoped he would have time to grab some coffee before class, or else he might actually fall asleep, which was something he’d never done before and wasn’t planning on starting anytime soon.

Recovery Girl looked over the information Bakugou brought with him, strained smile slipping as she reviewed the recommended prescription plan. She tsked lightly, turning to type a few things on her computer. Bakugou waited, impassive and only slightly irritable.

“You took scent suppressors yesterday and this morning, yes?”

Bakugou grunted in affirmation.

She tsked again. “They want you to take scent suppressors whenever you leave campus, but that’s not going to work. They need up to three to four days before they fully kick in, and I’m assuming you young people don’t plan that far in advance for every single outing.” She tapped her cane on the ground, brainstorming something. “It would be most reasonable for you to be on a daily dosage, but I hesitate to prescribe that when you’re still developing...but given the circumstances, it can’t really be helped, can it?”

She typed a few more things into her computer before hopping out of her chair and heading to one of her cabinets. After rummaging around a bit, she returned with a bottle of pills and a flat package,
handed both off to Bakugou. “This bottle contains your scent suppressants. I’m giving you a lower dosage than the hospital recommended, but it’ll do the trick without clogging up your glands. It won’t completely halt the production of oils, but it’ll dampen it considerably and make it difficult for anyone to pin-point your scent on anything more than a subconscious level. The other package has your contraceptives. Each packet contains enough pills for a month-and-a-half heat cycle, and they’re labeled according to the order you need to take them. Follow the directions and take them at the same time every day. I’ll put in an order when you need more of either prescription.”

Bakugou nodded as he listened to Recovery Girl’s directions, brow furrowing at how precise some of the directions were. This was going to be a pain in the ass. He took the pills and threw them in his bag, making a mental note to create a reminder on his phone so he doesn’t forget to take them. Recovery Girl waited for him to look up at her again before continuing.

“You may experience side-effects to your heat next cycle. It’s normal to experience some changes after an attempted mating bond, even if it didn’t fully take. If you have any concerns, don’t hesitate to come talk to me. We’ll schedule you to occupy a heat-rut room on campus and make all the necessary preparations.” She hobbled back to her desk, picking up a clipboard and looking over a few notes. “That leaves just one last set of affairs.”

Recovery Girl picked up a pen off of her desk and grabbed a form before returning to where Bakugou was sitting. “As you know, by consent of your parents, both Principle Nezu and I were informed about the incident in order to accommodate the necessary changes to your schooling, health, and security. However, given our policies in place for your privacy, no one else on staff has been told about your situation.” She clipped the form onto the clipboard and handed both to Bakugou. “This will give us consent to tell the designated parties about the current situation. While I understand that you may not like the idea, I highly recommend you add at least your homeroom teacher, so that if you cannot reach me in case of emergency, you’ll have a second primary contact. He’ll be able to accommodate your needs on a per-case basis in class better than we would alone. I would also recommend adding and talking to the therapist on staff.” She paused to look at him with a small bit of cynicism. “Though I have a feeling convincing you of that one might take some work.”

Bakugou snorted humorlessly in agreement. He wasn’t going to go to a damn shrink...probably. He didn’t want to think about it right now. The form itself was pretty basic—his personal information, a checkbox for ‘all’ and a couple of lines for names if he’d rather specify, and a space for his signature. The pen felt heavy in his hand as he stared at the lines, feeling a dark sense of dread churn his stomach. He didn’t want anyone to know, but he also...didn’t want to feel completely alone in his thoughts and experiences the way he did after Kamino, when the fall of his greatest hero felt like it was entirely his fault. He didn’t want anyone to look down on him or pity him, but he didn’t want to be drowning in a sea of unknowing smiling faces, like everything but him was fine and unbroken.

If it were someone else, All Might or Present Mic or any of those other happy-go-lucky chucklefuckers, he probably would have refused. But Aizawa was distant, harsh, and would rather expel someone than go easy on them, and somehow that was a warped comfort. Bakugou heaved a sigh and quickly jotted down Aizawa’s name before signing off his permission to disclose. He handed the clipboard back to Recovery Girl, who took it with a poorly-hidden look of relief.

“If you have any concerns whatsoever, or want to make changes to whom we can disclose, don’t hesitate to stop by. Mr. Aizawa will be debriefed later today. Have a good day in class, young Bakugou!”

- - - - -

The world finally took pity on him long enough to allow him time for some coffee before class
started. Bakugou walked to the classroom with no urgency, hoping he’d be able to cut it close to the start of class so he could avoid any questions about his presentation, but he didn’t have much luck. He wasn’t the first to arrive, but there was still about fifteen minutes before class began, and he could only hope everyone would leave him the fuck alone.

He slumped into his seat, completely ignored the chirped “Morning, Kacchan!” from the seat behind, and got to work glowering and sipping his coffee. He was so fucking tired. Glasses was gesturing wildly at him and saying something about beverages in the classroom, but Bakugou ignored him. He found himself comfortably zoning out when the peanut gallery finally decided to get in his space.

“Woah, dude, you look like shit.”

Bakugou turned to sneer at Kirishima with an inelegant, “Ha?”

Kirishima was grinning at him, leaning against his desk while Kaminari claimed Jirou’s empty seat to the right. Both had that stupid look on their faces that made it very clear they were here to be nosy.

“Had a rough rut?” Kirishima wagged his eyebrows at him.

Bakugou’s brain short circuited. He was expecting a number of questions, but that wasn’t one of them. He must’ve sat a little too long with a blank face because Kirishima went ahead and continued, “I mean, I wasn’t expecting it on my first one either. Everyone makes it sound sexy, but that’s kind of bull, right? I couldn’t sleep for shit.”

“Man, you guys are so lucky,” Kaminari groaned, slumping against Jirou’s desk. “I really hope I present as alpha...all the badass heroes are alphas.”

“There’s no way in hell you’re an alpha,” Mina snickered, bouncing over to join the conversation as soon as she heard the topic.

“Hey! Screw you!”

“I’m with Mina on this one. Sorry, dude,” Kirishima shrugged, almost apologetic if it weren’t for his unfaltering toothy grin. “Besides, it’s not true that all the best heroes are alpha. All Might’s a beta, and I’m pretty sure I heard Best Jeanist is an omega.”

“Whaat, seriously?” Mina said, honing in on the gossip. “Are you sure, or did you just hear that on a shady tabloid site?”

“Uh...I don’t remember, to be honest.”

“You should know before telling people!” Mina lightly batted at Kirishima’s arm. “Don’t just spread rumors!”

Kirishima leaned away with his hands up in surrender. “Okay, okay. I got it.”

Bakugou just sipped his coffee and eyed them all with unveiled annoyance. He didn’t know how he felt about them all unanimously agreeing that he was an alpha without even bothering to ask, but his tentative plan at the moment is, ‘if they’re dumb enough to assume, let them.’ He didn’t know how long that would last, but if that could be a problem for a few days (or weeks) from now when he had some energy, he could deal with the fallout then. It was probably unlikely he’d get away with it forever, especially because no one had any respect for boundaries and more questions were bound to come up.

Speaking of which-- “Why don’t you smell like anything, Bakugou?” Mina tilted her head and
leaned further into his space, eyes narrowed and nose twitching with loud sniffs. She had a knack for actually being able to tell the difference between the scents of classmates and accurately guess second-genders, which was something almost everyone else struggled with. Kaminari, so far, had managed to get every single person he guessed wrong.

Bakugou leaned away, lip twitching back in aggravation. “What the fuck? Do you have no concept of personal space?”

“Dodging the question!”

“Like you have a right to know in the first place! Stay out of my fucking business, Raccoon Eyes.”

“I mean, you kinda smell like something, but it’s weird? Like a mix of things. Are you wearing cologne or something?”

“Will you just-- If you touch me, I’ll rip your goddamn hand off.” Bakugou snarled, rolling his eyes and grabbing her face to try to push her back. The three of them stared at him expectantly. “Fucking- I’m on suppressants, okay?”

They blinked, and Kaminari dropped a genuinely curious, “Why?”

Bakugou shrugged, mostly to buy himself some time. He wasn’t about to tell them the real reason, but he needed to come up with some bullshit reason to appease them on the fly. “Old Hag thought I should.”

“Oh. Huh.” Kirishima looked suddenly thoughtful. “Is it because you stink up the place? I mean, I know emotions can carry through scent, and no offense bro, you’re manly as hell, but you’re really emotional.”

Mina's nose wrinkled as she imagined it. “Oh yeah, that would be kind of awful. Thank you, Bakugou’s mom, for sparing us that cruel fate.”

“Fuck you guys.”

The conversation was ended fairly quickly after that as Aizawa removed himself from his sleeping bag and Jirou shooed Kaminari from her seat. Bakugou willed himself to find that fine line between relaxing from stress and not falling asleep in class, nursing the last of his coffee. He felt strangely okay with how that went, despite knowing that he’d probably created a bunch of problems to deal with in the future. Hopefully, however, the future will contain less exhaustion and give him more time to prepare himself. For now, he listened, took notes, and promised himself he could sleep the moment he got back to the dorms.

Chapter End Notes

Some friends! I did a quick read-through right before posting but it's 2am right now and I'm super sleepy, so there might be revisions to this later

Also you guys are so sweet ;o; Thank you for almost 100 kudos already and all the lovely comments! They're such nice motivators, and appreciate you taking the time to write them--it's been a long time since I've written any fanfics and the support means a lot!
I do feel a little bad though...so many people are worried about poor Bakugou and whether they'll catch the bad guy...but it's just the beginning, isn't it? Our boy has plenty of support and people willing to help him....but he also has many more obstacles yet to come
There’s a problem, and it has to be dealt with

Chapter Summary

He wanted to think this whole thing wasn’t getting too far under his skin, that he would be able to just brush it off and move on, but that might be a bit optimistic.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Bakugou managed to stay awake for all his morning classes, but it was a struggle. As soon as it was time for lunch, he dropped his head into his arms and attempted to doze. Thankfully, for once, his classmates left him alone to get some rest. Normally, dozing like this in class would be more of just sitting quietly with his eyes closed, not really evoking any real rest, but today he actually started to drift, mind sinking and sounds slowly moving away. He was in that place right next to unconsciousness where reality no longer registered when he felt a hand grab his arm.

Sirens blared in his head, memories of being forced unconscious and brought back again flooding his system, and he reacted blindly, shoving himself away and leveling an explosion at the offending party before he even reached awareness. His panic only dissipated when the world spun and felt the impact of falling off his chair onto the floor. Suddenly very awake, he stared up at an equally shocked-looking (and hardened, thank fuck) Kirishima.

“Uh. You good?” Kirishima asked after a long pause. Bakugou grunted, starting to twist himself back to an upright position while trying to calm his too-fast heartbeat. “Mr. Aizawa was calling for you. Sorry for, y’know, waking you up.”

“Whatever. ‘S fine.” Bakugou grumbled as he moved to his feet and looked around for their teacher, groggy from being abruptly awakened. Aizawa was standing in the doorway of the classroom, watching Bakugou through the entire exchange with a grave expression, and as soon as Bakugou met his eyes, it was clear what he wanted.

“We need to talk, Bakugou. You’ll be excused from your next class.”

Kirishima looked wordlessly between the two, eyebrows raised in a silent question. It wasn’t often that Aizawa had an aura this serious, and it was rarely good. Bakugou ignored him, walking wordlessly around the desks to follow their teacher out of the room.

Aizawa led him to one of the staff lounges, opening the door to usher him in. Or he was about to, except All Might and Deku were in there, having one of their weird lunch meetings. Aizawa glowered at All Might, jabbing his thumb out the door. “I need a private word with a student. You two can conduct your business in public like everyone else.”

All Might seemed a little surprised at first but didn’t protest, giving a few words of apology and other polite platitudes. As per usual, Deku blindly followed the cues of his idol, eyes darting curiously between Aizawa and Bakugou. When the room was vacated, Aizawa slunk inside, gesturing for Bakugou to take a seat. “I’m making tea. Want some?”

Bakugou gave a vague noise of affirmation. He wasn’t looking forward to whatever conversation
might be coming, and if he had tea, at least he could use that as an excuse to keep from talking if he needed to. After a few minutes, Aizawa returned with two cups, setting one in front of his student.

“As you’ve probably guessed, I was informed of the events that occurred during your absence.”

Bakugou waited. Aizawa blew on the steam over his tea, taking a small sip before setting the cup down again. He sighed deeply before continuing, and it seemed like he’d rather not be having this conversation either.

“I can’t help but feel like we’ve failed you again. There’s been an upsurge in this kind of activity lately, and we should have known better than to let our guard down against it. This shouldn’t have happened.” Aizawa dragged his hand over his face, looking even more worn than usual. Despite knowing it wasn’t directly his fault, Bakugou felt an uncomfortable crawl of guilt, especially after all the work Aizawa had to do to defend him in the past.

“I’ll be giving you my contact information until we have more intel about the attacker. If you feel threatened or if he makes any move to contact you, get a hold of me immediately. I don’t care if you think you can handle the situation yourself or if it feels like you’re overreacting. Call me.” He stared Bakugou down until Bakugou nodded. “Good. As long as you comply with the additional measures set down for your safety, I won’t be changing anything in my lessons. If you feel you need accommodation, or if we discover any through practical exercises, we’ll address it as needed.” Bakugou nodded again, feeling a small sense of relief that his training wouldn’t be affected. The last thing he wanted was to be coddled.

Aizawa paused again to look him over. “Does this affect your feelings towards alphas?”

The question took Bakugou off guard, and he felt a spike in irritation that alphas somehow stole the spotlight of even this conversation. “...All of them? Because there’s a few specifically who can eat shit and die, but I don’t really give a fuck about the rest of them. I’m still going to be the best.”

Aizawa examined him. He didn’t seem thoroughly convinced, but he also didn’t seem surprised. “Good. As you probably know, the hero courses tend to skew alpha. By extension, a high number of your classmates are going to be alphas. Frankly, most of them will be terrible at it for the first few years, and you might get a face full of more than a few emotional scent fogs. I want to be sure this doesn’t become a problem, for you or them.”

“As long as they can keep their hands to themselves, it won’t be. If they can’t, I’ll just blow their arms off.”

Aizawa leveled him with a deadpan look. “By the way you almost blew a hole in Kirishima’s face about ten minutes ago, I don’t doubt it. Violently overreacting is under the umbrella of ‘presenting a problem,’ Bakugou.”

Bakugou bristled. “If you already decided I have a problem, why even bother bringing it up?”

“Aiwa paused again to look him over. “Does this affect your feelings towards alphas?”

Because I want you to be aware of it before it negatively impacts your peer relationships or class performance, and I want to gauge where you stand so I can instruct you properly.”

“I said it was fine, didn’t I?”

Aizawa looked as if he was going to say something before shutting his mouth. He did this a second time before grabbing his tea, taking a drink as he mulled something over in his mind. When he set the cup down again, his expression was pinched in anticipated distaste, like he was watching a cat heave up hairball knowing he’d have to clean it up later.
“If you tell anyone else what I’m about to tell you, I will go out of my way to make your coursework a personal hell.”

Bakugou raised an eyebrow but tentatively nodded.

“As an omega myself--” He paused and rolled his eyes through Bakugou’s surprised ‘Ha?’, waiting to make sure there wouldn’t be anymore interruptions before continuing. “As an omega, I hated working with alphas when I was your age. Aside from the obnoxious displays and hormones and posturing, a lot of social bias and stereotypes made it easy to default to being bitter and defensive back then. It didn’t do me any favors in understanding our strengths or weaknesses, and in some ways, it reinforced internal biases that held me back in the long run. When I ask you about alphas, I want to know more about the way you conceptualize yourself as an omega hero in comparison to your alpha classmates, especially with your experiences.”

Bakugou made a concentrated effort to not point out that his teacher was still chronically bitter and defensive and instead focused on his answer. This was difficult because frankly, he didn’t know. He had barely a week to consider his identity as an omega hero, and although there was still an unsettling dissonance to the idea, he didn’t begin to know how to define or address it. “...I need to think about it.” He didn’t really want to, though. He didn’t want to make this into a big deal or something that would hold him back, and he didn’t want to be reminded that, no matter what excuses his parents or anyone else gave him about experience or normalcy, some random guy rendered him powerless almost instantly. He swallowed thickly, the notion causing his shoulders to tense, and he tried to find a way to form it into a question.

“When I was...when that guy...overpowered me. All it took was his scent and the bite. Is that...something any alpha could do? Will they be able to do that here?” As soon as the idea was in the world, fully formed, it seemed more real, and Bakugou felt as if the room was growing smaller. The idea that this could be a threat to his hero career, or even that a classmate or rival at U.A. could overpower him like that, made his hands shake. He did his best to hide it and focused on evening out his breathing.

“No,” Aizawa responded, though the word rolled with the promise of nuance. “Your classmates likely won’t have the control and understanding of their own bodies to do anything like that for at least a few more years. In the same span of time, you’ll acclimate, and it won’t affect you as strongly. Usually, for most adults, things like that only strongly affect mates or pack members. For strangers, it’s more like a disgusting annoyance.”

“No.” Aizawa responded, though the word rolled with the promise of nuance. “Your classmates likely won’t have the control and understanding of their own bodies to do anything like that for at least a few more years. In the same span of time, you’ll acclimate, and it won’t affect you as strongly. Usually, for most adults, things like that only strongly affect mates or pack members. For strangers, it’s more like a disgusting annoyance.”

“Why?” Bakugou was getting a little exasperated with how convoluted all of this was. Why wasn’t it just a yes or no answer? The sex-ed classes had made it seem so clear-cut. “What’s the point of doing that shit to someone you’re already mated to? Why even have it be a thing at all?”

“Aside from the fact that biology doesn’t care whether or not you think it should be “a thing”? For one, quirks aren’t always ideal for relationships. Especially in young, emotional people. Between mates and pack members, having a sort of natural kill switch can be helpful, aside from all the other ways scent can play an important part in relationships. It starts off as an impulse, something related to emotion that happens automatically, but there are ways to learn to control it, like breathing exercises to help stress or forcing yourself to cry.” Bakugou listened, but he still looked unimpressed and skeptical.

Aizawa sighed, rubbing his eyes before the pinched look was back, and he stared at Bakugou for a little longer before grabbing his tea. “If you tell anyone about this, I’ll expel you on the spot.” He knocked back the last of the liquid in his cup before continuing. “I’ve been mated to Present Mic--”

“Are you fucking serious--”
Aizawa talked louder to drown him out. “I’ve been mated to Present Mic since we were in our last year at U.A., and we’ve had our fair share of heated arguments, especially around the time we were about to graduate and go pro. Tell me, Bakugou, do you see some potential problems with having a shouting match with a guy whose quirk could easily blow your eardrums if he accidentally lost his cool?” Bakugou stays quiet, but a look of understanding dawns on his face. “I would’ve been fine either way because of my own quirk, but not everyone’s so lucky. In some cases, shutting down a mate’s quirk during times of intense emotion can quite literally save lives. This function of second genders was never meant as a direct tool of subjugation, and only certain kinds of assholes bother to learn how to forcibly control it for that purpose. Either way, you won’t have to worry about that coming from your classmates, both because they won’t be able to and because I doubt any of them would try.”

Something about hearing that dispelled an anxiety Bakugou wasn’t even fully aware he was carrying. While he was relieved, he was also becoming wary of the fact that it seemed likely he would be blindsided by more uncomfortable hidden fears in the future. He wanted to think this whole thing wasn’t getting too far under his skin, that he would be able to just brush it off and move on, but that might be a bit optimistic. He filed that thought away in the “bottled traumas” part of his brain to mull over probably never.

“Any more concerns I can dispel?” Aizawa broke him from his train of thought.

Bakugou didn’t really want to go on any more journeys of personal discovery today, so he just shook his head. “...Not right now.”

“Okay. If you think of anything later, we can talk. I can’t relate to all of your experiences, but I can at least work with you on obnoxious second gender issues, particularly regarding the urge to drown an alpha in a lake.” That pulled a small smirk out of Bakugou, thinking that hearing Aizawa rant about this topic might actually be a good use of time. For now, he was relieved that it seemed that their conversation was close to ending, and with only a few minor instances of nearly blowing his temper.

“One last thing.” Aizawa leveled him with an intense look, as if trying to see through his skull into his thoughts. Bakugou felt a prickle of discomfort, and he hid it by keeping his back straight and face neutral. “I’m the only one you chose to disclose to.”

It was a statement rather than a question. “Yeah.”

“Add the therapist. I want you to have appointments after class at least once a week.”

“Ha?” Bakugou responded, tensing immediately. So much for not wanting to blow anything up. “I don’t want to cry to some fucking quack--”

“I don’t care,” Aizawa cut him off. “I know all the excuses, and I don’t want to hear them. After your fight with Midoriya, All Might asked me to go easy on you because we, as teachers, neglected to care for your mental health. I won’t be making the same mistake twice.”

“But that was-- I was-- Why the fuck am I being punished for this?”

“It’s not a punishment, Bakugou.”

“Yeah, that’s why you brought up the suspension, huh? Gonna just tack this on the back of my other stupid mistakes? Double jeopardy sounds like a great fucking plan.”

Aizawa gave a long suffering sigh. “Listen, as a hero, you’re going to be in situations that will test
the limits of your mind. You’re going to see people suffer, see them die, lose friends and allies, and witness things that will haunt you deeply in ways you can’t escape. Handling that is part of the job. It’s not fair to the people you’re protecting if you’re working on fumes after nights of insomnia and panic attacks. And if the villain attacks, kidnapping, hostage situation, and weight of guilt are already on your shoulders, I’m not going to sit here after sexual assault is added to the mix and wait for you to crash.”

“I’m not going to crash--”

Aizawa interrupted him, voice firm but flat. “Most heroes have seen mental health professionals, and many do regularly. It’s as much a part of the job as physical check-ups. Consider this a supplementary course on hero work, and talk to the damn therapist. I will be barring you from practical lessons until you comply.”

Bakugou balked, composure lost. “You can’t--”

“I can. I’ve talked to Nezu, and he agrees with this plan of action. You’re far too promising a student, and you have the potential to be a great hero. We want to do all we can to give you the best possible chance at that future, and if that means wrestling with your ego, then so be it.” Aizawa leaned forward, face stern except for the concern in his eyes. “It’s normal to not be okay. No one expects you to be magically fine. No one wants you to pretend you are or thinks it has any bearing on your strength or resilience. But it’s not my job to let you struggle when the only thing it’s going to accomplish is to hurt you further. I want to teach you at your best, but that requires you to take advantage of the resources we have.”

Bakugou fell silent, a mix of chaotic emotions playing across his face. Aizawa let his student process his words before picking up his empty cup to conclude their meeting. “Don’t half-ass your time here. I don’t want to have to force you, but there’s a problem, and it has to be dealt with. Swallow your pride, address the issue, and talk to the damn therapist.”

- - - - -

Tucked away in an unassuming apartment, a jaded beta scrolled through a series of messages on one of multiple screens set up on the desk in front of him. The blinds were closed tightly, but the blue glow of the computer illuminated the room well enough. While he passed most of the messages without a second glance, one particular subject caught his eye, and he opened it, fingers idly fumbling with one of many small bottles and vials shoved into the pockets of his vest as he read.

On the other side of the room, an alpha with styled but oily hair was typing away on a laptop. The forum he frequented was not one easily accessed by anyone outside of his particular set of interests, although there were plenty of similar sites that were slightly less illicit and much more unapologetically public. At the moment, he was updating a thread he started a few days ago, detailing what the community called a “successful hunt.” A few other members had given him some ideas for the game he was planning, and he was in high spirits.

The beta called over his shoulder. “Hey, Watanabe. That broker’s trying to get us in contact with the League again. Says they have a job they think you’re suited for.”

Watanabe ignored him. He was busy.

“Hey. Dumbass. Answer me.”

“Shut up, Specs, let me finish this post.”
Specs groaned, swiveling his chair around. “Yeah, sure. Take your time fucking around and telling everybody about your jailbait adventures. Or, how about instead of finding more ways to put us at risk, you focus on getting some goddamn work?”

“Someone’s pissy today.”

“Go to hell. I keep telling you to quit it with that heat hunt shit.”

“It’s just a hobby. Let’s calm down, hm?”

“A hobby that makes more trails that I have to cover up. You’re getting cocky. I’m not the best at cyber security, and one of these days this is going to get traced back to you, and I’m not gonna take the fall.”

Watanabe smirked at his companion, shutting his laptop with a sharp click. “Come on, Specs, we both know you’re just jealous. Wish you were an omega so you could get a taste for yourself, don’t you?”

“You’re an ass.”

“And yet, you stick around anyway.”

“You’re a profitable ass.”

“Keep pretending like you’re not drooling for a pack bond.”

Specs inhaled deeply and counted to five in his head before turning back to his computer. “Broker. Job. League. Want me to tell them to fuck off again?”

“Hold on now. What do they want?”

Specs glanced back over his shoulder. Usually any word from the League of Villains was pretty quickly shut down, given that their plans were often too flashy and rarely involved an emphasis on return value. They were gaining more traction with All Might’s retirement, though, and this particular broker did usually deliver some decent hits. “Says they want to do some covert heists. There’s not a lot of details, but their warp guy needs exact coordinates for his quirk, so it sounds like they want confidential ground plans or blueprints for certain locations.”

Watanabe leaned back in his chair, crossing his legs and tapping his chin with his finger. “Now, isn’t that interesting...this might actually work in our favor.”

“...How? Can’t buy dinner with a blueprint.”

“No, but we could easily nab some valuables on the side, and information is as good as gold these days. Plus, they might be able to help me on a personal project.”

A look of exasperation bloomed over Specs’s face as he realized what his associate meant. “You can’t be serious.”

“They got into U.A. before, right? And even captured the lil’ firecracker once. I think that’s worth trying to negotiate a favor or two in exchange for some floor plans.”

“I’m not going to agree with this.”

“You don’t have to.” Watanabe shrugged, amusement flickering in his eyes as he watched a series of emotions play out in Specs’s expression. He pulled out his phone and opened up his contact list,
preparing to get in touch with the broker about the job.

“...Fine. Fucking whatever. At least get some hair or something from your new League friends so I can keep an eye on them.” Specs turned back to the computer, jabbing the keys with more force than necessary as he responded to the message before Watanabe could.

“Sure thing. I’ll grab some from my new project, too, and maybe once he’s tamed, I’ll let you have your cute lil’ pack bond, and we can all retire to raise pups in the countryside.”

“Do whatever. You’re just going to anyway.”

“There, now you get it.”

Chapter End Notes

[Edit]
Character profiles for Watanabe and Specs :
Watanabe Touma
Specs (Kanbe Tadao)
First off, comment reply:
Kristy_Senju: "Umm is it just going to todobaku? Just wondering."
That's the main plan yeah! I'd like to play w pack bonds too, so there p good likelyhood for more additional pairings. This whole fic is basically an excuse to mess around with a/b/o as a social/biological concept, so don't be too surprised if that happens...but todobaku is the For Sure Going To Happen ship and kind of the crux of any other relationship developments, so dw about that

I'm a little nervous because I know OCs and antagonists can sometimes be pretty hit or miss..I've read some fics where villain OC's are great and some where it's a little annoying, so I'm hoping I'm making them at least somewhat interesting.

Also Dadzawa to the rescue. Give our boi some tough love and guidance thru these hard times.
A sense of normalcy

Chapter Summary

Until he had more examples to go by, he’d have to assume that not taking any shit was simply a quality omegas shared, and he was more than fine with that.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

In the weeks following, things fell back into a routine. As much as Bakugou hated the idea of talking about fluffy shit like his feelings to a stranger, he wasn’t about to miss out on training, so he started seeing the therapist. At first it was a struggle, especially the first session when his symptoms were pulled out and laid bare and wrestled into a treatment plan, but the therapist didn’t immediately force him to lay out his entire life history and all the accompanying complexes in terrible detail. After a few sessions, he relaxed from ‘aggressively defensive’ to ‘begrudgingly compliant.’ A fair amount of time was spent discussing exercises to help him handle his emotions or panic attacks, practical skills to help him get through his days while he struggled to open up and talk about the assault (and Kamino, and the slime villain, and his anger problem--). While he initially scoffed at the 'homework' assignments he was given to practice, he still followed through.

He might not like it, but that wasn’t going to stop him from being good at it.

...Except, he wasn’t. It was frustrating, struggling to do something seemingly simple like breathe evenly or ground himself when his emotions started the spiral. It didn’t help that a lot of the time, he wasn’t even sure whether it was because of some trauma or if it was just habit, expressions of anger and pride that had always been part of him. Since he came to U.A., and especially after the events around Kamino, he had changed, but he was no longer sure if that was growth or something else, something insidious. Maybe it was a mix of the two. But as he struggled to rework how he responded to his own thoughts and emotions, he couldn’t help but wonder if he was being rewritten into someone he no longer recognized, and if so, whether that was for better or worse, and who was to blame.

Fortunately (or maybe unfortunately), those thoughts mostly only haunted him when he was alone--doing the exercises before bed or when he needed time to himself between classes. He was thankful that the rest of the world seemed to move on as usual and not pin him under its scrutiny, but sometimes he hated it, their dumb ignorance turning callous and grating as steel wool. It was often a double-edged sword, where being alone only made it worse, but dragging himself back to squeaky-clean society was a chore he didn’t want to tackle.

But if nothing else, his goal to be the best kept him grounded, and he worked to convince himself that all of this was just making him stronger and would give him an edge...once he finally got a handle on it. At least he had class have him a sense of normalcy, and at least his dumbass friends were a good distraction, even if he wanted to strangle them half the time. The days always passed quickly at U.A., filled with fast-paced hero courses and a demanding workload, and Bakugou was determined not to let any of his bullshit hangups hold him back.

After his talk with Aizawa, he was worried that being surrounded by alphas would be a daily hurdle, but that ended up not being the case. Aizawa was right when he said no one actually knew what they
were doing. Alphas like Kirishima and Mina were like energetic puppies, more likely to crowd you with excitable attention or rowdy playfulness than they were to act domineering or defend some sort of perceived territory. The second-gender traits they did present were mindless and clumsy, such as defensively hiding their lunches without actually realizing it or turning to a beta classmate for support during a dispute like kids whining to their mother over who gets to eat the last cookie. Others, like Yaoyorozu, Iida, or Ojiro, were just as clueless but seemed almost embarrassed about it, and when someone would point out some alpha-esque thing they were doing, they would immediately start apologizing profusely.

Not that anyone was very good at telling what an ‘alpha-esque’ thing even was yet. On several occasions people would point out that Bakugou was acting a little extra alpha, and he would respond with a blank stare before ignoring them and continuing to do whatever he was doing. He had thought that people would catch on faster that he wasn’t an alpha at all, and at first, he tried to watch out for telltale omega behaviors to squash...only to realize he didn’t actually know what those might be, either. The sex-ed class went over clear symptoms of heats and ruts, along with some almost stereotypical tendencies and differences in scent or internal biology, but other than that, he couldn’t really hone in on exactly what made an omega different from an alpha in day-to-day behavior.

The only other omega in the class was Uraraka, and Bakugou tried to discreetly observe how she acted to see if he could catch any tells, but he had trouble telling what was omega behavior and what was just her. She was definitely more bubbly and outgoing than he was, and she was infinitely more nurturing, demonstrating it in a way that was warmer than a cool-headed beta but subtler than hot-headed alpha protectiveness. Bakugou knew that she was tough as nails, and that she was just as fierce and cunning as the Four Eyes and Shitty Nerd she hung out with, if not more so in certain ways. When he considered the fact that she was the one who shared his second-gender, he almost felt proud of her, becoming more adamant about taking stock of all of the powerful qualities contained in her cutesy, rounded frame. Until he had more examples to go by, he’d have to assume that not taking any shit was simply a quality omegas shared, and he was more than fine with that.

That is, until he did have another example. About three weeks after his own presentation, both Kaminari and Deku were absent from the dorms, which almost guaranteed that they were presenting and spending their first heat or rut at home. Bakugou would bet money that Deku’s mom was probably elated enough to buy the nerd a ‘congratulations on your presentation’ cake. Kaminari was the first to return to class after two days away, and he walked into the room with the sullen expression one might have if all they got for Christmas were socks. He slumped into his chair with a sort of pouty theatrics that betrayed wanting attention despite avoiding initiating it.

Mina was quick to take the bait. She leaned in, patting him on the shoulder. “Not an alpha, I take it?”

Kaminari made a face and shook her hand off, sighing dejectedly. “No...”

“You’re an omega, aren’t you?” Mina was leaning in even closer, clearly to take a big whiff of Kaminari’s scent and either not realizing or not caring that it was a little creepy.

“Yes,” Kaminari moaned dramatically, drawing out the word and dropping his head on his desk. Mina rubbed his back, and he responded by waving her arm away with a sulky, “Stop touching me.”

Kirishima, from the seat behind him, tried to placate him. “Don’t worry about it, bro. There’s a lot of great omega heroes.”

“Yeah!” Mina agreed. “Like Best Jeanist!”

Kaminari sighed, lifting his head to look at them. “Yeah, I know...”
At this point, about half of the class was listening in to some degree. Presentations tended to be a topic of interest and gossip, and as far as most of them knew, this was only the second time the results were omega. Bakugou tried not to look too interested, but he listened intently, mind already calculating the traits or behaviors Kaminari had that might hint at an 'essence of omega.'

Jirou disengaged from her conversation with Yaoyorozu to return to her desk next to Kaminari. “You know, you could probably talk to Uraraka about it, if it bothers you.”

“Yeah!” Uraraka chirped, walking over to perch on Tsuyu’s desk and get closer to the conversation. “I’d be glad to help, if I can.”

Kaminari didn’t seem to perk up much, but he nodded anyway. “Thanks, Uraraka. I think it’s just something I need to get used to. I’m still figuring out how things are going to change.”

Uraraka gave him a reassuring smile. “Honestly, they didn’t change that much for me! I think most of it ends up being in your head. And it won’t get in the way of being a hero at all, I promise!”

“Yeah, the hero thing kind of sucked, but I got over that pretty quick,” Kaminari shrugged.

“Then what are you so worried about?” Kirishima asked

“Just, you know, reputation, I guess? My mom said if that if I keep flirting the way I do, people are gonna think I’m a ditzy omega floozy. How am I supposed to be a smooth-talking badass if people think I’m a floozy?” Kaminari bemoaned.

“God forbid you stop harassing women,” Jirou responded dryly. “And you were a floozy ditz before you were an omega, so don’t worry about your reputation.”

“Only you think that,” Kaminari responded with a childish huff. “And besides, that’s not even all! I have to totally change my angle! Now I gotta worry about being on the catching end, and have you ever seen an alpha dick, it’s scary—”

“Okay! We’re done!” Jirou interrupted loudly, drowning out Kirishima’s “That’s only in porn—” and Mina’s howling laughter.

When she finally gets a hold of herself, Mina looks around. “Almost everyone has presented now, right? Who hasn’t yet?”

The rest of them look around as well, taking stock and reviewing in their head. Kirishima starts to list off out loud, “All of us here have...you’re a beta, right Jirou? Yeah...Tsuyu, Kouda, and Tokoyami are betas too...”

“So is Mineta,” Kaminari added. “He was pretty disappointed when he found out. Betas don’t really present obviously, though, right? So we wouldn’t know unless they said something or Mina sniffed them out.”

“Ah yeah, that’s true. And you two are the only omegas so far, so everyone else would be alpha...that makes Bakugou, Sero, YaoMomo, Iida, Souji, Satou, Hagakura...has Todoroki presented? Oi, Todoroki!”

Kirishima caught Todoroki’s attention from where he was talking with Yaoyorozu and Tokoyami. Todoroki excused himself and walked over. “Yes?”

“Have you presented yet, bro?”
“Ah. Yes. I’m a beta.”

Kaminari squawked, gaping openly. “What, really? You seem so alpha, though! And your dad is like, the alpha icon right now.”

Todoroki eyes narrowed a fraction, almost imperceptibly. “I’m aware.”

“Ah, sorry. I bet he was kind of pissed about it.”

Todoroki shrugged. “He’s pissed about a lot of things.”

“Ha, true.” Kaminari laughed before having the good sense to look a little sheepish. “Nothing wrong with being a beta, though. I’m just surprised.”

“It’s okay,” Todoroki assured, face relaxing back into a small smile. “I prefer this, actually. I think it suits me, so I was relieved. There are a lot of betas I look up to.”

Kirishima clapped a hand on his shoulder. “That confidence is super manly! Though honestly, I thought you’d be alpha, too. I was looking forward to watching you and Bakugou duke it out over the top alpha spot.”

Bakugou barked out a surprised, “Ha? Me?” while Kirishima laughed.

“I’m sure as hell not going to fight you for it! Don’t worry, bro, title’s all yours,” Kirishima shot Bakugou a thumbs up.

“What the fuck even is ‘top alpha’--”

Are we missing anyone?” Kaminari interjected. “Aside from Midoriya.”

“Oh, Aoyama!” Mina turned to the desk in front of her. “You’re a beta, right?”

“Oui!”

“Then, that’s everyone, right? Now we just wait to see what Midoriya’s going to be. Bets?”

---

When Deku came back to class the following day, he was greeted by a number of expectant stares and a chorus of “Welcome back!”s. He blushed but smiled and gave a flustered, “Thank you!” before he was accosted by Round Face and Glasses. Bakugou wanted to not care, but he couldn’t help the whisper of curiosity, and the fact that everyone in the class seemed hyper-focused on the nerd wasn’t helping him ignore it.

Eventually Mina got tired of waiting for the ball to drop. She slung her arm over Uraraka’s shoulders, leaning in until Uraraka managed to squirm away from her. “Well, Midoriya?”

“Uh...yes?” Deku replied, obviously aware of what she was going to ask but trying to dodge the topic, shrinking back a bit.

“What was your presentation? Come on, don’t leave us hanging! You’re the last one!”

“Ah, I’m an...alpha...” To Bakugou’s surprise, Deku’s eyes flicked over to his face. When the nerd caught him watching, he seemed to become even more jittery.

Mina didn’t seem to notice, squealing out an, “I knew it!” before turning to Sero and Kaminari. “You
guys lose! Pay up.” She ran over to Kirishima, who also was on the winning side of the bet, to get a high-five. Sero and Kaminari groaned.

“Midoriya, come on man, you have such beta vibes.”

“Uh...sorry?” Deku was giggling, though, still uneasy at being in the center of attention around this topic.

They carried on for a while until it was almost time to start class. Hesitantly, Deku made his way to his desk, giving Bakugou a wide berth as he did. Bakugou didn’t understand what his deal was—he didn’t think he did anything intimidating lately. He’d actually been putting an effort into it, even (sort of). He eyed the nerd suspiciously, which only made the other seem more uncomfortable. Finally, Deku spoke up.

“Don’t worry, Kacchan. I know you and Todoroki are probably going to be pushing for top alpha, but I’m not really interested in that! I won’t get in your way, I promise.” Deku shot him a shaky, placating smile, and Bakugou just stared for a few seconds before sighing explosively and turning back around.

“Whatever.”

Chapter End Notes

Dialogue!! Is tough. The fastest way to remind me that I don't write often enough

Thank you again for all your wonderfully enthusiastic comments ;; I am so happy that so many people are liking this story despite the rather niche subject matter, and I'm glad I'm making a/b/o more interesting for many of you!! Again I'm sorry for not replying individually bc of the Anonymous thing, but please know that I'm <333 whenever I'm reading them!!

I think...the idea of therapy is interesting at this point (in the manga) because like...I think Bakugou would be generally resistant to the idea, but he also seems to be more grounded after his fight with Midoriya and the humbling events at Kamino...I'd like to think that if he was pushed into it, he would take it seriously, or at least recognize some value in productive introspection even if he sucks at it for a while. He's an interesting character, that's for sure...potentially complex, for better or worse. I love it when a narrative takes a seemingly simple and assured character and busts them open, forcing out their potential as a kaleidoscope of dimensionality and unaddressed depth--anger dandelion has that going on for him. Hopefully I can latch on to some of that
Do we have ourselves a deal?

Chapter Summary

The problem was that everything seemed to be in relation to some standard of ‘normal,’ and he didn’t know what the fuck that was.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Just to make sure we’re on the same page, this is a short term contract. We’re not joining you, and we don’t want you going around telling people we’re members.”

Shigaraki nodded sullenly, obviously not happy with those terms, but not to such a degree that he would refuse. Watanabe knew the League was trying to recruit and doing a poor job of it, but he wasn’t sympathetic. Despite their hand in All Might’s downfall, the reputation of the League was still unstable and disruptive, and a lot of successful villains didn’t want to risk their livelihoods by getting involved.

Watanabe was no different, and despite the flippant attitude he gave Specs, he took his work seriously. They had managed to carve out a specific niche with fairly regular jobs, and although they couldn’t claim that they were the best at what they did, they were still pretty damn efficient. Watanabe might take some risks now and then, but he had his own set of philosophies about correcting society’s hero problem, and he wasn’t about to put his neck on the line for a bunch of weirdos hiding out in abandoned warehouses...at least not more than he was already.

The list of target locations that was handed to him earlier by...stitches guy (Dabi?...Yeah, Dabi) was neither short nor simple. Most of the locations were high security or had good reason to guard information about the building’s layout, and finding those layouts without being detected would be a challenge. There were a few embassies, hero agencies, hospitals, prisons, and even a few schools including U.A., which kept Watanabe’s interest. It might turn out to be a bit of a gamble to take this job, but it also seemed exciting, and it had been a while since Watanabe had a good stage for high-stakes stealth. He figured it’d be good practice for Specs as well, although he knew he wouldn’t be able to rely on remote hacking in some of the more advanced security systems. The final icing on the cake was knowing that they would be able to find a lot of other confidential information during their raids, and they could make a lot of money selling it on the black market.

But the League didn’t need to know about that last point.

“So what are you offering? This isn’t a small job.”

The members glanced around at each other, betraying that they either didn’t know the answer or didn’t agree on it. Shigaraki was scratching at his neck, clearly agitated about something, and Dabi was watching him with an air of impatient boredom. It was Kurogiri, the warp user for whom the coordinates and layouts were being gathered, who spoke.

“We are currently planning a series of activities to increase our support. While we don’t have funds to pay you upfront, we are anticipating an influx in the coming months.”
Watanabe lifted an eyebrow, mouth set to a mocking smirk. “An I.O.U? Really?” While he wouldn’t trust the League as far as he could throw them without an upfront payment, this gave him the upper hand with negotiations. It would be hard for them to refuse his terms when they didn’t have any real leverage. Plus, having the League owe them money could be useful in the future, if they could find a way to hold them to it.

“You’ll get your money,” Shigaraki sneered.

Dabi rolled his eyes. “I told you that no one in their right mind would go for that.”

“Now, hold on,” Watanabe cut in. “What ‘activities’ are you planning, exactly?”

Shigaraki’s fingers twitched in annoyance, putting Watanabe a little more on guard. While it was hard to take the League seriously, it was still well-known that its leader was dangerous and possibly straight-up unhinged. “Why should we tell you?”

“Well, if we complete this job successfully, it’ll put you in a very good position,” Watanabe stated, looking over the list with a calculated interest while trying to seem more innocuous. He glanced up after a pause. “But I sincerely doubt anyone else would take you up on this without upfront payment. You could let me in on your little secret, or you could as good as kiss your clever plan goodbye.”

Shigaraki stood rigidly as he seemed to process this, mumbling darkly to himself. Dabi spoke before he had a chance to respond.

“We’re going to do a series of small-scale attacks against some heroes, mostly for publicity and to rattle the confidence of the public. It probably won’t result in any real lasting damage because we don’t want to risk our position, members, or very limited resources—” He shot Shigaraki a dark look. “—but the message should be clear, to heroes and potential recruits or benefactors alike.”

Watanabe gave a thoughtful hum in reply, thinking it over. Their plan didn’t necessarily sound bad per se, but it didn’t sound groundbreaking, either. It certainly didn’t have even the smallest guarantee of profit. If this was the only thing that the League could offer him, he would have turned down the job without a second thought. But, the promise of having something to hold against them later as well as the profit he knew they could net on the side during the raids may make it worth the effort. Throw in a few more favors, and perhaps it didn’t seem so bad.

“Here’s my proposition,” Watanabe began. “While this is a risky job, I know your reputation is a critical part of your success right now, so I’m willing to believe you won’t shaft me and my partner after it’s done. Word travels fast in the underground, after all, and I’m sure you won’t want to dissuade people from your cause by being flaky with your deals.”

Dabi looked surprised but suspicious, as if never imagining anyone would actually consider taking the job. Watanabe couldn’t read Shigaraki’s or Kurogiri’s expressions, but their body language hinted at similar reactions. He continued, “I do have a few caveats. First off, I’ll need a lock of hair from everyone in the League. Doesn’t have to be a lot, but at least more than a few strands. If anyone doesn’t have hair, other body tissue would work as well, but something that won’t deteriorate would be best.”

“…Why?” Shigaraki looked apprehensive, but Watanabe was expecting that.

“My partner’s quirk allows him to track anyone within a 200 mile radius as long as he has a bodily connection to some piece of them. He’ll keep a bit of hair in his pocket, and we’ll be able to keep an eye on you. Don’t freak out—it’s a precaution we take with all of our clients and collaborators, and it simply makes things easier.”
They watched him warily but without immediate protest, and he assumed that meant they’d probably comply. “The only other addition is that I would like a few favors in the future that may involve warping goods or people. I’ll update you on that as my own plans come together. It shouldn’t cut into any of your schemes at all.”

He paused, glancing between the three men. They were still stiff, but they also weren’t reacting dismissively or aggressively, which Watanabe counted as a victory. Kurogiri looked as if he wanted to say something, and Watanabe waited to see if he would speak up. When he did, he spoke cautiously, “I’m not...opposed to providing you a gate on a few instances, but we move often, and I would require a fair amount of information. You will have to contact me well in advance, and I would like to reserve the right to refuse if your request jeopardizes our location or our members.”

Watanabe nodded. “I can agree to those terms.” He waited for any more discussion, and when none came, he addressed Shigaraki. “So, do we have ourselves a deal?”

Shigaraki looked back at Kurogiri for a long moment before the man’s misty head seem to nod. Shigaraki turned to Watanabe, drawling out his words to make it very clear he was still suspicious. “I believe we do.”

The days leading up to Bakugou’s heat were not too much different from the first time, but after all the cautioning about symptoms of a successful mate bond, he kept obsessively overthinking it. The problem was that everything seemed to be in relation to some standard of ‘normal,’ and he didn’t know what the fuck that was. They told him that he might be irritable or anxious, but that was a given most of the time anyway. He didn’t even realize that he was sometimes anxious until his therapist pointed out that his impatience, aggressive outbursts, and impulsiveness could be related to it. How the hell was he supposed to know if he was more anxious or moody than normal if he could barely differentiate the feelings in the first place? Add the fact that an increase in moodiness was already a common part of pre-heat, and Bakugou didn’t know where the line into abnormal began.

The concept of ‘territorial impulses’ was similarly difficult to nail down. He liked his space, and he liked people not crowding said space. He didn’t think he was unreasonable about it—it’s not like he was claiming a lot of extra room or blatantly attacking people who were getting too lax with his boundaries (often, anyway), but he wasn’t one to back down from defending his personal bubble. His alpha classmates could be way too uppity sometimes, and it was hard to be patient when they crossed the line, no matter how innocently. A couple of them had taken to oblivious scent marking, running the gland on their wrists over things like their desks or the doorknobs to their room. No one knew who started it, but once one of them did, a handful of them joined in almost compulsively, Deku included. Which would be fine, except once or twice Deku accidentally rubbed his noxious-ass alpha oils over the back of Bakugou’s chair, and Bakugou was forced to resist the urge to throw both the furniture and the shitty nerd out of the classroom window. He settled for glaring bloody murder until Deku was almost sliding under his desk in the process of cowering and apologizing profusely. The only reassurance that his level of territorial behavior was probably okay was the fact that both Uraraka and Kaminari tended to get equally (and sometimes unpredictably) grouchy when touched or infringed upon without their approval.

Bakugou almost wished he could just ask one of them about their cycles to get a better standard for ‘normal,’ or at least some reference for comparison, but at the moment that wasn’t going to happen. He didn’t want the questions or the reactions or the teasing, and there was a stupidly high chance that he would get all of that with no real answers to show for it. At least he was sure that he wasn’t really nesting or anything...probably. He did find himself drawn to softer clothing and added an extra blanket to his bed, but that was about as far as those impulses went. A couple of frustrating google
searches told him that said impulses were probably just general pre-heat comforts.

The one thing he absolutely knew he wasn’t experiencing was a desire for ‘his mate’ because frankly, fuck that guy...whoever the hell he was.

All in all, when he considered the list of symptoms the nurse warned him about, he didn’t think he was doing too bad. The next problem was the symptoms that he wasn’t told about. He wasn’t expecting, for instance, that he would find himself zoning out or staring at the wall, mind drifting and not infrequently coming back to mildly erotic thoughts. It was nothing too alarming, and nothing too outside of the norm from his hormonal brain before he presented, but there was a different tone to it that he didn’t know how to describe (which consequently made his google search process much more difficult). Sometimes there were vague fantasies, sometimes there was a mild curiosity around sensual acts, but in general it was just...hazier, and involved more casual, almost neutral observations about his classmates and their physical existences. On a few occasions, it was accompanied by the barest whisper of the hallow desire he felt during his heat before...before. He didn’t know how he felt about that, but it didn’t seem to be disruptive or intrusive, so he tried to approach it with some of the mindfulness techniques his therapist taught him without making a big deal out of it. He had mixed success.

Other surprise symptoms were less arguably pleasant. He found himself eating more, getting weird cravings, and his stomach would randomly get upset, an inconvenience which grew more frequent as his heat got closer. The google search on these symptoms actually went smoothly because they were easily described and apparently a concern shared by many, but Bakugou balked at the results. Supposedly, it was a common affliction in about half of omegas as a response to being ‘sexually-active,’ which did not feel like the right term for his situation at all. The idea made him feel a prickle of disgust until he read that for some, having a strong romantic or sexual attraction, frequently masturbating, or even just being around more alphas could be enough to trigger the symptoms. The more medically-oriented sites went into detail about how hunger became suppressed during heat periods and the body ‘flushed out the system,’ blah blah blah--Bakugou ended up skimming most of that information because it was a little gross and probably not something he’d care to know about in detail.

As long as he knew he wasn’t sick or abnormal or irreparably fucked up, he was good. He didn’t want to have to discuss any of this embarrassing shit with Recovery Girl unless he thought there was an actual problem.

He had to contact her anyway as his heat approached in order to schedule a heat-rut room, although he didn’t think anyone else would even be using them. Generally, the school encouraged students to spend heats or ruts at home to avoid both overcrowding and any hormone-related debacles, and for the most part, it worked out well and served as another good excuse to make sure students would regularly see their families. Even so, each dorm had three small rooms with accompanying bathrooms for students to use in case of emergencies or situations where they were unable or unwilling to leave, tucked away discreetly on the first floor. Bakugou had never seen anyone else in his class use one, and he was a little apprehensive about having his heat mere meters away from any of the common areas.

But he didn’t have a choice. The school had already tentatively scheduled which days off he needed for his heat, and he confirmed with Recovery Girl that it seemed like it would be on time.

Chapter End Notes
1) I know some ppl are eager for things to move along (so am I), so to give an estimate: I imagine the main conflict will take something like 20-25 chapters, and after that, there's some other things I'm toying with...it depends on how much we wanna bully Bakugou and how much we wanna play with relationships, pack dynamics, societal ills, etc. I'm purposefully leaving things that can make the story stay interesting beyond the main conflict, tho there are also things that could make good side fics later....still deciding!

2) I know that if I'm going by current canon, Kurogiri would probably not be making an appearance. I'd like to say that was intention, but to be frank, I just forgot until like..today. We're just gonna keep this timeline vague and call it a divergence... think like the tone around the internship arc except everyone has their provisional license, which doesn't really make a difference, but is a detail

This fic is becoming like, a projection of my frustration with the hush-hush confusion around puberty/sex-ed, the bullshit around how ppl of certain genders "act" a certain way when half the time it's just confirmation bias, and the notion of evil related to gender violence that seems rarely portrayed from a threatened pov like...ppl always be getting beat up and tortured and murdered in stories, but what about PUAs and incels and domestic abusers and serial sex offenders? Bc that's the face of a lot of modern villainy relevant to a lot of ppl lbr. It's a little cathartic to mess around with it, condemn it but also like...examine it, express some fears and morbid curiosities and bits of sadomasochism that you would never want to exercise irl...I want Watanabe to have real conviction and a certain predator's charm but also be Very Obviously Gross. On that note, continue to mind the tags. Also, sorry, this note went long for some reason :x
A fairly painless venture

Chapter Summary

He timed the entire schedule of their heists around this particular target.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Watanabe started off with a few of the more difficult targets on the contract, making sure they remained as undetected as possible so as not to alert the authorities. An unsuspecting police force is much easier to deal with than one that has figured out a pattern. The deal with the League ended up working out better than he thought it would, mostly because their guerrilla attacks against random mid-level heroes distracted law enforcement and drew attention away from detecting Watanabe and Specs. They managed to cross off almost all of the highest security targets off the list within two weeks, leaving only targets that should be manageable even if there were notable security increases.

Which Watanabe suspected would happen given that he doubt they could remain undetected after this target. Specs also came to the same conclusion and bitched him out about it no less than three times, but fortunately the beta had learned that Watanabe wasn’t about to listen. Watanabe would feel bad if he wasn’t aware of the fact that Specs could leave anytime he wanted, but never did. It was in his beta nature to follow, after all, and Watanabe reminded him of the fact often.

He timed the entire schedule of their heists around this particular target. It didn’t really matter what order the rest of them came in, but he had calculated a three day window for U.A. in order to also take advantage of his side hobby. It would also be one of the trickier locations due to the security hikes after the League started targeting the institution, but the fact that it was a school meant that navigating the compound would be intuitive, if not blatantly obvious. He would mostly have to be careful to avoid cameras or robot sentries, as well as any pro-heroes acting as baby-sitters or guards. Thankfully, some of the gear he invested in would help him camouflage from detection by surveillance when he stayed in the camera’s periphery, and as long as he didn’t get messy during the second half of his plan, he should be fine.

Getting in was the easy part, although he had to fiddle a bit with the mechanism that locked upon detection of intruders. It had taken him a long time to expand his quirk to stranger locks like this, but he’d had a decade of crime with nothing better to do than practice. Getting into the actual building was even easier, but he had to start watching his movements, taking note of every camera and every potential blind spot.

He pressed a button on his headset to open communications. “I’m in. Do you have the feeds?”

Specs made an affirmative grunt on the other end. “It looks like you’ll want to head downstairs, but be careful. You’re not alone in the building. I’m ready when you are.”

It was a well-practiced dance—Specs knew where Watanabe was at all times, a lock of hair kept safe in a vial in one of the many pockets of Specs’s vest, and Specs could use the security feeds he hacked to guess where Watanabe should go next. The directions were curt, simple, “left,” “right at the end,” and Specs could cut out or distort the security feeds of only the cameras he knew Watanabe would be approaching, effectively making sure the man was never seen. Before long, Watanabe was
standing in a seldom-traversed hall that promised secrets, and he opened a door and started searching.

In the third room he checked, there were many filing cabinets, archives, and a small multi-use office space. He didn’t have a lot of time to check for physical documents, but those would likely be outdated anyway. He focused instead on the computer he found attached to scanners, printers, fax machines, and other clear signs of official business. Letting Specs talk him through the process, he plugged in a USB stick and bypassed the computer’s security. Checking the computer’s local files, he confirmed his suspicion that this was one of the terminals used for archiving important information, sensitive or irrelevant information that was taken down from the vulnerable and widespread school network. Because of the recent updates to the directories after construction of the dorms, it didn’t take long to find the newest versions of detailed blueprints of the school, and Watanabe also copied a few interesting documents about the school’s finances, confidential legal information, and, as an afterthought, schedules of all of the staff. Overall, it was a fairly painless venture, at least for now.

He made his way back out to the exit of the main building with Specs dictating his movements and hiding his trail. Back outside in the cool night air, he checked the time: 2:13am. Instead of moving towards the entrance gate, he slunk off towards the shiny new dorms, taking cover around trees when he could. Specs groaned in his ear.

“Oh my fucking--please? There’s really no way to talk you out of this? You know there’s no way in hell they’re not going to start an actual investigation on us if you mess with a student.”

“Haven’t caught us yet.”

“It only takes one time, idiot.”

“They won’t even know where to look. Not really.”

“Again, one time!”

“Whatsoever. Anything on the radar?” Watanabe waited to hear his answer before leaving cover to approach any of the buildings.

Specs made another frustrated sound, pausing as if considering not answering at all. “...Camera in the main common area, and a few in the hallways. None near the wing with the showers and heat/rut rooms. Should be clear after the common room.”

“Cool. Spot me. I’ll let you know when I’m done and on the way back.”

“Yeah. Sure. Fine.”

And with that, Watanabe slid into the dorm building.

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The night before he was scheduled to take off for his heat, Bakugou snuck past the common room to prep the heat/rut room designated for him. The rooms were in a separate section near the showers, behind a door that led to a short hallway which contained nothing but three more doors. He opened the one to his right labeled HR1, surveying the interior. It was small, almost uncomfortably so, with a bathroom that was little more than a closet with a tiny shower. Crammed into a space about half the size of his own room, there was a twin-size bed, a mini-fridge, and a few cabinets, one of which was empty and the others containing cleaning supplies, extra bedding (sheets, duvets, and special heavy scent-blocking quilts), and, oddly enough, a small toaster oven.
Bakugou sighed heavily, resigning himself to spending a few days every month-and-a-half holed up in this glorified closet. He deposited his own blanket and pillows on the bed by recommendation of Recovery Girl—apparently it would put him more at ease to have things with his own scent here, even though he’d been on suppressants for weeks and didn’t smell like a damn thing. He threw a few sets of clothes in the empty cabinet, unwrapped his heat aids from where they were hidden in his towel, and put his plastic shower caddy in the bathroom. The last thing he had to do was stash some water bottles and juice in the mini-fridge and throw a few energy bars that he probably wouldn’t eat on top of it. He took one last look around to make sure there wasn’t anything he was forgetting before shutting the door behind him, settling in for the next two or three days.

It wasn’t quite as bad as he was expecting, but it wasn’t good either. As the first night went on, pre-heat gave way to the full thing, and Bakugou was able to just drift off through most of the discomfort of being in a new, uncomfortable environment. He didn’t feel so different from the first time, mostly just hot, uncomfortable, and lethargic, although the hint of arousal was more insistent this time around. Regardless, all of those things actually helped him not give a shit about where he was, or at least try to. Normally speaking, spending more than a few hours cooped up in one place would start to drive him insane, especially without anything but his phone for entertainment, but heat just made him too damn lazy to care. He spent the first day lightly dozing, getting himself off a few times, and catching up on mindless game playthroughs on youtube (he tried watching more useful things like hero analysis breakdowns, but he couldn’t really pay attention long enough and eventually gave up).

He couldn’t completely relax, though. There was a sort of comfort in knowing he was in a building full of people during the day, but that came at the cost of worrying that they would somehow detect him here. Something about knowing how close people were made him undeniably self-conscious. On the other hand, it helped alleviate some of his more seemingly illogical fears, that he would look up and someone would be in the room, that his quirk would be rendered useless or teeth would find his neck. He knew he was at U.A. and anyone would have to bypass all of the security and not be noticed by any of his teachers or classmates, and that helped...to a degree. It still made it hard to allow himself to sleep any deeper than a doze, and it still made him look around nervously sometimes while he touched himself.

The day went by uneventfully, though, and eventually, after the time his phone’s clock told him was night, he managed to fall into a deeper sleep. He barely remembered dreaming of suffocating.

Chapter End Notes

A short chapter...these last two were a little difficult to figure out how to break up easily. The next one will be longer, and also explicit. I'm imagining a lot of chapters will be longer after this...it feels like this is the point where the actual plot is going to start picking up, and we'll get some catalysts for relationship developments

Kristy_Senju:
"Sometimes in other fics when one of the pairs is a beta it leaves the relationship open for a third or fourth party. I know this is weird but I read some OT3 fics so I wanted to check."
Polyamory is def a possibility, but it's not gonna be like...beta exists until alpha takes his place sort of thing. It always kind of irked me that betas were just...basically boring wingmen? Like so many a/b/o hierarchies seem like artificial social constructs, and I want balance and symbiosis! Everything has its purpose, and those purposes are important. So Todoroki might be a beta, but he's not going to be brushed aside even if
other relationships do come into play

Nou_chowan:
"It's going to be like this..Deku/uraraka, kirishima/kaminari just guessing lol
Which isn't bad or anything really but.. I'm secretly hoping for
todo+deku+kiri/bakugou"
Tbh I'm a multishipper and I think like, pairing off one-to-one is nice sometimes but can be boring when you have the opportunity to explore more complex and interesting dynamics ;) So keep hoping hahah although don't leave the poor other omegas out of the game so early
A happy coincidence

Chapter Summary

Watanabe had to admit that if this were any other day, Katsuki would probably overpower him on technique and combat experience alone, but right now, the omega was effectively quirkless, weak from his heat, and likely unsteady from not having eaten or moved much in the past day or two.
Timing is key.

Chapter Notes

CW: rape, graphic sexual content, violence, victim blaming, gaslighting

See the end of the chapter for more notes

At the door labeled HR1 in the dorms for class 1-A, Watanabe pulled back his sleeves, removed his gloves, and rubbed his wrists together, making sure his scent would be strong when he walked in. It was late at night, and Katsuki was likely asleep, but it didn’t hurt to be prepared. The feisty omega proved he could be a bit of a handful last time, and even though the anticipation was already building Watanabe’s arousal enough to permeate, he wanted to make sure he packed as much of a punch as possible. When he was ready, he covered the doorknob with a glove and pushed inside.

The room was small, and Watanabe noticed that the smell of heat was remarkably faint. They must’ve put the kid on suppressants. Watanabe was a little disappointed, but he got over it pretty quickly when his eyes combed the sleeping form of the room’s occupant. Katsuki was deep asleep, sprawled out as much as he was able on a small bed against the wall, wearing a pair of damp boxer briefs. He almost looked peaceful. Watanabe smiled, setting his gloves and equipment down where it wouldn’t get in the way, and approached. He reached a hand out to brush the boy’s cheek before dipping down to rub his wrist along the boy’s throat and scent gland, watching as the sleeping face twitched from the disturbance. When Katsuki’s eyes finally cracked open, Watanabe guarded himself.

“Good morning, sweetheart--”

Katsuki interrupted the greeting with a jerk of his arm and an explosion aimed directly at the alpha’s face. Watanabe was partially expecting that and dodged, but just barely, laughing in surprise at the reflexive aggression the omega was capable of. He grabbed Katsuki’s wrist and aimed it away from him, watching as the next explosion died before it could really form. There was smoke coming from his palms, but otherwise it looked like Watanabe's scent marking and preparation were working as intended.

Katsuki attempted to yank his wrist away, moving to level a kick at the intruder. He was snarling, wide-eyed and incredulous, voice laced with shock. “How--! How the fuck did you get in, you piece of shit, I’ll fucking kill you--”

Watanabe dragged a knee onto the bed, turning his body and pressing the omega against the wall so
that he wouldn’t risk getting kicked while the other thrashed. Katsuki attempted to free his captured wrist, twisting and pushing back against Watanabe, but his self-defense was not as practiced as his offensive combat—before he could escape the grab, Watanabe adjusted his grip further up Katsuki’s arm and pushed it to the side. Watanabe had to admit that if this were any other day, Katsuki would probably overpower him on technique and combat experience alone, but right now, the omega was effectively quirkless, weak from his heat, and likely unsteady from not having eaten or moved much in the past day or two.

Timing is key.

In any case, while Watanabe wasn’t exactly a brawler, it’d be damn near impossible to be a villain without having some experience with skirmishing. Watanabe took a cheap shot in the opening he created, slapping Katsuki hard across the face and then yanking the kid’s arm forward to twist his body and force his chest against the bed. Before the omega could gather his bearings, Watanabe pressed his knee across Katsuki’s shoulder blades, putting his full weight into immobilizing Katsuki’s upper body. Katsuki roared and struggled, using his legs to shove himself forward and his arms to try to push up and dislodge the knee pinning him. It didn’t get him far—the kid might work out more, but Watanabe was bigger, fully developed, and used to playing dirty without a quirk to back him up. Even so, Watanabe almost had trouble keeping himself in position, focusing most of his attention on properly crushing his prospective mate.

“Will you just— goddamn it, hold still!”

“Fuck you! Die! Get off of me! Get off!” Katsuki’s voice was cracking, on the edge of panic. Watanabe gripped the back of his neck, pressing down.

“I’ll bite the shit out of you again if you don’t stop struggling.”

Katsuki continued to struggle, but he was growing weaker, panting harshly as he failed to move the larger man. The position had made it difficult for him to breathe, and his arms were shaking from exertion. He let out a despairing groan in frustration before he finally stilled, croaking out a muffled, “What the fuck do you want from me?”

Watanabe blinked. “It’s kind of obvious, isn’t it?”


Watanabe chuckled lightly, testing his weight and shifting to better maneuver. It seemed that he would be able to keep the situation under control. “Why not? You’re a powerful little bitch, and I get off on reminding breeders where they belong. It was just a happy coincidence that you fit my needs so well, Katsuki.”

“You’re fucking sick. Disgusting piece of trash.” Katsuki was murmuring to himself, and Watanabe loosened his grip on the boy’s nape to rub his wrist along the side of his neck. This position turned out to be a little bit of a blessing, giving him access to the rest of the body pinned beneath him while still maintaining his control. He reached his free hand down to grip the omega’s ass, squeezing before smacking it hard. Katsuki yelped and renewed his thrashing, and Watanabe pressed down on his neck and shoulder blades until he was still again, breathing labored and uneven.

“Relax. This’ll be easier on both of us if you just stay still.”

“This would be easier if you just fucking left.”

Watanabe chuckled again, kneading and running his hand over the omega’s ass. “You’ll like it. You
did last time.” He spanked him again, then two more times, watching the way the muscles tensed.

“Fuck you, no, I didn’t.”

“Liar. You got off just as many times as I did.” Watanabe slid his hand under the waistband of Katsuki’s boxers, rubbing his middle two fingers firmly back and forth between the cheeks and behind Katsuki’s balls. The omega was squirming and growling and cursing, clearly not pleased, but Watanabe knew he could change that. He removed his hand long enough to wrap his arm under Katsuki’s hips and yank them up, and when he slid his hand back along the round curve of an asscheek, he pushed Katsuki’s underwear down with it. He smacked the omega one more time before shoving two fingers into him.

Katsuki gasped sharply, pitching forward to try to avoid it, but he didn’t get far. Watanabe didn’t go easy on him, thrusting his fingers at a fairly quick pace, encouraging slick and openness more than pleasure. By the time he was adding a third digit, Katsuki was flushed and agitated beneath him, rambling between “stop”s, “please”s, “wait”s and colorful death threats. He was wet, responsive, and Watanabe watched sweat bead along his back. Despite the suppressants, he could still smell a waft of arousal and heat.

Watanabe tested his grip and stance, shifting his hand on the nape of Katsuki’s neck a bit lower, right above the shoulder blades. He removed his fingers long enough to fiddle with his pants, releasing his erection, and in one swift movement, he pressed his weight into the hand on Katsuki’s back and slid down to slot his hips against the other’s. Katsuki jolted to try to get away in the opening, but Watanabe grabbed his shoulder and hips, pulling him back into place. Before he could try it again, Watanabe lined himself up and thrusted inside. Katsuki cried out, tensing and jerking away, but Watanabe grabbed his hips with both hands, holding him still.

“I can’t be gentle with you if you’re going to be a slippery little shit.”

Katsuki didn’t answer, choosing instead to bury his face into the crook of his elbow. Watanabe waited as the omega panted and trembled, staying still until the initial shock subsided and enough tension faded so that he wouldn’t (seriously) hurt the kid. When some of the strain left Katsuki’s muscles and his breathing wasn’t near hyperventilation, Watanabe started to rock, thrusting slowly until his passage was smooth and easy. The anticipation for this hunt and the adrenaline from the struggle made it difficult to hold back, however, and perhaps too soon, he was bending forward and snapping his hips hard against the other’s. He pressed a hand down on Katsuki’s shoulders, keeping his chest against the mattress, and his thrusts pushed the omega’s hips forward, forcing his back into a deep arch.

The position and pace made the sounds of Katsuki’s voice punch out with each thrust, and his face was screwed up tight, red and sweaty. It took longer than Watanabe expected for the noises he was making to have the thick quality of pleasure given his heat, but they did eventually merge in with the whimpers and grunts of aversion. The alpha could tell he was trying to be quiet, to not let his pride be injured by giving away that he was either suffering or feeling good, but he got noisier the longer he was fucked into the mattress. It was a turn-on, unraveling the stubborn omega, and Watanabe growled and leaned forward to nip at Katsuki’s neck.

“You’re such an easy slut, I love it.”

As he got closer to his climax, Watanabe let his thrusts get erratic, sucking hickies at one of Katsuki’s scent glands. He made a show of it, moaning and tightening his grip, relishing in the omega’s confusion at the mix of signals his body was sending him. As soon as his knot was trying to breach, the alpha sunk his teeth into Katsuki’s neck, feeling the omega relax and forcing the orgasm to overcome him as a result, and Watanabe felt a vicious sense of pride as he spilled inside the cocky
If Bakugou could dredge up strong emotions through the haze of omega subspace he was in, he would be raging. An indignant thought relating to how calling someone an “easy slut” is bullshit when they almost blew your face off drifted through his mind, but he couldn’t hold on to it for very long. He did think he was mostly conscious this time instead of falling directly into sleep, but it wasn’t far off. It was like he was swaddled, feeling motionless but assured, with his mind far away and his senses of touch and smell taking over as his main focus. He could feel the alpha behind him, inside of him, and the dull ache in his body from being used, but he didn’t seem to have any particular judgment to make about these observations.

The alpha ground his knot into Bakugou after a few minutes of being tied together, and it sent jolts and shivers through his body. When the knot came down enough to move, the man didn’t pull out, instead starting to thrust back into him, and Bakugou could feel the blunt build of arousal swirl again in his core, massaging the insistent need of his heat. He didn’t know how long it went on for, but it didn’t feel like much time before he felt a weaker tremor through his body, making his thighs tense and breath hitch. The alpha continued to move until he came again, making Bakugou feel too hot and full and weird. It was a relief when he pulled out, moving away and letting Bakugou drift against the soft fabric of the sheets.

He was brought back when something tapped against his cheek. It seemed like a monumental effort to open his eyes, but he did, and floating in front of his face is his phone. He stared at it for a second, thinking why this might be the case, but he remembered that he was told to call his teacher if something happened. He lifted his arm, which was much too heavy, and typed in his passcode to unlock his phone...and then it was gone again. After a moment of blinking in confusion, he took the effort to look around, and the alpha was standing a few feet away with both of their phones, doing something that Bakugou couldn’t quite make out. Bakugou had the good sense to realize that this was probably bad.

“Give it back.”

“Not yet.”

He tried. It was hard to keep his head up, so he let it rest on the mattress, staring openly at the alpha with hazy eyes. The man was tall, maybe as tall as Shoji, and his features were sharp and almost charming, but in the type of way shared by people who are probably either vain assholes or trying to rip you off. He was wearing a lot of black clothing, like he was doing some sort of covert operation. He was also wearing his shoes indoors, which was rude. Bakugou realized that he’d always been fully clothed, and Bakugou had always been buckass naked, and that didn’t seem very fair. Bakugou didn’t even know what his dick looked like, even though it’d been buried in him multiple times now. Bullshit.

“My eyes are up here.”

Bakugou looked back up at the alpha’s face, which was pulled into a smug smirk as he watched Bakugou take inventory of him. The man set Bakugou’s phone back down on top of the mini-fridge, but he spent longer with his own, turning it on its side and looking over the top of it at Bakugou before tapping a couple of times. He walked closer and towards the end of the bed opposite of Bakugou’s head, and Bakugou watched him, a feeling of something like wariness bubbling through his cloudy mind. Bakugou curled a bit onto his side so he could keep his eye on the alpha behind him.
“Haven’t even worked you through two heats, and you’re already perfecting that ‘come fuck me’ look. I’m impressed.” The man held his phone up again, and suddenly Bakugou felt very self-conscious.

“I’m not...”

“Mm-hmm. Sure, sweetheart.”

“Fucking...pervert.” Bakugou cringed inwardly at how uncreative that was.

Shitty Pervert grabbed his ankles, twisting his legs to make him flop onto his back before pulling him closer. Bakugou weakly tried to draw his legs away, up to his chest, and the feeling of wariness magnified, trying to dissipate the dumb indifference he was prisoner to. The alpha moved back onto the bed, settling in front of Bakugou.

“It’s been fun, Katsuki. I’ll be going in a bit, but I can indulge you a little more first.” Bakugou felt some deep part of him cringe when the asshole said his name again, like he was familiar, like he had the right. That feeling was put on the backburner as the alpha ran his hands up his inner thighs, parting his legs. He raised his phone again, and there were alarm bells ringing in Bakugou’s mind.

“I wasn’t planning on this, but I guess that’s just how this goes.”

As Bakugou was trying to force the heaviness from his limbs and make his brain work properly because he was catching on, the alpha leaned over him. One of Shitty Pervert’s hands was fumbling between his legs, and Bakugou could hear the rustle of fabric moving, but the other was carding through Bakugou’s hair. He tenderly eased Bakugou’s head to one side, exposing a smooth expanse of neck before tucking his face against it and breathing deeply.

“You can struggle and bitch all you want. Your body knows it’s mine.”

Before Bakugou could retort, the alpha was biting down, pushing his mind far away from what was happening to him in the physical world.

Chapter End Notes

For all those who were worried for Bakugou.......pls forgive me

Lost12345:
"Also, is this all prewritten? Cuz ur updating really fast lol"
Nope haha I’m just writing this on the fly...I do have a pretty clear idea of what the plot’s going to be and have a few scenes planned out, though. Mostly, I’m just bored in the evenings, and I’m trying to get this story finished up before I have a big move later in the summer...
Aizawa felt a barrage of strong emotions that he didn’t know where to redirect: fury and
disgust and alarm and foreboding. Mixed in with that, however, was an innate desire to
comfort and protect, and he was capable of acting on that.

Aizawa was about ready to kill someone when his phone went off. A quick look at the digital clock
next to his bed told him it was 3:48 in the morning, and he wasn’t supposed to be on call tonight.
Regardless, he groaned and picked up the offending device when Yamada elbowed him.

His reluctance was quickly replaced with dread when he saw the name flashing on the screen.

“Bakugou. What happened?”

There was silence on the other end of the line for a few seconds, which prompted Aizawa to swing
out of bed and start putting on pants in preparation, ignoring Yamada’s groggy questions. Silence
and Bakugou was an enigmatic combination on the best of days, and in this case it could only mean
something was seriously wrong.

“Talk to me.”

“...I got fucked again.” The voice at the other end of the line was flat, with this airy, mumbly quality
that Aizawa hadn’t heard from the kid before. He rushed to put his shoes on and grab a jacket before
he was out the door and heading toward the school.

“Is he still there? Are you in danger?”

“No, he’s gone.”

“Which room are you in?”

“Heat/rut one.”

“I’ll be there soon. I’m going to hang up to call the police and Nezu, but if anything happens, call.”

“Okay.”

Aizawa moved through the calls quickly while he rushed to campus, starting by contacting the
police, asking for detective Tsukauchi, and detailing briefly that there was a break-in to the school
with an unknown perpetrator, still at large. In addition to Nezu, who told him which teachers were
on-call for the night, he also contacted Recovery Girl, urging her to arrive as soon as possible. He
didn’t yet know what to expect, and he didn’t want to take any chances.

When he arrived to the dorm, it looked normal, nothing disturbed or out of place. There weren’t even
any alarms triggered, which was deeply unsettling. He didn’t dwell on that for too long, figuring the
police would do a better job at investigating thoroughly anyway. He had more important matters to attend to.

When Aizawa reached HR1, he took a deep breath to calm his hammering heartbeat before knocking—it would help neither Bakugou nor the situation at hand if he wasn’t rational. The door took a long time to open, and immediately Aizawa was hit by a nearly overwhelming scent of alpha pheromones and the lingering musk of sex. Bakugou had gotten dressed, but the collar of his t-shirt did nothing to cover the arrangements of hickeys and bites along his neck, and there was an inflamed red mark on the left side of his face that turned darker higher on his cheekbone. His student was swaying on his feet, eyes unfocused and heavily lidded with the need to sleep off a round of mating during his heat, and it looked like a stiff breeze could probably knock him over. He was silent and subdued, unsure of whether to leave the room or not, and he still had the sweaty flush from being in the middle of his heat.

Aizawa felt a barrage of strong emotions that he didn’t know where to redirect: fury and disgust and alarm and foreboding. Mixed in with that, however, was an innate desire to comfort and protect, and he was capable of acting on that. He maneuvered around Bakugou into the room, quickly going through the cabinet to find the heavy scent-blocking quilt. He wasn’t about to leave his student in a room that smelled of assault, and it would be difficult to do any questioning in here anyway. He tossed the blanket over Bakugou’s head and shoulders before quietly addressing him. “Come on. We should get you to the hospital.”

Bakugou blinked and shook his head. His speech was soft and murmured from the threat of sleep. “Don’t want to. Had a kit done last time.”

“You should get checked out, Bakugou.”

Bakugou sighed, brow furrowing and eyes sliding shut. “I’ll be there for hours...can’t Recovery Girl take care of it? Please? ‘M fine.”

Aizawa wanted to tell him that he was very much not ‘fine,’ but he watched the teen lurch on his feet and relented. “If Recovery Girl says you should go to the hospital, we’re going. No arguing.” Bakugou nodded, blinking his eyes open again.

“Either way, we’re not staying here. You’ll need to talk to the police, and we don’t know if your assailant is still on the compound. Follow me.” Aizawa led Bakugou to one of the conference rooms used by the teachers, indicating for him to take one of the chairs at the long table. Hot revulsion churned in Aizawa’s gut when, instead of flopping down like he normally did, Bakugou sat slowly and tenderly, shifting uncomfortably before drawing his legs up on the chair and wrapping the blanket more securely around his shoulders. “I’ll let the detective know you’re up here...can I get you something? Some tea?” Bakugou nodded wordlessly, resting his chin on his knees and letting his eyes drift closed.

Aizawa informed everyone of their location and set a cup of tea in front of Bakugou, who wrapped his hands loosely around it. The police were combing the grounds to be sure that there wasn’t any lingering threats, but Aizawa suspected the assailant had long since departed. Nezu and detective Tsukauchi joined the pair in the conference room before long, with Nezu excusing himself shortly thereafter to personally call Bakugou’s parents about the assault. Tsukauchi updated Aizawa on the situation.

“Midnight and Vlad King were on campus tonight, and they’re currently checking surveillance footage and coordinating the search. We’ve alerted all of the staff that there’s been a break-in situation, and we’ve asked Hound Dog to come in to see if he can sniff anything out.” The detective addressed Aizawa gravely. “But...it’s strange. So far, nothing seems to be out of the ordinary as far
as we can see. There are no signs of forced entry or external tampering whatsoever.”

Aizawa ground his teeth, but nodded. That was not the news he was hoping for. If they didn’t find any leads, they wouldn’t know how to plug the holes in their security, and as much as he’d like to hope this was a one time occurrence, it was becoming clear that Bakugou was being deliberately targeted. Tsukauchi seemed to be on the same page, his eyes darting to the bundled student. He sighed before moving around the table to sit in the seat opposite.

“Bakugou, I’m going to need to ask you some questions,” he said, voice gentle and eyes soft.

Bakugou watched him, tired but more coherent after some time and tea, and his expression had a slight shadow of irritation from being spoken to so tentatively. “I figured.”

“While I’ve been briefed on the basics of your situation, I wasn’t working on your case before, so forgive me if I ask you to repeat information about the previous incident. Do you have any recollection about how the suspect came or left, this time or the time before?”

Bakugou shook his head. “I was asleep. Both times.”

“Were there any details that seemed important this time? Anything that seemed out of place?”

After a second of thinking, Bakugou nodded. “Yeah, he was wearing a bunch of black clothing, and it looked like he had some gear or something, extra shit he left off to the side. I don’t know what exactly it was, but it seemed very covert ops. Messed with my phone, too.”

“He messed with your phone? Where is it?”

“On top of the fridge in the room. I don’t know what he was doing with it, but he had it for a little while.”

The detective addressed someone over a radio, requesting that someone go pick up the phone. “Do you mind if we go through it and make sure it hasn’t been hacked or bugged?” Bakugou nodded. He didn’t keep any weird shit on his phone unlike half of his classmates, and he wouldn’t want to use it without knowing it wasn’t tampered with anyway. Tsukauchi jotted down a note and reassured Bakugou that he would have it back in a day or two if they couldn’t find anything. As he wrote, his radio cracked, a voice letting him know that Hound Dog had arrived and would be taking over coordination of the search so that Vlad King and Midnight could focus on reviewing footage.

Tsukauchi ten-foured before taking a second to think. He addressed Bakugou, “Last time, was he also wearing any gear or anything of the like?”

“No, he was just wearing regular clothes, I think. Jeans and shit.”

“And there were no signs of forced entry that time, either?”

“No.”

The detective’s brow furrowed as he considered something. “Did he make any indication of whether or not you were the only reason he broke in?”

Bakugou paused, staring at his tea as he tried to remember anything. “I don’t know...I don’t think so.” He opened his mouth as if he were about to say more before shutting it again, picking up his cup and holding it in front of his lips, as much to hide behind it as to use the smell of tea to calm himself.

Tsukauchi waited to see if he would continue, and when he didn’t, the detective followed up the
possible lead with a tentative, “Did he reveal anything to you? Anything that might give us an idea about his process or purposes?”

Bakugou’s expression grew darker, and he hunched a little deeper in his chair, glancing away. He swallowed before mumbling, “Just said he got off on it. Called it ‘a happy coincidence,’ whatever the fuck that’s supposed to mean.” Tsukauchi exhaled slowly, jotting something down in his notepad. He was about to continue the interrogation when voices drifted in from the hallway, prompting the three of them to turn to the door.

“--don’t know what’s with this night. Who do we have to talk to about smelling this place up half to rut? Better not have been Nezu.”

“I’ll let you have that conversation with him.”

Midnight and Vlad King were bantering between themselves as they opened the door to the room. Midnight shot Aizawa a tired smile, waving a tablet as she looked around to address the group.

“So, any updates on the search? We have something that might be of interest--” Midnight’s voice drifted off as her gaze landed on Bakugou. She took quick stock of him, eyes darting to the bruises and blanket, and her face melted into an expression of dawning realization before swerving to shock.

“What-- Aizawa, a student was assaulted? What the hell, you just said there was a break in, this totally changes protocol, we don’t know if other students are in danger--”

Aizawa cut her off. “From what we know right now, other students aren’t at risk. The attack wasn’t random. This is the second time Bakugou’s been targeted.”

“That doesn’t mean we shouldn’t take this seriously! If we don’t know for sure, we should treat this like a worst-case scenario.”

“Nezu advised this course of action,” Tsukauchi interjected. “And I agree, for now. The attacker seems to be actively tracking Bakugou’s heat schedule, and the break-in seems too organized for someone who would be looking to draw attention to themselves by attacking indiscriminately. It would do more harm than good to alert the entire campus and cause panic among the students. For now, we should treat this matter sensitively.”

Midnight stood stiffly before relenting, taking a deep breath and reigning herself in. When she addressed Tsukauchi again, it was with a grave professionalism. “We’ve reviewed the footage from the past few hours. We didn’t catch anyone on film...however, there was a pattern of visual loss or distortion that seems deliberate. It’s as if each camera shut off as soon as someone would be in view, following a path, but the rest of the system remained unaffected, so you wouldn’t notice unless you were watching all of the feeds in real time. We can’t tell if it was done locally or by a second party.”

The detective narrowed his eyes, mind churning. “And no sign of entry or tripped alarms...where did the path go? To the place you keep your archives?”

Midnight blinked and shared a look with Vlad King. “Yeah. There and back, from about one to two a.m.”

“And the camera feed from 1-A?” Aizawa asked.

“I’d have to check,” Midnight responded, throwing him an annoyed look. “After all, I wasn’t aware there was a need to check specific dorms.” She went to fiddle with the tablet, but Vlad King reached for it, nodding for her to continue talking. She glanced at him before handing the tablet off.

Tsukauchi waited for her attention before he spoke. “I need someone to check to see if any files were
accessed during that time, and if so, which ones. One of my colleagues is working on a case that matches this pattern—seamless break-in, camera manipulation, and theft of sensitive information. She suspects that there are more incidents that haven’t been reported simply because the perpetrator is skilled at not drawing attention to themselves.”

“So you think the main target wasn’t Bakugou?” Aizawa cut in.

“Well...the timing suggests that it was planned to include..that. I think the assault was still deliberate.”

Aizawa nodded slowly. “Do they have any leads on the identity of the perpetrator? His quirk, or any other information we could use?”

The detective deflated a bit. “Some, but not much. The actual identity of the villain is unknown. We believe he has some sort of quirk to manipulate locking mechanisms, but we have a number of people with variations of that class of quirk on file, and many of them have criminal records of petty crime. It’s a sample, but not enough to put a name to the perpetrator yet. Right now, we just use the codename Locksmith. We also believe that he has an accomplice, a hacker with an unknown quirk.”

Tsukauchi ran his hand through his hair, sighing. “In any case, he’s been able to break in to a number of high-security locations virtually undetected.”

“So, what, he can just waltz in whenever the fuck he feels like it?” Every eye in the room landed on Bakugou, who stared at the detective with heavy tension. A silence stretched between the group as the gravity of the implications set in.

“Effectively...yes,” Tsukauchi replied, slowly.

“But we’re not going to just sit back and let this keep happening.” Aizawa interrupted, shoulders squared and eyes burning. “We’re not going to let this happen again.”

Bakugou really wanted to believe him.

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Watanabe walked into the apartment with a spring in his step and a tune on his lips, feeling energetic and refreshed. Specs was hunched over his computers, as always, and Watanabe didn’t hesitate to wrap his arms around his accomplice’s shoulders to nuzzle him fondly. Specs huffed in annoyance, but didn’t make any move to push the alpha away.

“You smell like a whore.”

“Jealous bitch.” Watanabe laughed and squeezed the beta. “I knew you were going to say something like that, but jokes on you. The kid was on suppressants, so I can’t even smell like him.”

“Who said I was talking about the kid?”

With a snort, Watanabe released the beta, reaching into one of the pockets on his belt to fish out a USB. “Here’s the documents. Aaand--” He reached into another pocket, pulling out a vial with a small lock of blond hair. “Here’s the tracker for my cute new playmate. Keep an eye on him, will you? He’s a feisty little tramp, and I don’t want him getting into trouble.”

Specs grumbled but took the vial, sliding it into one of his vacant pockets in his vest. “I’m too fucking good for you, you know that?”

“You’re the best,” Watanabe confirmed, with only a little bit of sarcasm. He placed his chin on the beta’s head, rubbing against his hair in a show of thanks.
Specs inhaled, some of the tension bleeding away from him. “...Quit scenting me.”

“You love it.”

Specs ignored him in favor of plugging in the USB and checking the files. Watanabe hovered, sliding over a chair so he could kick his feet up and continue to pester his partner. He fidgeted merrily, pulling out his phone and tapping around.

“You’ve synced up my phone with the system, right?” he asked, already knowing the answer.

“You phone syncs every hour automatically.”

“Have you checked it?” Watanabe wagged his eyebrows at the beta. Specs just sighed, side-eyeing his partner.

“What sort of garbage did you put on my network?”

“Wanna see some pictures?”

“Fuck no. Keep your jailbait to yourself.”

“Aw, don’t be like that,” Watanabe fake-pouted.

“You know I’m not into that. If you want to feel all proud like the mighty hunter you are, or whatever stupid shit you guys call it, show off to someone else.”

“And you’re always telling me to stop posting.” Watanabe was already online, navigating through the convoluted path to update his ongoing thread.

“You’re just going to anyway.”

“See? You get me.”

Chapter End Notes

It is thus established that our friends have A Problem

Thank you all again for the lovely comments ;; I might be busy the coming weeks, but I'm hoping to keep updating fairly frequently...you guys give me strength, encouraging me despite beatin up our boi so much

Nou_chowan:
"Oh um i have a Question if you don't mind,
Q. don't you have a pen name or something? so that i could call you with"
Iiii have pen names, but I don't tend to make controversial explicit content like this, so I wanted to make a clean separation...but I don't like not being able to interact either :(
SO! I [made a side blog on tumblr](https://example.com) for this and other slightly left of center fandom content...there's nothing there rn so pls come say hi! I may draw some eventually on there too maybe?

Which is a roundabout way of saying I guess my pen name is Autochorystalize from here on out :> altho this is still gonna be an anon fic
Morning classes passed with the sort of restless fidgeting of teenagers wanting to speak their minds when they were required to stay quiet, and when the lunch hour finally came, the classroom erupted in chatter.

After the detective left and Bakugou was released, Aizawa escorted him to Recovery Girl’s office. She agreed to let Bakugou avoid a hospital visit on the condition that she conduct a quick check-up. Bakugou hesitated--there was something mortifying about the idea of the familiar old woman giving him some sort of prodding exam, almost like getting a pap smear from his grandma...but he didn’t want to spend another five hours waiting for nurses and doctors, so after a long moment, he relented. It turned out, thankfully, that the check-up she had in mind didn’t involve anything invasive. She did take a blood sample, do some minor prodding, and ask a bunch of questions, but at least he could keep his underwear on.

She tsked around some, although it didn’t seem to be directly related to the exam. Every time she looked at the red slap mark on his cheek or glanced at the list of prescriptions on his files, she shook her head and fumed. After about 20 minutes of incensed efficiency, she addressed Bakugou. “I was hoping to start weaning you off of suppressants as soon as possible, but we have no choice but to keep them going, I suppose...It’s really not good for you at this age. I’ll start keeping a backup supply of emergency contraceptives as well...you’ve been following through exactly as directed, yes?” Bakugou nodded. “Good.”

Recovery Girl adjusted his file as well as made a few notes for her stock before turning back to Bakugou. Her eyes landed on his neck, and she sighed dejectedly. “As a precaution, we’ll prepare for the effects of a mate bond during your next heat. I’ll schedule an appointment for the week before so we can see if you’re displaying any symptoms.”

Bakugou felt his stomach drop. “You think I’m mated?”

“I’m not sure, to be honest...normally, so early after presentation, it rarely takes, but the cases I’m familiar with are almost exclusively between two young people. Big age disparities like yours are rather rare these days. Most of what I have to rely on is from accounts of older traditions, which may be as much composed of outdated stereotypes as they are accurate portrayals. Why, just a hundred years ago, they thought riding a bicycle could set off an omega’s heat. Ridiculous!”

Bakugou gritted his teeth, trying not to spit out an ‘it was a fucking yes or no question’ like he was sorely tempted to (and probably would if it was anyone else). “So...yes?”

“Maybe. If we go by what we know from archaic, exploitative customs, then possibly yes.”

Recovery Girl smiled sadly and didn’t push the issue. It was already past five a.m., and he looked completely exhausted. “Let me heal you up and then Mr. Aizawa can take you back to your dorm.” Bakugou nodded, and with a big kiss to the cheek, he felt much less achy but almost on the verge of passing out. He only vaguely remembered Aizawa guiding him back to the heat/rut wing, depositing him in the clean, adjacent room HR2. By the time he woke up the next day, classes were almost over and the last whispers of his heat were leaving his system.

- - - - -

The next night, Bakugou had a bitch of a time trying to sleep. Aside from sleeping most of the day, his mind was churning through a particular type of hell. His thoughts kept returning to the simple fact that he was being targeted by a guy who couldn’t be caught. Before, he had always felt secure, knowing the barriers around him would keep most threats out and anything else he could deal with himself through a few well-placed explosions.

Suddenly, none of that felt real anymore. A sense of danger crept up on him, and he couldn’t dispel it when it felt so indisputably justifiable. It settled in his bones, buzzed under his skin, seeped through his mind, made his heart thump too hard in his chest. For once, he was actually looking forward to his therapy appointment this week because he couldn’t stand the idea of this feeling following him as a fixture. There had to be something that could help it...right?

At least he knew the nameless creep was only interested in one thing, and that thing wouldn’t arrive again for another month-and-a-half.

He did manage to drift into a fitful sleep eventually, only to wake again about an hour before his alarm was set to go off. He gave up, rising to begin the day by showering, eating some cereal while watching some news in the common room, and appreciating the relative peace that only too-early mornings bring. He was the first to class, and he even had time to get himself some coffee and pick his thoroughly-examined phone up from the office beforehand.

People began filtering in before long. Some of them greeted Bakugou, and some of them were too busy chatting already to bother, which he was more than fine with. Of course, it wasn’t made to last. As soon as Sero took his seat in his desk next to Deku’s, he leaned forward, speaking conspiratorially.

“Bakugou! Did you hear what went down while you were gone? Apparently someone broke in!”

Bakugou grunted, already done with this conversation. “...I heard.”

“Isn’t that crazy? They won’t tell us anything about it, but there were police all over the place, and some students were interviewed by a detective.”

Jirou took her seat next to Bakugou, listening in to the conversation and nodding. “You can mostly tell by the teachers. They’re way stressed out.”

“Obviously. It’s kind of a problem,” Bakugou grumbled.

“Yeah, no kidding!” Sero agreed. “They should at least tell us what happened!”

“I think they’re trying to keep it quiet,” Jirou said, leaning her chin on her hand. “U.A. doesn’t exactly need any more bad P.R.”

“Yeah, but–”

“Take your seats,” Aizawa’s voice came from under his desk and the sound of a sleeping bag zipper
ripped through the conversation of the class. “It’s time to start.”

“Isn’t it a little early?” Deku murmured idly as he took his seat. Bakugou glanced at the clock—it was a little early. Kirishima, Mina, and a few others just barely managed to scramble into the classroom before Aizawa addressed the class.

“I have an important announcement before we begin class. As you are all probably aware of by now, there was an incident two nights ago that involved a breach in security. At this point, we don’t believe any students were in danger of being randomly targeted. However, given this and a number of other concurrent events, we have decided that students are not to leave campus alone unless you are going to or coming from a hero internship. Additionally, if you see any suspicious persons on or around school property, contact a member of U.A. staff as soon as possible. Understood?”

There was a chorus of “Yes, sir,” from the class, although many of the students looked off-put by the new regulation. Morning classes passed with the sort of restless fidgeting of teenagers wanting to speak their minds when they were required to stay quiet, and when the lunch hour finally came, the classroom erupted in chatter.

Mina and Kaminari both started complaining loudly. When Kirishima pointed out that neither of them tended to go out alone very often, Kaminari puffed up.

“It’s the principle of things! The principle!”

Jirou raised an eyebrow at him. “Gonna throw a wrench in your secret outings to buy dirty magazines?”

Kaminari squawked. “How did—wait, I mean, I don’t—! Jirou!”

Sero laughed. “Don’t worry man, someone will chaperone you to the store. I bet Mineta does the same thing, so you can just go together.”

It was Mineta’s turn to squawk. “Don’t get me involved!”

Jirou leveled him with an unimpressed glare. "I might tease about Kaminari, but I know for a fact you do stuff like that."

"Doesn't mean I want an audience!" Mineta said. "Besides, it’d look better if one of the alphas took care of escorting him, you know."

“Why?” Deku asked, pausing his usual routine of joining Four Eyes and Round Face. “Because of the dirty magazines? Not all alphas are like that, Mineta.”

“No, the chaperoning.” Mineta rolled his eyes, like Deku was chronically clueless...which to be fair, looked to be the case. “It's a joke. Because, you know...a beta chaperoning an omega around? Work with me, here.”

Deku still looked a little confused, but half the rest of the class within earshot groaned. “Bro, that’s so old-fashioned,” Kirishima said, voicing the thoughts of most everyone else.

“I said it was a joke,” Mineta pouted. “Besides, it’s not that old-fashioned. Some people still do it.”

“Yeah but only like, religious nuts and conservative wackjobs, right?”

“Well, yeah, but that’s way more people that you’d think.”
Uraraka and Iida moved closer to listen in when Deku still didn’t move to join them. Deku smiled at them before cutting in to ask the question that kept him still involved in the conversation. “Sorry, but my mom never really got into a lot of that stuff. What’s the joke with betas chaperoning omegas?”

“Oh, that’s what you’re talking about?” Uraraka scrunched up her nose. “Back in the day, omegas used to have to be accompanied by betas when they left the house until they found an alpha.”

Deku’s overly-expressive face started with comprehension before melting back into puzzlement. “Wait, people still do that?”

“Religious nuts and conservative wackjobs,” Kirishima supplied sagely.

“Ugh, I wish,” Uraraka huffed. “There’s a whole movement. You guys had to have heard about it--Alpha Rights, all over Twibbler and Readbits. But they’re mostly about blocking Omega Rights topics and bringing back archaic stuff like chaperoning. Not that a lot of it was every really taken care of to being with.”

“What, really?” Deku looked genuinely surprised, along with a few others. “Why?” The surrounding classmates were starting to listen in to the conversation, a bit intrigued by just how invested Uraraka seemed about the topic. Conversations about second genders from the omega perspective were somewhat less common in the hero courses given their comparatively low numbers, and there was a certain curiosity around hearing it firsthand and not from a heated thread on the internet.

“Because a lot of alphas used to benefit from that system, probably. And a lot of stuff just never changed, to the point where people just think it’s normal,” Uraraka looked a little like she didn’t want to continue this conversation precisely because she had strong feelings about the subject. Bakugou was hoping the conversation would go on long enough for her to rip Mineta to shreds about it.

“Like what?” Yaoyorozu leaned forward in her seat behind Mineta, having started listening after Uraraka got involved. She looked sincere in her curiosity, and there was little doubt she would be appalled to hear about the ills of modern second-sexism. Half-and-Half was also listening in, but he was more withheld with a strangely serious expression.

“Well, like...I don’t know, it depends on the context. Some things are just kind of accepted, like alphas giving mating bites but not the reverse, and other things are things that anti-Omega Rights groups have actively fought against. Laws and things.”

“Ugh, the mating bite thing is so stupid! It’s just tradition, right?” Mineta groaned. “Like in a marriage, the woman takes her husband’s name, and in a mate bond, the omega takes their alpha’s bite. Everyone makes it out to be a big deal, but it’s just symbolic.”

Bakugou was starting to get annoyed, and the subject of the discussion was grating on an increasingly sensitive topic for him. “Bullshit. My parents are both bonded to each other. Why would an alpha refuse if it wasn’t a big deal?” As soon as the words were out of his mouth, almost everyone was staring at him in bewilderment.

Kirishima nodded resolutely, putting on a mock seriousness. “Top alpha says it’s bullshit, so it’s bullshit.”

“Will you stop fucking calling me that--”

“Wow, Bakugou, I would’ve pegged you as Alpha Rights before Omega Rights,” Mineta mused.

“Ha? Why? I’m not an idiot.”
“The Alpha Rights movement is mostly pretty stupid,” Uraraka agreed, encouraged and wearing her determined face. “And it’s not just symbolic, Mineta! There are still laws on the books about the obligations of a mate bond which are super unfair to omegas! Society has changed, and some things don’t apply anymore because you can’t just look at an omega and tell if they’re mated, but certain things can still be used against us.”

“Uh...like what?” Kaminari tentatively asked from the edge of the conversation. It seemed like he wanted to know but was afraid to ask. Bakugou could relate—there was a lot about being an omega he never thought he’d have to be prepared for, and now he felt like a dumbass anytime it came up. He wanted to know more, but the history wasn’t glamorous, and it was sometimes easier just to pretend everything had been worked out. This entire conversation was starting to move into a territory he didn’t want to get involved with, especially not on three hours of sleep and with a mess of very intimate personal anxieties.

“Well...mate bonds can let alphas get away with a lot of really abusive behavior, as long as it’s done in private. Controlling heats or correspondences, that sort of thing. And if an omega bears a child to an alpha mate, there are laws that legally bind them pretty much permanently, unless the alpha breaks it off. Sometimes an alpha can take control of their partner’s finances or civil documents if they make the argument that it was for the family.”

“What? How do laws like that still exist?” Deku asked, looking personally affronted.

Uraraka shrugged, sighing and slightly agitated from knowing the reasons were bullshit. “Some of them just never got updated, I mean, omega rights is still only a little more than 100 years old...my grandma can remember growing up in a time where it was weird for omegas to attend school after they presented. A lot just hasn’t had the chance to change yet. And some things can’t be changed because there are groups focused solely on making sure they don’t. People who say that it’ll ruin families or put kids at risk if they repeal certain laws.”

Todoroki snorted derisively, speaking low almost as if to himself. “If alphas cared about family life, they’d be working to prevent unwanted mating bonds instead of protecting them. It’s about control.” There was something dark in his expression, and it seemed like he was purposefully trying not to get involved but failing. Even Bakugou could tell that he seemed weirdly worked up, which was saying something.

“Well...” Sero held his hands up apologetically. “Don’t hate me, I agree with most of what you’re saying, but isn’t it a bit logistical too? I mean, isn’t having a heat without their mate really hard for an omega if they’re bonded?”

Kirishima leaned forward and nodded. “Yeah, that’s a thing, right? Mom had to do it once when Dad got held up on a business trip...she had a few things scented, but nothing fresh, and it was pretty awful on her. Took twice as long, too.”

Bakugou didn't know shit about any of this stuff, mating or bonds or heats while bonded, and he really, really didn't want to right now. Not after last night, or the night before, or the last two months, or until Recovery Girl could just tell him what to expect in careful, nurturing language. He officially knew this was a conversation he didn’t want to be involved in anymore. Or within earshot of. Or literally anywhere near any part of his thoughts. He stood up and shoved his shaking hands in his pockets, hoping no one noticed the sweat starting to bead along his hairline. Kirishima looked up and stood as well, “Hey, where you headed, bro?”

“I’m fucking hungry, it’s lunch--”

“That’s not the point, Sero!” Uraraka’s voice was starting to get louder, her frustration with the topic
“I know, I know, I’m just saying we don’t really have a good system for that yet, so maybe it’s still too soon—”

“That still shouldn’t justify legally forcing them to stay in a bond,” Todoroki cut in, sharp and cold as ice.

“What I don’t understand is why omegas even get mated if they don’t like how things work,” Mineta sighed, shrugging like it was the most obvious solution.

If looks could kill, Mineta would have been murdered on the spot. Uraraka and Todoroki both stared in a speechless state of, ‘I can’t believe you just said that,’ and a few people started to raise their hands to pacify what was likely going to be a shitstorm.

“Congratulations,” Aizawa drawled from the front of the class, louder than normal to draw the students’ attention to him. “Your lunch hour is almost over. Classes will not be delayed for you to get food, so if you don’t want to go hungry, I suggest you stop shouting and eat.” Several of the teens yelped and ran to get food before it was too late, while others hastily went to pull out their lunches from their bags. Deku gently reached out to tug Uraraka’s arm, quickly flinching away when she turned and glared daggers at him. With one last sneer and an ‘I’ve got my eyes on you,’ gesture of two fingers from her face to Mineta’s, she turned to march to the cafeteria, her alpha companions trailing behind her.

All Bakugou knew was that he couldn’t stay in this room anymore. He didn’t know if he was going to get lunch, but the idea of being in a crowd was unbearably stifling, and the creeping, terrible sense of crushing anxiety was finding its way back into his lungs. He was vaguely aware that Kirishima was speaking to him and waiting for him to lead the way, but the prospect of making a normal-looking decision seemed impossible. He knew he’d need to eat, knew he should do that now, but more than anything, he wanted to go somewhere he could fucking breathe.

“Bakugou.” Aizawa’s voice registered through his budding panic attack. “I almost forgot, but I was told there’s been a minor error on one of your files. Please go to the main office to get it fixed.”

Bakugou stared dumbly at him for a second before nodding and distractedly telling Kirishima he would talk to him later. He walked out of the classroom and towards the main office, relief at being able to get away overshadowed by the fact that he knew he only had a few minutes left of break, and he had to eat something at some point if he didn’t want to get weak during his afternoon lessons, and the edges of his vision seemed darker for some reason, and his heart was beating too fast and chills ran through his core and fuck, keep it together--

His phone buzzed in his pocket. He autopiloted it out of his pocket and glanced down, expecting Kirishima or something to be bugging him about some stupid crap, but the preview of the text on the screen stopped him in his tracks.

*Mr. Aizawa:*
You don’t need to go to the main office. Calm down and come back to class when you’re ready.

Chapter End Notes
Ok first off, some art:

Bakugou from Chp 11

Some TodoBaku as an apology for taking a long time to get the plot where it needs to be to trigger their relationship

Sorry again for continually veering back into worldbuilding territory...it should only be a few more chapters until we get into ship land...and, well, more other terrible stuff for a while but the tags shouldve given that part away haha

I'm not too sure how I feel about this chapter...but....it is here. So! We move on

Thank you again for your continued support and wonderful comments while I slowly push this narrative along!!
So he churned these thoughts in his mind, by himself. He didn’t want to act on them, wasn’t ready to confront them...but he approached.

The pressing weight that accompanied him that first night after his heat didn’t lessen in the coming days. He was doing okay during school hours, mostly, but being alone in his room triggered some sort of whispered terror like a horror movie he couldn’t turn off. He spent more time than usual in the common room, trying to study despite the distractions of the idiot brigade, and that only led to a peripheral anxiety that his grades would slip. He was already a little off his game during practical lessons because of his lack of sleep...or maybe he just felt like he was. If anyone else noticed, they didn’t say anything, but he never gave a shit about the opinions of extras anyway—if he felt off-balanced, if he felt like he wasn’t at his top, then whether or not it was visible didn’t matter anymore.

When he had his therapy appointment that week, he had come to a tentative decision. He didn’t like the idea at first, but after trying to pull together his crumbling foundations, it seemed like a lesser evil. With the thought, ‘There’s a problem, and it has to be dealt with,’ echoing in his head, he asked his therapist if she would give him some medication to deal with his anxiety. After all, you handle illness with vaccines and antibiotics—it wouldn’t be weakness to need help for ailments of the mind, right? Just another part of the solution.

Or it would be, except his therapist gently shut him down. “While medication is a necessary and helpful tool for many people, with Acute Stress Disorder, we try to avoid relying on medication too early. Anxiety and other symptoms are normal after a traumatic event, and while they’re very unpleasant, diving into long-term pharmacotherapy right away isn’t always the best solution.”

Bakugou huffed, scowling. “So, what, medication is helpful but it’s not? I’m just supposed to feel like shit all the time?”

His therapist gave a hum to acknowledge his concerns, but she didn’t waver. “Ideally, no. But there’s conflicting evidence about how helpful medication is so early on, and you were doing quite well with your cognitive-behavioral therapy before. I would like to try working in some exposure therapy to help you get back a sense of control before we move to medication. Additionally, I would like to start meeting twice a week.”

Bakugou’s eye twitched, and his mouth was still set in a deep frown, but he clicked his tongue in obstinate agreement. “...Fine, whatever. You’re the fucking expert. But if this keeps affecting me in class, I’m going to want something for it, got it?”

The therapist’s lip quirks up slightly, but not quite in agreement. “We can try some temporary solutions, like sleep aids, but I’ll want you to keep a more rigorous sleep routine in that case. For now, let’s re-evaluate your treatment goals and come up with a plan.”

The rest of the session was spent putting things into order, and Bakugou was more grounded when
he left. He didn’t know if he felt better, but at least he felt like he had perspective, like maybe, over
time, there was a way to piece this mess back together.

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In the next few weeks, his therapist encouraged him to approach “unpleasant topics” more, which
was bullshit. Bakugou didn’t avoid things, and he didn’t run away. He made sure to tell her that, to
which she reminded him that his entire class still thought he was an alpha. Which, he countered, was
not his fault. Which, she countered, he had no intention of remedying and no plan for when the truth
would eventually hit.

Which...fair point.

She made it very clear, however, that he wasn’t required to force anything or out himself before he
was ready. He was just supposed to test the waters, so to speak. Dip his toes in a little. Even if all he
did was imagine it, that could be enough. The goal was to take all of these things that made his skin
crawl and find a way to make them his bitch, rather than the other way around. And if there was one
thing that Bakugou was good at, it was making reality his bitch.

...Except, he wasn’t. In theory, he had no qualms with his classmates knowing he was an omega. But
when it came to actually telling anyone about it, or imagining with more detail the ways people
would react or interact with him, his palms would sweat and he would get the urge to shrink away.
People assumed he was an alpha because that seemed like the most natural and obvious way to relate
to him, right? So if he told them different, if that changed, wouldn’t the way they view him change,
too? He couldn’t stand the idea of Kirishima or Deku or anyone else looking at him differently, like
he was delicate or sensitive or...consumable. As an alpha, no one questioned him, and he didn’t have
to worry about what people thought because he had all the real control. As an omega...he wasn’t so
sure his image was something he could control, not without fighting to establish the legitimacy of
even his most fundamental traits. It was almost like shifting the focus from the goals above him to the
platform beneath his feet, and that felt like an insult that was borderline violating.

So he churned these thoughts in his mind, by himself. He didn’t want to act on them, wasn’t ready to
confront them...but he approached. Once or twice he brought them up with his therapist, who
listened, validated and reassured, and at times guided his logic. He wasn’t about to come clean
anytime soon, but he was starting to feel less uncomfortable with the idea, rather than more so.

Other things, he knew would be harder, and he didn’t know if he really ever wanted others to know.
It was probably okay if they didn’t, since it wasn’t any of their fucking business, but...there were
times where he felt different, tainted, and he was pretty starkly alone in that. Everyday conversations
among teens were sometimes minefields, and Bakugou hated that he had answers to some of their
purely speculative curiosities (“Do you think getting some during heat is really that good? Like how
they make it seem in porn?” Nah... “I mean...an omega pretty much can’t help but go for an alpha
during heat right? Don’t tell Uraraka I said that...” What the fuck, no. “Getting off with someone
during your cycle doesn’t mean you like them, it’s just physical, you know?” Yeah...yeah.). It was a
weird place to be, and Bakugou wasn’t sure just where the line was in terms of the amount of
information he might be willing to disclose, and to whom. Maybe nothing to no one, maybe just a
hint to everyone. He found that the idea of people knowing he wasn’t a virgin didn’t necessarily
bother him, but the idea of anyone knowing any details beyond that made it seem a lot easier to just
keep everything under wraps.

Not that it was really that ‘under wraps.’ After the school break-in, basically all of the staff was
informed of his situation since it was clear it wasn’t a one-time thing. When Nezu explained it to him
and his parents, it was basically to ensure that if anything suspicious was happening, any of the pros
and teachers around would be able to assess and respond immediately. He couldn’t argue with that logic, but it took weeks before he was able to look All Might in the eye again. How those dark pits managed to so easily convey heartrending concern was a mystery to Bakugou, but it was more than he could handle.

Aizawa, on the other hands, was a sort of life raft. Bakugou knew his teacher was capable of great compassion—he just wasn’t capable of expressing it, which made Bakugou way more comfortable around him. Where Deku had his weird lunch meetings with All Might, Bakugou started to have a few lunch talks with Aizawa, and it was one of the only times he could be at ease without the weight of heavy secrets. Maybe too at ease, if you asked Aizawa. Aside from being an adult who knew what Bakugou was dealing with, the teacher’s status as an omega made Bakugou oddly comfortable lobbing some of the otherwise untouchable questions about his experience at him (“So hey, do you know what’s the point of passing out after someone blows a load in you?”

Aizawa stared at Bakugou like a sleep-deprived mother watching her kid take a dump on the floor in the middle of a church service. “…Why are you like this.”

“My therapist said I should try to approach the subject more.”

“I don’t think that’s what she meant.”

Bakugou shrugged and waited until Aizawa inevitably indulged him).

Having the teachers know did make things a little easier in other ways, too. During practical lessons and hero exercises, Bakugou noticed that he’d be more often paired off with betas during hand-to-hand, although not so often that it was obvious. Especially when he couldn’t use his quirk and had to grapple more intimately, the teachers seem to shuffle him in with Todoroki, Tokoyami, even Uraraka, but almost never Deku or Kirishima or any number of the more physically imposing alphas. He didn’t know if that was necessary, but he also wasn’t going to complain...yet. He didn’t want to be denied a challenge...but for a little while, this was probably fine.

At least with more long-distance exercises or quirk-heavy drills, they paired him off without paying mind to second-gender. He would definitely complain if he couldn’t practice his explosions on Kirishima, and he’d lose out on a lot of good opportunities to strategize if he didn’t have the chance to go up against people like Yaoyorozu or Iida.

Plus, as long as it wasn’t in his face, there were certain things about second-gender interactions that were kind of hilarious. No one could really control their scent, and at times someone would get riled up and put out a confusing waft of emotional pheromones—you could always tell because whoever they were paired with would either get flustered and overly concerned or would look like someone farted directly into their face. Some quirks made it worse, adding to or spreading the issue. Mina’s acid would sometimes come with a caustic mix of pheromones that stuck like a film over whatever burned surface it landed on, and Hagakura’s excitable alpha scent would routinely take people completely by surprise. More than once, Kaminari’s electricity fried some of the oils on his skin like a super-powered diffuser, effectively sending most of the alphas out of the room gagging on the charred mist of aggressive omega musk.

Bakugou knew he was an angel to work with because he didn’t smell like anything at all. Too bad every other aspect of being paired against him completely outweighed the benefits. He kind of wondered what it would be like when he came off suppressants, and if it would really be as bad as Mina and Kirishima made it sound. Hopefully it’d be bad enough to get all these assholes back for forcing him to deal with their stench all the time.

Most of the issues with pheromones only came up during practical exercises, which most students
were likely thankful for. When someone sent off a wave of pheromones during lectures, it was always pretty obvious and a dead giveaway that the originator wasn’t paying attention to whatever was going on. Sometimes that was harmless—a random thought that ended up in a wave of stronger emotions—but sometimes it was embarrassing as hell. It was not fun to be the kid zoning out to some less-than-innocent fantasy and then notice a few classmates giggling or blushing or waggling an eyebrow. Out of all the random scents anyone learned to control, that one was almost always the first.

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About two weeks after his heat, Bakugou was feeling more at ease as he sat through his last few afternoon lectures. Earlier in the day, he was able to blow the hell out of Kirishima in a spirited test of limits, and the alpha managed to make it a fun challenge rather than a grind to the top. Bakugou sometimes got so caught up in his own issues and keeping ahead of Deku that being able to let off some steam and grin about it after wasn’t as easy as it used to be, but that’s been the case for a while. He had a lot of work to do, and he knew that since fucking up the provisional license exam, since he learned about One for All.

His mind was drifting between paying attention and mulling over his earlier performance as he stared at the board. The mid-century history of major villain battles was an interesting subject, and even though he wanted to obsessively categorize all his minor mistakes to improve on later, he couldn’t fully disengage from the class. He was writing down an extra note to look up more about a few notable villains when his phone vibrated in his pocket, almost making him jump. He looked around—who the fuck was texting him in class? They had to know he wouldn’t be answering that shit. It didn’t look like Kaminari, Mina, or Kirishima were on their phones, so that ruled out most of the major players, especially as his phone kept buzzing for a full minute before finally quieting. He huffed, ignoring it and turning back to the board.

It wasn’t until the final class ended for the day that he remembered to look at his phone. The rest of the class was filing out, chatting and laughing between themselves, and Bakugou was looking forward to searching more information about the fights discussed during their history lecture. He swiped to unlock the device, taken aback to note the notifications were for regular texts rather than Line messages. Brow furrowing, he opened up the message thread.

Unknown:
Hey sweetheart <3
I know you’re probably in class right now so Ill let you off the hook if you dont answer right away
Before you block me, I want you to know that I went ahead and grabbed all of the contacts off your sim card last time
In case you dont believe me:
Received Contact: Mr. Aizawa
Received Contact: Ashido Mina
It looks like your whole class exchanged numbers! Its good to see you have each others backs ^v^
But it would be unfortunate if I had to send some of these to your entire contact list
Photo Received
Photo Received
But dont worry! You dont have to do anything
I just want to talk
Keep in touch more than once every heat cycle
So dont block me and send me nice little good morning texts and ill keep all those sexy pics away from your cute friends <3
Understood?

Bakugou stared at his phone, dull horror and bile climbing up his throat. He couldn’t make sense of this, frozen in place as his mind stuttered through what he should do. He vaguely remembered the alpha messing around with his own phone, and looking at the photos, it was now disgustingly obvious what he was doing. It was worse to realize he was almost right about saying Bakugou had a "come fuck me" face, eyes heavily lidded and flush of heat across his cheek. And he had contacts for everyone, he could actually send those...would he? Of fucking course he would, fuck...Bakugou didn't know how to breathe anymore, phone slipping in his sweaty palm. It wasn’t until Kirishima came up to his desk with a, “Hey, bro...are you okay? You look kind of pale,” that Bakugou reacted, slamming his phone against his chest so the alpha couldn’t see what was on the screen.

“I—I almost forgot that I had to talk to Aizawa. Later.” He bolted out of the classroom, heading straight to the teacher’s offices. He didn’t know what he was going to be able to do about this, but he wasn’t about to try it on his own.

Chapter End Notes

It almost seemed like a happy chapter for a second! But that's not what this story is Sorry if this poorly proofread, I'm posting at 3:30am again like a dumb I also originally wanted to keep the therapist a bit vague because like...I don't want to fuck up the description of treatment, but hopefully this is still fine...

Also, a reminder that I have a tumblr now for this story and related shenanigans

kimbo0:
"I can't see the pic :( I guess i need an account? Can someone give me a rundown of the pic please?"
Ahh sorry I think I had the settings wrong, you should be able to see it now! My bad my bad :x if there are still problems I'll link to an external page :o

WhereIsThePlot:
"Man the conversation uraraka has with the class is so lifted from life, i swear to god the bs people i knew spew when it comes to feminism lol"
Yes exactly hahah p much where it came from, like honestly a lot of the omega/alpha discussions in this story are direct parallels to frustrating feminism conversations/facts...Like it's outlandish to think that omegas wouldn't go to school after they presented but it's also outlandish that women could be fired for being pregnant until like the 1970s. Frustrating but a/b/o makes it obvious how much at least
Chapter Summary

It had been almost a month since he’d left U.A.’s grounds, not since before his last heat, and he was beginning to go stir crazy.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Locksmith:
Good morning bby <3

Photo Received

Bakugou recalled thinking once that it was bullshit he didn’t even know what Shitty Pervert’s dick looked like, but now he could only wished that were still the case. He was fucking drowning in dick pics. Flaccid, erect, various angles, even next to a ruler once—it was clear the shitbag was just so fucking proud of himself. Telling him to fuck off or even outright insulting the alpha’s junk only seemed to amuse and encourage him, and after a handful of days, Bakugou gave up trying.

When he first brought the texts to Aizawa, they contacted the police, who were basically no help in this situation whatsoever. It wasn’t that they didn’t want to help, but the situation was still delicate—they couldn’t arrest the guy because they still didn’t know who or where he was, and doing anything that would cut him off would potentially cause him to make good on his threat. As much as Bakugou wanted to just get a new phone, risking everyone seeing those pictures of him was not an option. The final nail in the coffin was the fact that the guy didn’t actually want Bakugou to do anything, despite the blackmail. There was no demand for money, no obvious risk of physical harm to Bakugou or his friends and family...the guy really did just seem to want to ‘chat.’ In the end, the best solution they could come up with was to just appease him for now, while keeping a copy of everything as evidence against the sick freak later.

And so, Bakugou gained an unavoidable texting buddy and a massive thorn in his side. He had never been one to keep weird shit on his phone, and thus never really cared if anyone messed with it, but suddenly the device was a ticking time bomb in his pocket. He knew his friends, especially Mina and Kaminari, and this could easily become a fucking problem. He had to be careful with what he named the contact, where he left the phone, what was on the screen whenever he unlocked it. For the most part, he was able to keep his device away from prying eyes and hands, but it forced him to stay hyper-aware of the stupid piece of crap in a way he never was before.

The police also recommended that he go through the settings for all his social media, setting everything to private and disallowing anyone from posting to his profiles without his approval first. Everything related to him had to go through a filter before it became public on his accounts. It was a pain in the ass, and he was reluctant to make his social media profiles so inaccessible when he was trying to become a hero, but it was better than a scandal from someone posting something weird to his timeline now that there were obscene photos floating around god-knows-where.

Bakugou had started getting more weird DMs in the last few months anyway, though it took him a
while to really notice since he tended to ignore anything but positive fanmail. He was used to getting
stupid messages after the publicity around Kamino, but once he started paying attention, he couldn’t
help but notice a new trend in the...boldness of the message content. It seemed to be increasing, too,
with more and more vividly lewd requests or even image attachments that, more often than not, were
more dick pics. He used to think it was just internet bullshit, but after the recommendation of the
police...he was getting more than a little paranoid.

He tried to pull information from the alpha when he could, since he couldn’t exactly avoid the
conversations anyway. It rarely yielded anything. The man was infuriating at best, dodging and
teasing without giving anything useful away unless it was meant to rile Bakugou up. Any clues were
only hinted at, not leading to anything conclusive, and usually made Bakugou too angry to get him to
spill anything else.

Me:
Why the fuck am I getting weird messages on Twibbler and Placebook?

Locksmith:
Why wouldn't you be
You're an up and coming hero with a lot of spotlight and a very fuckable ass

Me:
More than normal, smartass.
Don’t bullshit me, I know you have something to do with it.

Locksmith:
I wasn't bullshitting!
They had to hear about your very fuckable ass from someone
I think I'm the only one who has experience in that dept (^3~) <3
Unless you're more of a cumslut than I thought
Been having fun?

Me:
FUCK YOU
Call me a slut one more time I swear I will fukcing crush ur ballsack with my bare hands
u trashass piece o fshit
I don't know what you’re getting from this pathetic crap
Trying to be all fucking cute.
Wasting my time with these dipshit braindead messages.
What’s gonna come out of this, huh? Gonna woo me or some shit?
Make me like you?
Good fucking luck.
I don't even know your goddamn name, you fucking psychopath.

Locksmith:
Nice try sweetheart
Tho its cute you wanna know my name <3
You can just call me daddy ;)
Or sir or your alpha or master
Im not picky

Bakugou barely resisted the urge to throw his phone at the wall, setting it down and taking
deliberately measured breaths while counting. So, no answers about the weird messages, aside from
the fact that the guy did have something to do with it, somehow. Figures. Bakugou was so fed up with the alpha’s bullshit that he almost didn’t care anymore as long as it never reached the light of day or the knowledge of anyone that mattered. He knew the guy just thought making him mad was funny or something, and at times like this it was best to just ignore him for as long as he could get away with.

In a weird way, the texts had a bright side. The man no longer felt as much like a formless entity that could be lurking anywhere, a bogeyman that could come and go as he pleased. The texts were infuriating, humiliating, a source of near-constant harassment, but they were humanizing. They made the man into something Bakugou could talk back to and be defiant towards, so while the resulting emotions were still squarely in the ‘extremely unhealthy’ zone, they weren’t as often in the form of terror (save for those late night occasions where he couldn’t sleep because he could’ve swore he heard a door click somewhere). They had a source, and every once and a while, he was able to walk away from it. He left his phone on his desk and got up to prepare for the day, fuming.

He had made some plans to meet some classmates for lunch off-campus, which he had been looking forward to for half a week. It had been almost a month since he’d left U.A.’s grounds, not since before his last heat, and he was beginning to go stir crazy. Kirishima was getting together with Deku, Uraraka, and Tsuyu between their internships and other duties, and he practically begged Bakugou to join once he heard that Iida and Todoroki were invited to come along as well. Bakugou reluctantly agreed to travel with Half ‘N Half and Glasses, but he was more eager than he would readily admit. It would be a bigger group than he’d normally like and few people he would normally hang with, but if it would get him out of the dorms for a while, he’d take it.

It was gearing up to be a nice day as well, with the sun bright but the autumn air cool enough to stay comfortable in a hoodie. Bakugou grabbed his phone, shot off a “I’m busy, don’t freak the fuck out if I don’t answer,” text to make sure the pervert knew he didn’t block him or whatever, and headed to the common room to meet up with the Deku’s posse. By the time he was downstairs, he was almost in good spirits, and he even tilted his head in acknowledgment to the extras he was walking with. Todoroki gave a slight nod in return, and Iida boomed a stiff, “Ah, hello, Bakugou! Shall we get moving?”

Bakugou grunted in reply, shoving his hands into the pocket of his hoodie and falling in step alongside the other two. It would be a train ride and a fair bit of walking, but it was likely that Glasses and Half ‘N Half would talk between themselves and leave him alone, so he didn’t mind too much. True to expectations, within a block the other two were having a casual chat, and Bakugou walked silently to the side, appreciating the simple act of being outdoors.

Surprisingly, the conversation between the two of them was not boring as hell, when he bothered paying attention. They started off with general small talk, but eventually it merged into discussing hero agencies and the internships other students were taking. While Bakugou was pretty familiar with the work of his own classmates, Glasses and Half ‘N Half seemed to know more about what the other classes were doing, so when they brought it up, he decided to listen in.

“From what I’ve heard, the internships that Class 1-B have taken have been more focused on rescue operations and disaster relief,” Iida noted, tapping a hand against his chin. “Which is noble of them! I think many of their quirks suit that type of work.”

Todoroki gave a small hum of agreement. “Shiozaki and Awase, especially.” Bakugou wished he bothered to remember any of their names, but not badly enough to actually try.

“Yes, I agree. I believe Awase and Bondo were part of the rescue operation in a building collapse incident recently. They both have quirks that can be used to hold structure together, so I imagine they
must have been in their element.” As Iida talked, Bakugou wondered what would happen if someone tied his arms to his side.

“Hm. I wonder if Testutestu is working in rescue. I think he and Kirishima would be useful in unstable environments,” Todoroki mused.

Iida nodded. “Perhaps we could ask Kirishima if he knows later. I believe they’re still on good terms.”

The conversation took a brief but comfortable lapse as they boarded the train. It was a bit crowded, so the three of them stood a bit further away than would allow much talking, but the ride wasn’t too long. When the arrived at their station, Todoroki was the first to speak. “I was surprised, but there are more opportunities for the general studies classes than I would have thought.”

“Is that so?” Iida replied. “In hero work, you mean?”

“No, in other fields. I was curious, so I asked what sort of internships were available outside of the hero courses. It was fairly interesting.”

“Now that I think of it, I haven’t heard much about that either. Is it more support work?”

“Some of it, yes. I don’t have details on everyone, but there was a bit of basic research and investigation. Some of it sounded more serious than I would have expected, though,” Todoroki responded. “Things like hostage negotiation and curtailing drug manufacturing. Apparently a few involved in social work took part in widespread child abuse and human trafficking cases, too. And even with investigation internships, some students were working on following gang activities and deep web black markets.”

Iida looked impressed, and Bakugou begrudgingly shared the sentiment. General studies gave the impression of a place you get stuck in when you couldn’t make it to the hero courses, but all of that sounded genuinely kind of cool. Iida expressed his interest, mostly through his arms. “That’s quite impressive! Especially with the upsurge in organized crime, that seems like exceptionally important work. I’m surprised we haven’t heard more about such opportunities in our class!” Bakugou had to lean away to avoid getting caught in the crossfire of his stiff-armed declaration. “Oh! Sorry, Bakugou!”

Bakugou grunted in acknowledgment. He paused, then grumbled a single contribution to the conversation, “Probably good if the hero courses didn’t let people graduate when they know fuckall about the shit they’re saving people from. They should teach us instead of waiting for Round Face to rip that Grape piece of shit a new asshole between classes and hope everyone else overhears.”

Todoroki snorted, and Iida gave a few indignant squawks at his wording, but the idea came across.

They were on the final leg of their journey, only a handful of blocks away from the cafe they agreed
to meet. It was a smaller establishment, off of the main stretch of road, and while the street it was on was still somewhat lively, the area leading up to it was relatively calm. Bakugou was almost a little disappointed that the walk was going to end so fast, wishing he could loiter around in the city a bit longer. Maybe after lunch, they could take the long way back.

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Specs was having a quiet morning so far. Watanabe was out for the day doing some stupid bullshit or another, and the room was peaceful as a result. They crossed off another target two nights ago, and the next one wouldn’t be until tomorrow night, which gave him time to review material and prepare. Given that most of the files they collected weren’t made up of raw data, the majority of the information was fairly easy to process, which in turn made packaging it for resale on the black market a breeze. Assigning exact coordinates to the layouts and blueprints they collected wasn’t quite so easy, but at least it was a skill he was already somewhat practiced in.

Although he could track multiple targets within a fairly large radius, his mind wasn’t automatically equipped with a detailed internal map. Learning how to utilize his quirk mostly meant memorizing a large amount of geographical information over time, and it wasn’t until well after he got out of school that he actually managed to make productive use of it. If he hadn’t met Watanabe all those years ago, he might never have bothered at all. Unfortunately, the alpha hadn’t left him much choice, gradually involving him in more and more of his risky schemes until he couldn’t really avoid crime full-time. Between that and him pissing people off until tracking liabilities became a necessity not to get beat to shit or murdered, and Specs finally gained the motivation to learn how to make use of his ability.

Some days, Specs told himself that he would drop that narcissistic alpha like a sack of bricks and make his own way. He knew he could. There wasn’t anything keeping him here, and there was no doubt he’d fare better without Watanabe than the other way around. But he never went through with it, and he probably never would, and both of them knew it.

Specs was working on reconstructing a blueprint with the coordinates integrated into the file when his attention shifted. One of his marks was moving, which was to be expected...but this particular mark hadn’t moved like this before in the time he’d been watching it. He brought his fingers to fiddle with a bottle in his vest, bringing the mark to clearer focus in his mind. It probably wasn’t too much of a concern, but just in case, he cataloged the position of some of the other marks he’d been assigned to watch. Watanabe was downtown. Not too far from him were two League members...Toga and Compress, by the look of it. That spelled trouble. It was rare that they would be in such a high-traffic area, and it almost always meant they were planning one of their showy attacks. At least without Dabi there, there wasn’t much to worry about with Watanabe getting caught in the crossfire.

Bakugou had boarded a train, his mark moving fast over the vague internal map in Specs’ mind. Specs waited, pulling up a map on one of his screens as an extra level of confirmation. When the mark finally slowed and began moving at a walking pace once again, Specs did a quick check-over of his location and the paths that he was likely to take. His eyes narrowed, and after a moment of hesitation, he reached for his phone.

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Me:
hey
ur pet project is on the move
and hes headed for a league stakeout
might want to intercept
Watanabe Touma:
Oh damn
Ok send me the location
Is it far?

Me:
nah ur close
might have to jog tho

Chapter End Notes

This chapter fought me some. But the good news is, I think we're mostly out of worldbuilding land and entering interaction-plot territory, maybe

As always, thank you for all your beautiful thoughtful comments ;; <3<3<3
tananoyas:
"do you have an idea about how many chapters this is going to have or will you just go with the flow?"
Going with the flow! I estimate this first arc will probably go to about 20-25 chapters, and then after that, I have a lot in mind but no..real...idea of what the end is gonna be hahah sooo maybe 40ish chapters...? Don't quote me on that.

WhereIsThePlot:
"Also i forgot to mention it in my last comment but i really really like that bakugou always does the right thing (so to say) by contacting the authorities. Both times after he was assaulted and now after he got that sms he contacts aizawa. He even goes to therapy and tries his best! Often characters who are victimized in fics tend to isolate themselves, so i like that this is i think deliberately avoided in this fic."
Ahh thank you! Yes it is deliberate, but I also didn't want it to be like...some "the police r ur friend!" PSA either, you know? Like I wanted it to seem both a good thing but also a nuanced thing. Bakugou struggles with it, he's sometimes pushed into it with others, he feels conflicted, and the authorities aren't a magical fix who always know the perfect solution...but they help, and they will help later on too

Fangirls_Unite:
"It sucks, I'm not seeing notifications for this story
Maybe because it's written Anonymously?
If anyone knows how to fix this I'd be appreciative"
Oh man, I don't know why that would be :x maybe someone else knows...? That'd suck if that were the case...
Chapter Summary

Watanabe cursed, sprinting the last stretch until he could look down the road to search for Katsuki. He had way too much invested in that kid to let him get ripped up by some monstrosity, no matter how powerful the hero-in-training’s quirk was.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Toga peeked out into the street from her position in an alleyway, not far from a number of small cafes and eateries. She had managed to find a super cute girl to slice into and use as her disguise, and it was an exciting day! They had been planning one of their now-routine guerrilla attacks against Ryukyu, the number 10 hero, and her interns, which included some adorable friends from U.A. To make everything even better, the heroes were having a surprise meet-up with friends, including Izuku! She squealed and bounced a little, turning to Mr. Compress, who looked a little silly in his disguise mask.

“Look! Look!” she said, pointing at the group. “Are you sure we can’t play just a little? Just for today?”

Compress was already shaking his head halfway through her first sentence. “We’re here to cause some chaos, and we will not risk our position any more than necessary.”

“Can I at least say hi? I didn’t know Izuku would be here!” She pulled on his sleeve, swooning a little.

“Neither did I, which is even more reason not to take risks. The Nomus will likely be subdued faster than we expected.” Mr. Compress pulled two marbles from his coat pocket, guiding Toga back into the alley. “But, no matter. It’s just as likely to cause even more damage that way.” He checked his watch, waiting as the seconds ticked by, and it was only when the clock hands lined up precisely that he threw the marbles out towards the middle of the street. Two Nomu erupted from the orbs, screeching, one falling heavily to the ground while the other took to the sky on a double pair of leathery wings. As they started attacking, ripping through people and buildings indiscriminately, a wisp of black smoke appeared behind the villains in the alleyway, right on time.

Toga pouted, but Mr. Compress didn’t let up, tugging her towards the warp gate. “Maybe next time. For now, consider it a calling card.” Toga giggled, eyes glinting as she finally allowed herself to be ushered away, hoping the news coverage would include plenty of shots of a bloodied version of her crush.

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Watanabe probably didn’t have to jog, but he did anyway. He didn’t hate it, as he did plenty of running to keep up his endurance for his ‘job,’ and if he was going to intercept his ornery, rage-filled mate, a little extra musk probably would come in handy. Frankly, he wasn’t even sure what he was going to do when he came across the little firecracker, since they’d never encountered each other outside of his heat. He suspected that the mate bond solidified after their second round of mating (and
five or six bites), but he wasn’t sure how much of an advantage that would give him yet, at least not until he could force the kid into subspace. In any case, he could use any help he could get.

He turned down a street perpendicular to the one Katsuki was on, which, according to the information Specs sent him, would put him between the locations of the kid and the League members. He erred a little closer to the villains, only about two blocks from their stakeout, to make sure he didn’t already miss Katsuki walking past. He was halfway to the last corner when a resounding boom and several inhuman screeches erupted from the direction of the League members.

Watanabe cursed, sprinting the last stretch until he could look down the road to search for Katsuki. He had way too much invested in that kid to let him get ripped up by some monstrosity, no matter how powerful the hero-in-training’s quirk was. Luckily, the rest of the world wasn’t forewarned about the attack like he was, so for a few seconds, everyone stood still, trying to understand the sudden uproar. It gave him the tiniest of openings to glance around at the relatively scarce street, checking if his target was anywhere near sight.

He didn’t spot the students right away. They were still a fair ways down the road, a couple blocks further back from Watanabe’s position, and they, like everyone else, were shocked into motionless confusion. When the din of the attack continued to blare on, however, all three of them sprung into action, but unlike any reasonable person, they ran towards the source of the noise. And they were fast. One of them had rocket legs or something, zipping past Watanabe’s position with speed more like a car than a person. The other two were slower, but were still gaining ground on his position faster than he was ready for. One of them, immediately recognizable as Endeavor’s kid, was quicker to action, coating the ground in ice and practically skating on the momentum, but Katsuki wasn’t far behind, propelling himself forward with blasts from his palms. Luckily, Katsuki was on the side closer to Watanabe, so Watanabe wouldn’t have to get in front of the ice quirk to do anything, but the fact remained that the alpha didn’t have a plan or any time to think of one. There was no way in hell he was about to follow Katsuki directly into the line of fire, so if he was going to do something, he had to do it now.

In reality, Watanabe didn’t think of a plan so much as he just acted on impulse. The boys were closing on his position, and Endeavor Jr. was already sliding past him when Watanabe surged forward, just short of being in Katsuki’s path. With adrenaline flooding his system and opening his pores, he shouted, “Stop!” as his mate came close to blasting past him. Time seemed to slow as Katsuki’s eyes landed on him and widened in recognition, but the real damage was done when his flight path took him directly through the cloud of sweat- and alarm-filled pheromones that surrounded the agitated alpha.

In the open air, it didn’t do as much to nullify Katsuki’s quirk as before, but it didn’t need to. In the next burst of explosions meant to keep him airborne, his blasts were unstable and uneven. One hand popped off much stronger than the other, and instead of forward, he pitched sharply to the side, careening off-balanced at too high of a speed. Before he could right himself, Katsuki slammed his upper body into the pavement, rolling and skidding before coming to a halt next to the curb on the opposite side of the street.

“Oh, fuck,” Watanabe murmured, wincing when the omega first faceplanted into the street. He jogged over as Katsuki groaned, twisting to prop himself up. Watanabe hadn’t really meant to knock the kid down like that (well, okay, he did, but not that hard), but as he approached, he supposed it was fairly effective. Katsuki was shaking his head, blinking rapidly to readjust himself and fight off his brain-rattled disorientation, but his face was already distorted into a deep scowl. Watanabe had a feeling the kid would not be happy to see him, and as much as he’d like to offer a hand to help the poor guy up, that probably wasn’t a good idea. Especially since he was kind of the reason the kid looked half-concussed.
Instead, he knocked Katsuki back down with a firm push with his foot, dropping to kneel next to him. Watanabe ignored the enraged, “Did you just fucking kick me?” and the hand that aggressively latched onto his knee, even when it started to crackle and burn. He gripped his mate’s hair, tugged and twisted hard to wrench Katsuki’s head down, and leaned in.

Katsuki did not give in without a fight. After a sharp yell when his hair was pulled, he roared, thrashing and shoving Watanabe’s knee with a half-cocked explosion, shifting to try to prop himself back up. Watanabe was thrown off-balance, forced forward as his leg was pushed back, and he caught himself with his free hand behind Katsuki’s shoulders. He snarled out a “Hold still!” as he used his forward momentum to force his face against Katsuki’s neck, pulling the hand on the blond’s hair tighter and dragging his other up to grip his shoulder.

Katsuki managed to get out a garbled, “Fuck, stop--” before Watanabe sunk his teeth into the omega’s scent gland, hard and deep. Katsuki gave a clipped wail in protest, body tensing and curling, hands clawing at the alpha, but it didn’t last long. Blood erupted on Watanabe’s tongue, but he didn’t let up until his mate was finally limp below him, breathing slowed to just short of sleep. Only then did Watanabe unlatch, licking the blood from his lips and raggedly panting to catch his breath. He readjusted his position, grimacing when he felt what was definitely a nasty burn on his knee, but he was careful not to jostle Katsuki around too much. He untangled his hand from his mate’s hair, sliding it down to cradle his heavy head instead, and he took a moment to look at Katsuki’s face.

His omega was deep in subspace, heavily-lidded eyes trained on Watanabe and expression devoid of emotion or thought. Watanabe sighed, cracking a small smile despite his various scuffs and bruises, and he leaned in to nuzzle his mate. Katsuki inhaled deeply in response, eyes sliding shut for a second before fluttering open again. Watanabe whispered against his jaw, “Sorry about that. Couldn’t have you getting into any tussles with the League. Conflict of interests, you know how it goes.” Katsuki didn’t respond, and Watanabe wasn’t even sure if he was capable of understanding like this.

Watanabe looked back up at his omega’s face for a long second before leaning in and pressing a kiss against Katsuki’s lips, soft and chaste. He sighed before chasing a second one, moving his lips against the other’s and giving a soft, teasing suck to his omega’s bottom lip. “’M gonna spend your next heat with you. The whole thing. Gonna take my time with you--”

A crack of loud, glass-like shattering filled the air, and suddenly there was a threatening forest of ice spikes looming just short of the two of them. Watanabe looked up in bewilderment, still kneeling awkwardly next to the half-conscious omega. Walking towards them, Endeavor Jr.’s face was set in a cold, simmering rage.

“Let go of him.”

When the telltale screech of Nomu and deafening crashes of property damage cut through their conversation, Todoroki wasted no time springing into action, even if he wasn’t as fast as Iida. He didn’t wait for Bakugou to catch up—the other might not have had as much experience responding to hero situations in the real world, but that didn’t mean Todoroki had to babysit the guy until he figured it out. Time wasted now meant potential injury to civilians later, and Todoroki didn’t know who was present at the scene aside from their friends. He wasn’t about to leave Midoriya and the rest to fend off the League on their own, in the worst case scenario.

It was only when there was a shout and the sound of flesh on pavement that he glanced back. For whatever reason, Bakugou seemed to botch one of his explosions, which was rare for him. Todoroki
paused, a little confused, but a civilian was already running over to check on him. Assuming Bakugou would be more than capable of handling himself after a minor fall like that, Todoroki turned back to the more pressing issue of the attack.

As he approached, the street grew more crowded. People were pouring into the side roads to escape the attack, and Todoroki was forced to slow down about a block away so as not to risk catching any civilians in the crossfire of his ice. Instead, he used his ice to elevate himself upward so that he could get a better view beyond the mob and assess the situation. As much as he’d like to just jump straight into the fray, the reality of his quirk meant that if he wasn’t aware of the area and the surrounding crowds, he could easily do more harm than good, especially if other on-the-clock heroes were already handling the situation without him.

The entire area was filled with people, but they were moving away to leave a large zone of empty street where heroes were gathered and teaming up against two Nomu. He could see that Iida had joined Tsuyu in herding civilians away from the conflict, and he could hear the sounds of clashing join in with the shouts of Midoriya, Kirishima, Uraraka, and a number of unfamiliar people from around the corner.

When Ryukyu slid into view in her dragon form, catching a blow from an airborne Nomu before grabbing it and slamming it into the ground, Todoroki felt himself relax a bit. Before, he didn’t know whether there would be any pro-heroes on the scene, and if so, which ones, but Ryukyu was more than qualified to handle the situation. The sound of sirens drawing closer and a few glimpses of other heroes moving in on the scene, including Kamui Woods, let Todoroki finally relent. One of the Nomu was already neutralized, and although he couldn’t see the other, the sounds of conflict were winding down, leading him to think that it wouldn’t be an issue for much longer.

Todoroki let his ice melt until he was on ground level again. He was on the outer edge of the crowd, but he moved back further, giving more room to people who were craning to see heroes in action. Rather than fight the horde, he turned to look around for Bakugou, expecting his perpetually angry classmate to be incensed at not being able to take part in the action. Oddly enough, however, Bakugou wasn’t anywhere near the crowd, and Todoroki couldn’t recall even hearing the tell-tale blasts of him approaching. He was wondering if maybe Bakugou managed to slip by him and vault over the crowd into the conflict when he spotted his classmate, still laying where he had fallen a block or two back.

That was a cause for concern. Todoroki’s brows knitted, and he turned to jog over. It looked like the civilian who had stopped to help was leaning over him, talking to him—maybe Bakugou broke something? Dislocated his hip or something from the fall? That would be embarrassing for him given the circumstances, but accidents do happen. There would be large number of precautionary ambulances nearby soon, and it probably would be a short walk to get some medical attention, so at least he chose a good time--

The man kneeling over Bakugou leaned down and brushed their lips together. Todoroki stopped dead, eyes widening as his brain short-circuited at the sight. Bakugou wasn’t even fighting it, wasn’t reacting at all, wasn’t...doing anything. His whole body was limp, and Todoroki was close enough to it now, he could see the way the man cradled Bakugou’s head, see the trail of blood that dripped down the side of Bakugou’s neck, smell the heady musk of alpha that the wind carried--

Todoroki had seen this before, and a barrage of sudden realizations hit him like a punch to the gut, rolling through him as a wave of nausea and a deep-seated disgusted fury. He didn’t even realize when his quirk was activated, body moving automatically as his mind stuttered to make sense of the world, and everything seemed a blur until the alpha was gone, deftly disappearing into the mass of people with his tail between his legs.
Chapter End Notes

Fast update bc I've been looking forward to this part :>

Also sometimes I do draws, related to this story or not, over at autochorystalize.tumblr.com. Come say hi!

Also also thanks for all of the responses to the notification issue...I wasn't aware that Anonymous stories had issues with that :x I've been considering applying for another account for stories like this, but I'm not sure if switching over authors would have adverse effects on subscriptions/kudos/etc...plus I'd have to figure out another email...it'd be nice but I'm not sure how it would work out on the reader's end :x But another plus side is it'd be a lot easier to reply directly to ppls comments and you guys leave v v v nice comments <3

Mooshbabii:
"I have a question. why is it that most heroes are alpha's when they normally don't present till like mid teens? is it that omega's and betas quite more often or don't go into the specific types of hero roles that the famous ones are in? or is it just genetics? i mean i was thinking it was kind of how like STEM science doesn't have a lot of women but if most of his classmates present as alpha i don't really get it."

Okay so *rolls up sleeves* there's a couple of things. 1) It involved some earlier prototype worldbuilding that I hadn't really been able to stick into the story, and is thus still a little rough around the edges. 2) It's kind of a plothole bc I kinda forgot My original reasoning was that because presentations don't happen until late adolescence/early adulthood, it doesn't really make sense for there to be distinguishing biological components that would differentiate a/b/o from each other earlier than that...like something you could do a check-up for in kids or something. So part of one's second gender was developed during puberty instead of already written into one's physical/genetic makeup. I thought it'd be interesting to make it that, in addition to biological/genetic factors, things like social, environmental, and experiential aspects of childhood/young adulthood has impact in what develops to be the final second gender. When I assigned genders, I considered some personality and background aspects--for instance, with Bakugou, he grew up in a stable house with doting, nurturing parents, a gentle omega dad and forceful alpha mom, lots of attention from basically everyone, and a relatively uninhibited self-centeredness...whereas Midoriya grew up with a loving but skittish beta mother, largely absent father, a fair amount of bullying, and a strong desire to save/defend/protect. These experiences translated in my mind as developing signs of omega/alpha presentations, either because it fits the role or because it fills a void in the environment for that role--balances out, basically...although not always, as other factors, including hormones, etc. also play a part. Basically, it's complicated, and while certain things can predict a higher likelihood for one gender than another, it's hardly set in stone

For hero courses, the application process happens before presentation, but it skews alpha regardless, which could mean that alphas are better suited for heroism...or it could mean that the application process for hero courses heavily emphasizes alpha-leaning traits like competition, aggression, physical dominance, etc. I imagine the a/b/o ratio in other courses is more reflective of society, even tho they'd be doing similar or equally interesting work. I also imagine in the top pro hero rankings, it's also more balanced, as the qualities that make great heroes in the real world aren't necessarily the same as the
qualities that would pass an entrance exam at U.A. In general, I think it's not unfounded to assume there are certain traits that are more common in certain second-genders than others...but I think the most important message is that individuals should not be forced to a standard or stereotyped/discriminated against based on loose population trends. There are alphas like Endeavor vs Midoriya...there are omegas like Best Jeanist vs Bakugou. A general trend towards more alphas getting into the hero course isn't a reflection on the aptitude of omegas who get into the course, nor does it necessarily have ecological validity about how apt alphas naturally are as heroes outside of regimented education.

Also, again...I forgot hahaha author error, had my timelines confused. But, yknow, still. Also sorry this end note is p much longer than the fic at this point..............enjoy some trivia haha
An ongoing problem

Chapter Summary

His expectations and knowledge of the world kept getting flipped, and none of it was good.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Todoroki cursed to himself as he watched the man merge in with the crowd. He hadn’t had good opening to attack with the stranger was so close to Bakugou, and when the man launched himself away, he had immediately beelined for the closest group of people. Todoroki was able to react fast enough to clip him, weigh down one of his legs with ice, but the unpredictable bustle of the confused civilians forced him to reign in his quirk before he could freeze the alpha to the ground. He hesitated too long, warring on giving chase at the expense of leaving Bakugou alone, but by then, the man was gone.

More people were beginning to move along the previously quiet road. The main street was blocked off by police by now, pushing civilians back so that emergency teams could get to the injured and assess the damage to infrastructure. With their normal route cut off, the remaining crowd had no choice but to go around, filtering closer and past where Bakugou lay sprawled on the pavement. He couldn’t be left like that. Todoroki eyed where the man had vanished with a pang of dissatisfaction before turning to attend to his classmate.

Bakugou’s eyes were open, but he seemed nearly catatonic. His gaze shifted when Todoroki waved his hand in front of his face, but it lacked focus or intent. There was no recognition when Todoroki asked him if he was okay, if he could understand. A feeling of unease grew in the pit of Todoroki’s stomach, and he looked around for a safer place to let Bakugou recover. He knew from conversations with Uraraka and his own curiosity-driven research that it would probably take between five and fifteen minutes to come back to normal after being subdued by an unfamiliar alpha, but in the meantime, it didn’t seem right to just leave him in the middle of the road. With a bit of maneuvering, he pulled Bakugou into a fireman’s lift, taking him just far enough to get him off the street and propped against a wall. He sat down as well, preparing to wait the few minutes until Bakugou began stirring, and he focused on trying to get his muddled thoughts in order.

Bakugou was an omega. Why would Bakugou tell everyone he was an alpha if he was an omega…? ...Did he even say he was an alpha? After sifting through memories and interactions, trying to recall if Bakugou ever referred to his own second gender at all, he came up blank. A lie by omission, then, but what was the point of that, going so far as to even involve suppressants? Pride, or--? Todoroki glanced at Bakugou’s face, still not showing any signs of responsiveness, and it hit him that if Bakugou had been attacked by the League before, then of course his parents would be nervous about him being outed as an omega. Todoroki literally just witnessed how dangerous such a vulnerability could be, at least for a few years until it could be managed. Bakugou was such a loud, unapologetic, challenging person that it was easy to forget he was a student with a flashing target painted on his back.

But then, if they worked so hard to hide it...how did that man know? Who was he? With the
suppressants, there was no way he could smell it on Bakugou. Did he just assume…?

Todoroki glanced over at Bakugou again, brow furrowing. He wanted to ask what happened, but there was no change in Bakugou’s demeanor. By now, he should at least be showing signs of fighting the paralysis. Strange alphas can briefly shock an omega into forced submission, but it’s a blunted effect compared to the deep subspace of a mate’s bite—he should at least be able to orient his attention at this point, react or respond or something. Instead, he looked almost calm, like waking from a dream, and it sent a chill up Todoroki’s spine. He had never seen an omega get bitten by an unfamiliar alpha, at least not outside of a TV drama, but he had seen what a mate’s bite could do, and that dazed tranquility looked too familiar. As the minutes ticked on, his doubt and dread grew.

After waiting for about ten minutes, Todoroki couldn’t stand it anymore. He moved to kneel in front of Bakugou, reaching out and touching his shoulder. “Bakugou? Can you hear me?” He gently shook the other when there was no response, just enough to try to get him to come back to reality. “Bakugou?”

Bakugou’s eyes slid over to his face, regarding him with a sort of passive fixation. Todoroki hesitated before placing his hands on the sides of Bakugou’s face, dipping to rub his wrists along Bakugou’s temples before starting to run his thumbs gently but firmly over his cheeks. He didn’t know if it would work, but it was what his sister used to do to help their mother. He wasn’t even sure if Fuyumi knew what she was doing back then—the worst of it happened a few years before her beta presentation—but she had a knack for this kind of thing. It was all Todoroki could think to do right now.

Bakugou’s eyelids fluttered, and he blinked a few times, sighing at the touch and mild beta pheromones. Todoroki tried speaking to him again with a soft, “Can you hear me?” but the dazed omega seemed more focused on the soothing sensations than on his classmate. Todoroki continued for a few minutes, alternating between grounding touches and guiding Bakugou to look at him and respond. Finally, Bakugou met his question with a small nod.

Todoroki exhaled in relief, relaxing his arms to rest his hands on Bakugou’s neck, tucked against the folds of his hoodie. He winced at the damp feeling of blood on one hand, but he didn’t want to draw away just yet. He needed to keep talking to get Bakugou alert enough to move, but he didn’t know what else to say. He cleared his throat. “Are you injured? Aside from the bite?” Bakugou seemed to process the question before shaking his head. Bakugou was blinking more, which was a good sign, but Todoroki figured it was best to stick to yes-or-no questions, even though he really wanted to just ask what happened. He considered for a few seconds before quietly murmuring, “You’re…an omega?” Bakugou nodded without any signs of his usual deflection or combativeness.

Todoroki felt a bit like he was taking advantage of something he shouldn’t be by asking questions when Bakugou was too out of it to be dishonest, but the greater part of him just wanted to confirm. He swallowed before continuing. “Did you…know that guy?” Bakugou looked confused for a second before his attention shifted to look around, as if only now starting to piece together the situation. The process looked a little exhausting, like Bakugou was still tempted by sleep, and no real conclusions seemed to register. “That alpha?”

“…Where…” Bakugou muttered, voice unsteady and soft.

“He’s gone,” Todoroki assured him. His heart sunk when a series of emotions passed over Bakugou’s face, a jumbled mix of relief, disappointment, hurt, and anxiety. “You know him, don’t you?”

Bakugou nodded with a sighed, “Yeah.” He was still looking past Todoroki, responding more like he was talking to himself than to a friend.
Todoroki was glad Bakugou was finally speaking, but he was only growing more apprehensive. “Is he...are you...” Todoroki shifted and drew his hands away slowly, knowing he was overstepping. “Are you...intimate? With him?” He cleared his throat again. “...Mated?”

Bakugou’s expression became slightly more morose, eyes beginning to take on more clarity. “...Dunno.”

“You don’t know?” Todoroki repeated.

“Nope. ‘S Maybe.”

“Bakugou, is he abusing you?” Todoroki whispered, stomach knotting as he already suspected the answer.

Bakugou snorted. “I’unno.” He sighed, closing his eyes and rolling his shoulders, starting to come back to his body even though his speech was still slurried. “Been fuckin’ me. ‘S only the third time I’ve seen him.”

Todoroki stared in shock. “Fuh..’fucking’ you…?” Third time seeing him? With a mate bond? What the hell-- When—Did anyone know about this? Knowing Bakugou, he probably hadn’t told anyone. He’d probably been trying to power through it all on his own to make sure no one looks down on him, refusing to seek any sort of help. Todoroki sputtered for a second before choking out, “Bakugou, you have to tell someone about this.”

Bakugou paused and opened his eyes before grunting. He clumsily dug through his pockets for his phone, pulling it out and unlocking it like the task took concentrated effort. He huffed at some messages he got before navigating to his contacts and calling someone. Todoroki watched with growing surprise, not really expecting him to be so easily convinced even if he was still half in subspace. The phone rang for a few seconds before someone picked up on the other end, and Bakugou began sluggishly responding. “Hey. – No. – ‘M Fine. – No. – Yeah, he was here. – No, just bit me. – Hm? I dunno. Uh, it was...like...was flying but he...just...showed up, I’unno, ‘m still dumb. – Uh, yeah. Here.” Bakugou held out the phone to Todoroki, who was admittedly lost. He checked the name of who he was talking to on the screen, eyebrows shooting up when he saw it was Aizawa.

“Uh. Hello?”

“Who is this,” Aizawa cut through with all the seriousness the situation deserved. Todoroki sat a little straighter.

“Todoroki.”

“Did you see what happened?”

“Not everything. There was an attack a few blocks away, and Iida and I were already ahead. I saw Bakugou fall when one of his explosions failed, and a man ran up to him. I figured he was just going to help. When I checked on him a few minutes later, the man was kissing him, and he had already been bitten. I reacted, but he got away in the crowds from the attack.”

There was silence on the other end of the line for a second, and Todoroki shifted. There was a sound of a pen being set down, and Aizawa returned. “Did you hear anything he said?”

“No.”

“You didn’t register any details about the man beforehand? Where he was, what he was doing?”
Todoroki thought for a second, trying to picture the scene in his mind. “No...he was at a corner to a side street, but I didn’t have a reason to take note of him.”

Aizawa sighed deeply on the other end of the line. “I’m going to contact the authorities in charge of Bakugou’s case, and when the two of you return to campus, I’m going to ask you to join us. In the meantime, stay with Bakugou until he’s fully conscious. Will you need a ride?”

“I...I don’t know. I don’t think so.”

“Oh. Okay.” Todoroki replied simply before Aizawa hung up. His expectations and knowledge of the world kept getting flipped, and none of it was good. The relief that should have come from knowing that Bakugou has actually told someone was overshadowed by the gravity of Aizawa’s tone, by the phrase ‘an ongoing problem.’ If Aizawa sounded that stressed about it, how could Bakugou be feeling…?

Todoroki held the phone out to Bakugou, who looked at it dumbly for a second before catching on and grabbing it, holding it loosely in his hand. He seemed closer to conscious, but he was still distracted, his calm demeanor slowly being replaced by a sort of introspective anxiety, like the weight of the situation was starting to set in. Todoroki realized that it was entirely possible for him to go from mindless subspace straight into a panic attack, and he refocused onto the needs of the current situation rather than his crisis of trying to understand it.

“Mr. Aizawa said he would call the authorities. He’ll take care of it, don’t worry--”

“Todoroki? Bakugou?” He was interrupted by the sound of Iida calling out in the distance. Todoroki froze, eyes darting to the prominent bite mark on Bakugou’s neck—no one else knew anything. Reacting before he could think about it, Todoroki grabbed the hood of Bakugou’s hoodie and wrenched it over his head, pulling it snug around his face so that his neck wouldn’t be visible to anyone who wasn’t looking. Bakugou blinked, baffled, and was about to protest when Todoroki quietly hissed, “They don’t know. Let me handle it.”

It didn’t take much more time before Iida approached, joined by Kirishima and Midoriya. The three of them glowed with the aftermath of a successful battle, without any obvious injuries between them. Their high spirits mingled with a lighthearted puzzlement as they got closer to the two sitting on the sidewalk away from the crowds.

“What are you guys doing over here? It’s way out of the way, we almost didn’t see you,” Kirishima asked before his smile faltered at the lack of outburst. “Did something happen?”

“Bakugou got hit with a quirk,” Todoroki replied, thinking on the fly. “Bumped into someone. I didn’t see who. It seems to be just a...disorientation quirk of some sort, or something, but he’s coming around.”

The reaction between the other three was mixed, from comprehension to confusion to concern. Midoriya was the first to speak. “Are you sure he’s okay? If you don’t know what the quirk is, it would be better to have him checked.”

Todoroki shook his head. “Bakugou mentioned something about what the guy told him. Apparently
the user apologized and told him it would wear off soon.” He swallowed, feeling a little bit of sweat under his shirt. He didn’t like lying, and he wasn’t sure he was any good at it. He just prayed that Midoriya would buy it.

“Oh. Uh, okay then. I guess that should be fine.” Midoriya shared a look with Kirishima and Iida, as if trying to confirm that it actually was okay, but the other two seemed equally perplexed.

Todoroki tried to change the subject. “Did the fight go well? I was a little late. I didn’t want to risk causing damage to any civilians, but you all seemed to have it covered.” That was the right choice, as their attention immediately shifted to giving Todoroki a rundown of the situation. There were apparently a number of injuries, but no reported deaths, and none of the surrounding buildings were damaged to instability. After the main numbers, they enthusiastically recounted the most interesting parts of the battle, from Ryukyu’s take-down of the airborne Nomu to a combo move where Uraraka made Midoriya weightless and then Kirishima threw him to smash the remaining Nomu into the ground. Todoroki nodded along, making small conversational sounds where he thought was probably appropriate, but he was too frazzled to listen closely. The other three didn’t seem to notice, at least.

After a while of this, Iida cut in to remind the other two that they had to report fully about their involvement to the appropriate authorities. He turned to Todoroki. “I regret to say that I’m not sure how long this will take. I would hate to leave my fellow travelers, but I also wouldn’t want to trap you here...would you prefer to leave now, or should we come back and return with you later?”

Todoroki felt a strong urge to thank Iida, which would probably be the wrong reaction. Instead, he responded in what he hoped was a neutrally conversational way, “I think we’ll head back soon, so you don’t have to wait. I think it would help to be away from the bustle.”

Iida nodded, smiling. “I understand. I hope you have a safe journey back, and we’ll see you at the dorms.” With that, he turned on his companions and ushered them away with his enthusiastic arm gymnastics. It was only when they were passing the police blockade that Todoroki finally relaxed, turning back to Bakugou, who seemed to be typing something on his phone.

Todoroki froze when Bakugou met his gaze with sharp eyes under the shadow of his hood. He was hunched over, expression severe and very awake, and after a second of eye contact, the normally explosive blond muttered, “Let’s get the fuck out of here.” Todoroki nodded silently as his companion struggled to his feet. He followed, watching for anything amiss as Bakugou started back the way they came. Aside from the tension in his posture and a slight wobble, he seemed stable, but Todoroki felt a gnawing unease at the way his classmate constantly scanned the environment around him.

---

**Locksmith:**
Sorry Katsuki!
I didn’t want you to get caught in a fight
It was for your own good I promise <3

**Me:**
fuck you
my own good my ass
you ran leik a bitchh the moment yo uwere pressured
Locksmith:
Its smart to pick your battles kid
Dont start shit with me

Me:
big bad alpha
talking a biggame
bailing the moment things get rough

Locksmith:
Dont you have a lot to say for someone who can barely type
Gonna swoon over the beta cuck that saved you?
Enjoy the attention while you got it whore because next time you wont be so lucky

Me:
so scared
next time ill blow your leg off.

Locksmith:
Youll blow something

Me:
fucking die.
Whatever there wont be a next time.
Idk how you found me but it isnt going to happen again.

Locksmith:
Really
You honestly think I cant find you whenever the fuck I want

Me:
Are you tracking me?
Is that why you’re forcing these stupid chat conversations? To track my phone?

Locksmith:
Look at the little brain on you!
Yes and no
Im tracking you but I dont need your phone to do it
You could chuck that thing in the ocean and Id still know every move you make <3
Remember that next time you decide to be an uppity bitch

Chapter End Notes

Todoroki learns some things and doesn't like any of them.
So, as you might imagine, it's not gonna be an immediate lovefest between the two of them...but it's a start. No matter how either of them feel about it, Todoroki’s pretty deep in this shit now. He’ll be getting established as a fixture from now on

For everyone saying Watanabe's the human equivalent of a steaming pile of shit: you're
absolutely right. But I promise I'm not shoving that down your throats for the sole sake of being obnoxious...solely. Hopefully its not too heavy handed, tho it was p upfront about that I hope, so at least you'll have known going in :x

In other notes...your guy's comments are literally the sweetest ;^; It's so flattering to hear people are waiting so much for next chapters and getting into it even if they don't really like a/b/o normally, and I love hearing your predictions even if I don't want to give away whether or not they're right just yet ;> (they often are tho haha) J/s you guys keep me going strong <3

bluesetter:
"I've always got mixed feelings when reading this, on one side this is really interesting bit on the other side i can't stand rape like this but once i read i want the character have happy ending and i end up getting interested in specs ao i cant stop rading this"
I'm really glad you have an interest in Specs bc there's a lot more to him than meets the eyes...but sorry about the rape stuff :x it's p explicit in this fic so ill make sure to keep CWs to the beginning notes of chapters heavy with that so you can skip them if you'd like :o
A step up from house arrest

Chapter Summary

Todoroki wasn’t sure what to do from here—there was a lot about the situation he didn’t know, but he knew now would not be the time to ask.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Todoroki asked if Bakugou was injured earlier, Bakugou shook his head...but now that he was out of subspace and sitting in the teacher’s lounge, he was reconsidering that answer. While he was pretty sure nothing was broken or sprained or otherwise serious, blasting himself into the pavement didn’t exactly leave him feeling refreshed. He rolled his shoulders, trying to catalog his bruises and scrapes without actually looking, and he willed time to go faster so he could visit Recovery Girl and get it taken care of.

After that, he was going to shower. He was covered in strange smells, and it was making him tense and on edge. The stalker left his mark with his bite and, apparently, some nuzzling which he didn’t remember. The alpha’s lingering scent was familiar yet different from how it was during their previous encounters, lacking the musk of arousal, and it somehow felt too normal, which in itself seemed foreign and invasive. Some part of him kept fixating on the scent, morbidly circling it as if to commit it to memory, and the logical side of Bakugou’s brain was disgusted with that part. On top of that, Todoroki’s beta scent was clinging to him, gentle and strangely comforting. It was weird, and what was weirder was that he didn’t mind it that much, which ended up pissing him off even more because he should.

It was confusing, and he wanted it to all go away. He was getting pretty fucking sick of people slathering their pheromones all over him without letting him have any say in the matter.

Dealing with those problems had to wait, however. First, he had to sit through yet another round of interrogations, of recounting, of dead ends. Every single time, more people got involved, and his bullshit was put on parade for a bigger and bigger audience. It was one thing for Aizawa to know, or his parents, or even All Might—they all knew things about the world, had an idea about the cruelty it was capable of. They were safe, somehow, figures meant to be relied on even if he hated doing it. But now it was starting to involve people his own age, who were all bright-eyed and innocent and pure, and he grew nauseous at the thought of them realizing he’d been tainted by some nameless guy who called him a slut whenever he got the opening. The only begrudging consolation was that it was Todoroki, who probably could keep it a secret. Hopefully.

“So you heard the Nomu attack and rushed towards the scene, and that’s when the assailant ambushed you?” Detective Tsukauchi asked, already jotting things down.

“Yeah, kind of. He did that goddamn pheromone thing, and it botched my explosions, which threw my trajectory off.”

“And then he bit you? Did you fight him?”

“Fucking obviously I fought him. Blasted the shit out of his knee. He plays dirty, though, always
fucking yanking my hair and shit, kicked me to throw me off balance, and once he’s at my neck it’s hard to do anything because he kills my quirk and he ain’t exactly small...He’d be shit in a regular fight, I guarantee it, and if he ever came after me without being a cheating scumbag cheap-shot motherfucking coward—"

“Focus, Bakugou,” Aizawa grumbled, although by his demeanor, it seemed like he agreed.

“He bit you after that, yes? What do you remember from that point on?” the detective asked, unfazed.

Bakugou shrugged. “Not much. It’s fuzzy until around the time Kirishima and them came by.”

Tsukauchi nodded before turning to Todoroki. “But you witnessed from that point, correct? Can you recount what you saw in detail, including a description of the assailant?”

Out of the line of questioning, Bakugou sank into the chair and crossed his arms. He tried not to act too interested in Todoroki’s side of the story, but he hadn’t actually heard it yet. They didn’t exchange many words on the way back, mostly because Bakugou didn’t give them the time to—he felt exposed, hunted, and it kept him in a skittish state of fight-or-flight on the entire journey to campus. Even now, the feeling hadn’t fully left him.

Todoroki cleared his throat, obviously uncomfortable and still a little out of the loop. “I was ahead of Bakugou and didn’t initially stop when he fell. I thought the man was a civilian going to check on him, and the Nomu attack was ongoing, so I pressed ahead. It was only when I thought that the battle was already handled that I turned back. It didn’t register at first, so I didn’t act right away, but then when he kissed Bakugou, I—“

“What?” Bakugou balked, arms half-unfolded in shock. “He kissed me?”

Todoroki faltered, swallowing before nodding hesitantly. “I—yeah. I’m sorry. I suppose I should have said something earlier, but I didn’t think...”

Bakugou stared with open outrage, first at Todoroki, then at Aizawa, before explosively settling back in his seat with a scowl and a final, “Bullshit. Fucking bullshit.”

Tsukauchi indicated for Todoroki to continue after an awkward pause. Todoroki started again timidly. “I saw the bite, so I sent some ice at him to get him away from Bakugou. I managed to hit him with some in the leg, but not enough to stop him, and I didn’t pursue because Bakugou would have been left alone. I moved him to the side of the road and waited for him to wake up. That was around the time he called Aizawa.”

“How long did it take him to come around?”

“I didn’t time it exactly...I think maybe a half hour? Forty-five minutes?”

Tsukauchi’s brow furrowed, and he glanced at Bakugou. “What was his demeanor during this time? Level of activity?”

“He was calm. Mostly inactive, though he did start responding to questions after about fifteen minutes.”

Tsukauchi shared a heavy look with Aizawa before jotting this bit of information down. He sighed, moving on. “Can you describe the attacker?”

“He was an alpha, dark hair...it was short, kind of buzzed on the sides but longer on top. Maybe
about six feet and a few inches tall. Slim build. Wearing jeans and a button down, nothing that stood out too much.” Todoroki’s eyes squinted and drifted to the side, trying to recall any more details. “I think that’s it...”

“Did he, at any point, say anything? That either you or Bakugou heard?”

Todoroki shook his head. Bakugou sighed and did the same, adding, “He said to hold still, and I think he said some stuff after he bit me, but I couldn’t make sense of it.”

With a dissatisfied hum, Tsukkauchi stared at his notes. “The fact that he arrived alongside of a League attack is...unsettling. We can’t assume he’s involved, but the timing suggests it might be more than coincidence.”

“Wait...” With a sudden look of recognition, Bakugou wavered for a second before grabbing his phone. He swallowed thickly before opening his messages and reviewing his last conversation. “He...did know there was going to be an attack, I think. And he knew where I was.”


“I don’t know. He won’t tell me.” Bakugou slid his phone over to Aizawa, who took it without a word and began reading the conversation.

Todoroki looked between the two of them, bewildered. “You’re...texting him?”

“Not my choice,” Bakugou grumbled, agitated as he watched Aizawa scroll through the texts.

Aizawa’s expression grew more disturbed, and he seemed to read longer than expected. Bakugou shifted uncomfortably in his chair, knowing that none of the conversations were exactly flattering. With a scowl, Aizawa slid the phone over to Tsukauchi. “You’re getting weird messages online from strangers?”

Not meeting his eyes, Bakugou nodded. “Didn’t notice at first because I usually ignore that shit. I already changed all my privacy settings.”

“Good,” Aizawa growled. He turned to Tsukauchi. “We need to talk to some other departments. If the League is involved or if this bastard is encouraging others to target Bakugou online as well, we’ll want to follow up on those leads.” Referring back to his student, his voice took on an edge of frustration. “You need to tell us these things immediately, Bakugou.”

“I forgot, okay? I don’t even know when that asshole is being serious half the time, or when he’s just fucking with me. I can’t just report every pervy message he sends or else I’d might as well just make it a goddamn group chat.”

“I’m not asking for every message, but if he says that he’s been telling people about raping you online, that’s something we should know!”

“Then that’s basically every fucking message!” Bakugou snapped, voice growing louder and fists balled. “He’s always trying to get under my skin, how the fuck am I supposed to know what to report when everything is just some attempt to humiliate me?”

“I gave you my number for a reason, you can forward any and as many messages as you need to—”

“You want me to send you the fucking pictures too? Huh? Maybe you’ll find him faster if you searched for a matching dick, I’ve got every angle you might need, high-fucking-def—”
“Bakugou, we’re trying to help you!” Aizawa shouted, slamming his hands against the table. Both of them were on their feet by now, glaring at each other.

“Then why is he still out there doing whatever the fuck he wants? You haven’t done shit!” Bakugou shouted back, arms tense to the point of trembling and expression contorted. “And now he just knows where I am, all the time apparently, that’s great fucking news! I can’t even go outside— I just wanted to have a normal goddamn day, despite, despite the bullshit and the stupid taunts and threats, but, but he...” He gestured widely, making a choked sound of frustration. “What—what am I supposed to do?” His voice cracked, and he took a shaky breath, pressing his palms to his eyes as his expression collapsed into a twisted grimace.

Aizawa took a deep breath, some of the frustration draining from his shoulders, and he slid his hand over his face. “I… I know. I know. We’re doing what we can.” He exhaled slowly, looking tired. “…I’m sorry I yelled.”

Bakugou nodded, not trusting himself to speak. His hands remained pressed to his eyes as he took measured, shuddering breaths, sniffing wetly at times between. The room was filled with an uncomfortable silence aside from his soft sounds, until Tsukauchi broke it with the recommendation that they stop there. With a promise to Aizawa to discuss follow-ups for the new leads later, he quietly left to grant the occupants some privacy.

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It took a while until Bakugou calmed down again, and Todoroki sat as Aizawa gently talked his classmate through measures they would take and more general reassurances. He wasn’t sure if he should stay to watch their exchange, but a meaningful look from Aizawa kept him in place, despite feeling like he was impeding on something. When Bakugou’s breathing was finally even, he murmured that he wanted to see Recovery Girl, and Aizawa nodded.

It was only then that Aizawa turned to Todoroki. “I’m sure you have the good sense to recognize that this is a private matter. Do not discuss any of it with your classmates.” Todoroki nodded, already assuming as much. “If it’s not too much to ask, I would also appreciate it if you accompanied Bakugou during off-campus outings. You don’t have to babysit him— “ He glanced sideways at Bakugou, who remained uncharacteristically silent. “—But it would help to have someone around who recognized his stalker and was aware of the situation. I know you two aren’t the best of friends, but I don’t want to have to restrict his freedom anymore than we have. This, at least, is a step up from house arrest. Is that a fair compromise, Bakugou?” Bakugou didn’t react for a few seconds before reluctantly nodding. Aizawa watched him before also nodding, looking like he was still grappling with ways to improve the situation. “Go talk to Recovery Girl and get some rest.”

The two students rose from their seats and left the lounge. Todoroki wasn’t sure what to do from here— there was a lot about the situation he didn’t know, but he knew now would not be the time to ask. He honestly didn’t know if it would ever be easy to ask with Bakugou. Even so, it didn’t feel right to leave him just yet, and he felt some sort of intrinsic want to help him, even if there was nothing he could actually do. He accompanied Bakugou to Recovery Girl in silence, leaning against the wall next to the office to wait once they arrived. Bakugou gave him a blank look.

“You don’t have to wait for me.”

“I want to,” Todoroki replied.

A series of emotions played over Bakugou’s face, and he looked away. “Look,” he started, voice still raw. “I don’t want you following me around just because you know about this, okay? I’m not a charity case, and this isn’t a fucking circus. I don’t want to be monitored like some kind of caged
animal, and I sure as hell don’t want your pity.”

“I know.” Bakugou seemed unconvinced, pinning Todoroki under a scrutinizing stare. Todoroki shifted on his feet, debating on whether he should explain himself. After a bit, he figured Bakugou was forced to lay out his secrets, so he might as well bare some as well. He thought for a second, trying to figure out how to speak concisely so as to not make this about his own problems before he began. “I...knew you were an omega because I’ve seen pacification like that before. My father abused my mother with it. I...couldn’t do anything, and I always hated it, and I still can’t stand it now. So, if it helps you feel better, I’m not just doing this because I feel bad for you, and definitely not because I pity you or think less of you. It’s just...unfair, and you shouldn’t be forced to deal with it on your own. It doesn’t change who you are or the respect I have for your abilities or strength.”

Todoroki looked Bakugou in the eye, promising a commitment as much to himself as his classmate. “I won’t force anything. You have enough to deal with as it is. But if you need anyone, an ally you can trust, I’ll do whatever I can. I want to.”

Bakugou considered, scanning his classmate’s expression, before he wordlessly nodded and slipped into Recovery Girl’s office.

Chapter End Notes

Hello naughty children, it's Emotions time. I think someone a while back mentioned that they don’t know how Bakugou hasn't broken down yet, but we can now cheerfully tick that box off

So, again, I'm leaving to visit my sister for the rest of next week, so there won't be any updates until at least July! I wanted to get this arc finished out before I left...it's a bit heavy, but there should be a few lighter chapters again after this before we get back into the heavy shit
I might still sometimes have access to some internet tho so if you're real thirsty, come say hi or talk to me or ask things on tumblr! Or as always your comments here make my day every day <3<3<3<3
The threat of openness

Chapter Summary

He didn’t say anything for a long time, and the two lapsed into a sort of heavy silence. When he did speak, it was quiet, but sharp and cold. “You keep being targeted, but it’s because you’re strong. It intimidates people who are afraid of their own weakness.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Sleep was a necessity that Bakugou had always took for granted. Sure, he had many nights of troubled sleep in the past—he’d had a fair number of villain encounters that left him restless, and he’d had plenty of exciting opportunities that kept him up with competitive energy or last-minute nerves. The last few months had been a notch worse, but he managed, even getting a handle on it without needing the sleep aids that his therapist offered. While he took his sleep as seriously as any other aspect of his training, he was no stranger to operating on a few hours less than optimal, and he prided himself in the fact that it never slowed him down.

After about three days with maybe six hours of sleep in total between them, he was reconsidering that.

That guy, that fucking guy, was tracking him, somehow. Not only was he a wanted criminal that the police couldn’t find, not only could he just walk into any room like locks meant nothing, but he also knew where Bakugou was, even across the other side of the city. It didn’t matter if Bakugou spent his heat at home or UA or a goddamn broom closet, that guy would be able to find him.

Bakugou couldn’t even say that the nightmares kept him awake because he was too keyed up to actually fall asleep most of the time. Being alone in his room felt like waiting for the ball to drop, and every time he would get close to unconsciousness, some animal part of his brain reminded him that he was defenseless, that he was still in danger. Barricading his door helped for a little bit, but not enough to allow him more than a bit of dozing. He couldn’t even convince himself that he would be safe outside of his heat since that guy was apparently fine with making contact in the time between.

Sitting in class on that third day after the off-campus encounter, Bakugou could feel eyes on him. He could almost sense the whispers of concern, the questions on his classmates’ tongues. He did his best to ignore them despite the fact that he knew he looked like shit and had dozed off for the second time today, nearly falling out of his chair and startling half the class when he jerked awake. He already told Deku to fuck off this morning when the nerd asked if it was a residual side-effect of the “disorientation quirk” he was hit with, and he hoped the rest of them would catch the hint and leave him alone.

All the while, the source of his problems was flooding his phone with stupid messages relating to an ongoing argument. The alpha seemed to think that Bakugou should just stop fighting or putting himself in hero situations, but if there was something that Bakugou was not about to compromise on, it was that. On top of that, the douchebag had been sending Bakugou links to all sorts of Alpha Rights pseudoscience bullshit, stuff about roles and abilities and nature, some of which Bakugou had skimmed before closing out in disgust.
Bakugou just wished he could catch a break during school hours instead of feeling his phone buzz away in his pocket while he tried to pay attention to some droning lecture. It was bad enough that his head was pounding and his eyelids wouldn’t stay up—he didn’t want to deal with that bastard as well. Nonetheless, when the lunch hour came around, he grabbed his food and left the room before anyone could address him, scrolling up to the last messages he sent so he could read through the responses.

Me:
I don’t give a shit what you want or what you think.
And I don’t give a flying fuck about any of that second gender bullshit, either.
I’m going to become a pro hero.
THE BEST hero. Number one.
You knew that about me even before you started stalking me, dumbass.

New messages

Locksmith:
I dont know so whats hard to understand about this
Youre assuming theres a choice and theres not
I dont give a shit about your whole hero delusion
I wont let you pick fights
Its hard on you and youre just not suited for it
Sure before you presented maybe it seemed like it with that quirk
But your body isnt made for fighting and itd be a waste to fuck it up
And yeah I know you grew up with all that omega rights bullshit
Had a bunch of crap planted in your head about how you could do or be whatever the fuck you want
But you cant escape your biology
And you were made to be bred up and to take care of a family
Sorry sweetheart but thats the most real you can get
Thats the whole point of genders
You were MADE to carry your alphas seed
And theres a reason why your alpha can force you to submit when you decide to be stupid bitch
To keep you safe so you can do what you were made to do
So you can whine and moan all you want about how you dont like it
But Im not going to feel bad about keeping you in line
As your mate its my natural right to intervene

Me:
I can’t believe I’m being lectured by a moron who can’t type in complete sentences.
You don’t have the right to shit, you self-absorbed entitled psychopath.
Take all your backward bullshit and shove it up someone else’s ass if you don’t like it.
I’ll die and rot in hell before I change anything for you.

Locksmith:
I do have rights
In law and in nature
And Im not a castrated pussy like the alphas in your life whos scared to take advantage of them
I found you and I mated you fair and square
You can think whatever you want about that but your body knows to submit
And when your heat comes around you're going to be begging for my cock
And I'm going to take good care of you and fill you to the brim <3

Me:
You're FUCKING DISGUSTING.
"Fair and square"??
Is that why you're going after students and not omegas your own age?? Fucking pervert.
If I was matched up to fight someone ten years younger than me, I'm pretty sure I could
kick their ass, but that wouldn't mean shit about natural order or biology or whatever
stupid bullshit you're going on about.
Just because it's sex doesn't make it any different.
You're just a fucking coward.
And you're not just going to walk in and do whatever the fuck you want this time.
You realize we've been learning more about you, right?
A lockpicking quirk is a neat trick, but it's not going to work forever.

Locksmith:
Cocky bitch
YOU realize you haven't stopped me yet right
Not once
And you're not going to (^3~) <3
So I'll let you keep playing hero for now
I'm nice like that
But you better enjoy it because by this time next year you'll have your hands full
I'm gonna pump you fat full of pups and there's nothing you can do about it

Even though the air was chill with autumn, Bakugou found himself outside, livid and pacing in the
relative solitude while typing away. His lunch laid on the ground, not yet touched as he argued. He
tried to resist the urge to throw or blow up his phone, until finally his resolve broke in the form of
him whipping the device across the lawn with a pent-up snarl. It bounced over the grass once or
twice, and Bakugou glared at it, chest heaving in rage and frustration before he dropped his face into
his hands to muffle a furious scream. Only after that was out of his system did he roll his shoulders
back, close his eyes, and start taking deep breaths, counting the inhales and exhales while flexing his
fingers out of fists.

After a few minutes had passed, Bakugou opened his eyes again and begrudgingly stomped over to
pick up his phone. It didn't seem to be damaged, thankfully (though there were smears and clumps of
dirt around the corners). He was grumbling and turning back to where he dropped his tantrum when
his gaze landed on Todoroki, standing awkwardly off to the side from where he was throwing his
tantrum. Bakugou glared at it, chest heaving in rage and frustration before he dropped his face into
his hands to muffle a furious scream. Only after that was out of his system did he roll his shoulders
back, close his eyes, and start taking deep breaths, counting the inhales and exhales while flexing his
fingers out of fists.

"Sorry. You seemed a little preoccupied, and I didn't want to interrupt."

Bakugou scowled deeply, trudging over the rest of the way to his lunch. "What the fuck do you
want, Half 'n Half?"

"I wanted to check if you were okay."

"Peachy." Bakugou dropped to the ground and started to pick through his food, mostly to look
preoccupied so his classmate would leave him alone.

Todoroki sighed, some of the concern in his features bleeding back into mild irritation. Bakugou felt a twinge of satisfaction, much more comfortable and familiar with that expression. To his dismay, however, Todoroki wasn’t deterred, settling down nearby with his own lunch despite his obvious annoyance at Bakugou’s prickly attitude.

“It’s okay if you don’t want to talk about it,” Todoroki began casually, as if he didn’t just watch Bakugou throw his phone and rage at nothing. “But I thought if you did, I should be available.” He began eating as if this was a perfectly normal, routine lunch hour for the two of them.

Bakugou glowered, trying to stare Todoroki down as the other picked through his meal. When Todoroki remained completely unaffected, he huffed and began to stab through his own food. “So what, you wanna play therapist now? Want to take a crack at dream analysis?”

“A therapist might not be a bad idea.”

“You’re out of luck, I already have one.”

“Oh.” Todoroki blinked, pausing in his eating. “That’s good.”

Bakugou rolled his eyes. “Don’t act so surprised, asshole.”

Todoroki shrugged, unfazed. “I figured you wouldn’t go. Unless Mr. Aizawa made you or something.”

“Shut up. What do you want?” Bakugou changed the subject, irritation spiking with Todoroki’s (overly accurate) directness.

“I already told you.”

“Why are you sitting with me?”

Todoroki shrugged again. “Why not?”

Bakugou sneered, his leg bouncing in agitation. He took to ignoring the other boy, trying to eat quickly and get this awkward lunch meeting over with. He glanced at his phone, almost going to pick it up to use it as a distraction, before changing his mind and glancing around at his surroundings instead.

For the most part, Todoroki seemed like he would prefer to let Bakugou initiate conversation. In fact, he seemed perfectly content with letting Bakugou steep in his own volatile emotions while he ate and calmly watched the breeze caress the blades of grass around them. It pissed Bakugou off, and after nearly ten minutes of fidgeting and aggressive avoidance, Bakugou finally let out an explosive growl. “Look, just because you know some shit doesn’t mean we’re best friends now, got it?”

Todoroki nodded like that much was obvious. “Of course.”

“You don’t have to coddle me.”

“I don’t really want to.”

Bakugou ground his teeth together, glaring. He glanced at his phone, opened his mouth to speak, closed it, and then opened it again. “You know about like...legal stuff, right? Mate bonds and all that? You and Round Face talked about it.”
Todoroki nodded, shifting to become more attentive. Bakugou fidgeted, glancing away. “Okay, so let’s say that this bullshit bond did take, and now I have this deadbeat piece of shit alpha latched onto me. What can he...what does that mean? Legally?”

A pensive but serious look overtook Todoroki’s features as he considered the question. “It depends. If it’s just a bond, it doesn’t necessarily mean much. There are some similarities to legal partnerships, but he can’t force you to maintain the bond if you don’t want to, normally. Most bad bonds are just maintained because breaking them is an unpleasant process.” His brow furrowed, and he sighed, leaning back. “But there’s a lot of fine print and loopholes to exploit. Having a child complicates things considerably, for instance, and in your case, I’m not sure how things like your age might affect it. But, he’s a villain, right? So I don’t think he would have much leverage against you. If you’re concerned, I’d suggest talking to someone about it, maybe a lawyer.”

Bakugou listened without interrupting, expression intense despite the fact that he was trying to look nonchalant. “So...as long as I don’t have a kid and break the bond, it should be fine? How do you break it?”

Todoroki looked him over for a second. “Didn’t anyone...explain mate bonds to you? With all this going on?”

Bakugou huffed, tugging at the grass. “I think Recovery Girl was going to, but I asked her not to yet. I didn’t really want to hear about it at the time. I know it only lasts for a few cycles if it’s not renewed or whatever, and I guess it changes your heat some? Beyond that, I have no fucking clue.”

“I guess that makes sense. To be fair, after listening to everyone else in class, I don’t think most people know a lot about it.”

“You seem to know a lot for a guy who hates them.”

“I don’t hate them,” Todoroki muttered. “Mate bonds can be beautiful. I just hate how people use them. It took me a long time to recognize the difference between those two things. And pack bonds are better.”

“Cool. Are you going to answer my goddamn question or what?”

Todoroki cast a deadpan look at Bakugou, but there was a hint of amusement to it. That fades quickly when he remembers what the question was. “You break it by just...avoiding contact, I think. The bad part is that it makes your heat a lot harder to deal with until it fades.”

“Is that it? It can’t be worse than dealing with that asshole.”

Todoroki grunted in agreement, taking a moment to eat a few more bites in the lull of conversation. After a few seconds, he spoke, tentative, “So...why are you texting him?”

Bakugou grimaced, taking his time chewing before answering. He wasn’t sure if he wanted to reveal everything or not, but since Todoroki was already this far in...might as well not leave any room for dumbass assumptions. “Fucker took some pictures and stole the contacts from my phone when I was. You know.” He waved his hand in front of his face, finding the right words. “Passed out? After he. Uh. During my last heat. Said he would send the pictures to everyone I knew if I didn’t talk to him.”

Todoroki gaped, stunned for a second. “They couldn’t do anything about that? Did you go to the police?”

“Police are no help. They’ve been after the guy for a while, and they don’t know shit about him. He’s got this lockpicking quirk or something, so he can basically go wherever, and somehow he
never gets caught on camera. And I guess it’s not ‘real’ blackmail unless he’s asking money or making threats, so they just said to keep a copy of everything for when they finally catch him.”

“...Damn.” Todoroki looked frustrated, staring at his food like it would inspire a solution. “So...how long has this been going on? You said it was your third time seeing him.”

“Yeah. Broke into my house for my first heat. Broke into U.A. for my second one. Just showed up, out of nowhere, for no reason.” Bakugou shrugged like it was a normal topic, but there was a jerkiness to his movements that betrayed him. “He’s into Alpha Rights bullshit. Pretty sure he targeted me just because I’m a badass and he wants to prove omegas can’t be.”

The concern from earlier was etched back into Todoroki’s expression, joined with a sort of deeply-held conviction. He didn’t say anything for a long time, and the two lapsed into a sort of heavy silence. When he did speak, it was quiet, but sharp and cold. “You keep being targeted, but it’s because you’re strong. It intimidates people who are afraid of their own weakness.” He caught and held Bakugou’s eyes, sincere but harsh. “But I was serious earlier. A lot of people are targeting you, and you don’t have to deal with it alone. It’s unfair. We don’t have to be best friends, but I want to help.”

Bakugou shifted uncomfortably, not really used to this sort of candidness or invitation to vulnerability. The idea wasn’t exactly unwelcome, and logically he knew the statements were true...but this wasn’t something he was practiced in. He settled with nodding, figuring that after a few more tries, Todoroki would give up and everything would go back to normal between them.

“I know the dream analysis thing was probably a joke, but if you’re having nightmares, you can come talk to me,” Todoroki continued, either not noticing or not caring about Bakugou’s discomfort. “It’s obvious you aren’t getting enough sleep.”

“Again, you’re not my therapist, but okay.”

“I know you won’t ask yourself, so I’m making the offer explicitly clear.”

“Cool, okay, thanks, we can fucking stop now.” Bakugou scarfed down the last of his lunch and rose to return to class, with Todoroki not far behind. He figured that tomorrow, Todoroki would go back to eating with Deku and the nerd brigade, and he could return to managing his den of secrets without the threat of openness or exposure.

Chapter End Notes

Two awkward bois with alpha issues become friends...ish
I've had to add chapters in my planning because I want their relationship to seem natural in its progression, so.......sorry for even more slow development orz
(also I know someone in the past made a comment about mpreg--there's not gonna be any preg in this fic, so I wont blindside yall w that later, dw)

I'm back from the short vacation (thank you for all the well-wishing! <3 ), although...this next month...is gonna be difficult. Right now this is kind of my decompression project, so hopefully updates won't slow too much, but there's a decent chance that they will. If that's the case, I'm sorry! Half of this chapter was written in the airport without notes, and the other half was done as soon as I got home after a day of travel and 3 hrs of sleep....so pls forgive if I update it later or if it just kind of doesn't make much sense
I've also applied for a new invitation to AO3, so hopefully I can have an account where people can get notifications and I can actually reply to individual comments...that won't be probably for at least a week or so, tho. You can talk to me on tumblr in the meantime!

Mooshbabii:
"hell yes. now at least i can sleep at night. i legit had a dream about this fanfic. it was fucking weird. you're a great writer and making me want to get back into writing fics again. thank you for all your creativity!"
You can't just say that and not give details!!! I was flustered for days!! Oh man I'm so amazed tho, I'm really glad I could inspire you that much ;;O;;;
A promise of commitment

Chapter Summary

As the days went on, Bakugou grew more comfortable in Todoroki’s space, and as a result, Todoroki picked up on things he wouldn’t have otherwise.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Bakugou had expected Todoroki to give up and spend his time with people who actually enjoyed his presence. Bakugou had not expected Todoroki to be unflappable in his stubbornness, continually joining Bakugou for lunch without batting an eye at his classmate’s vitriol. Bakugou could see the silent or rant and rave with accents of explosions, even actively berate the beta for the majority of the lunch period, and Todoroki’s expression would simply retain its usual impassivity, shifting just slightly to show interest or concern or irritation. He would chat as if this were the most natural situation in the world, as if they’d been buddies for months rather than just over a week.

Bakugou begrudgingly got used to it, but you couldn’t pay him to admit out loud that he kind of appreciated it. As much as it pained him, it was nice to not spend his free time either alone with his phone or trying to remember how to act normal around his idiot friends.

Something about Todoroki’s aloofness and relative non-judgment made him easy to vent to as well. The beta didn’t tend to get overly emotional, and when he did, it passed quickly, not so much diffusing as seeping back into whatever strange resolve kept him invested in Bakugou’s issues. Sometimes when Todoroki was taken off-guard, rather than being off-putting and loud like most people, it was almost funny, his eyes widening in flustered embarrassment or awkward surprise. Bakugou maybe tried to goad that reaction more often than was necessary. After a few days, Bakugou started to become comfortable in a similar way as he was with Aizawa—which is to say, maybe too comfortable, if you asked Todoroki (“Goddamn it—Half ’n Half, see what I have to fucking deal with? It’s barely noon and I’ve already gotten like three dick picks between Shithead Alpha and Placebook DMs. Don’t these people have lives or, like, actual hobbies? Look at this one —what the fuck is that lighting? Get a better camera, asslord, your dick looks like garbage.”)

“...I agree, but I really don’t need to see them, Bakugou.”

“If I have to, you have to. Fight me about it.”)

Over time, they started to hang out in the dorms as well. It happened almost seamlessly, without fanfare. Todoroki noticed that Bakugou tended to study in the common areas, but also tended to complain loudly about everyone around him and the horrible conditions for studying. Out of curiosity, he brought it up during lunch one day. “Why did you start doing homework in the common areas? It seems like you hate it.”

Bakugou grunted, staying quiet and pushing his food around before shrugging. “Gets too hard to concentrate in my room.”

Todoroki reflected on that for a second. There were a few questions he wanted to ask to clarify, but he opted instead with a simple nod. “If you’d like, you’re welcome to study in my room as well. It’s
Bakugou rolled his eyes but didn’t comment. Todoroki figured that he might have been having trouble because of his anxieties, which were clearly getting to him even if he hid them remarkably well on the surface, but when he didn’t come by to study that evening, Todoroki figured he’d assumed wrong. Two days later, however, he heard a knock on his door, and Bakugou stood awkwardly in the hall, expression pinched and daring Todoroki to say something. The beta simply opened the door and stood to the side, letting Bakugou enter and spread his books across whatever corner of the floor he preferred. From then on, Bakugou usually spent at least part of the evening studying or reading in Todoroki’s room, even if he still spent some of the time in the common room to tutor his less academically-inclined friends.

As the days went on, Bakugou grew more comfortable in Todoroki’s space, and as a result, Todoroki picked up on things he wouldn’t have otherwise. Without conversation or background noise, the omega would get increasingly agitated, especially after he’d check his phone, and he had these almost obsessive fixations on checking his surroundings. In the quiet of Todoroki’s room after an hour or two of studying, Bakugou would start to fidget, eyes darting from the door to the window every few minutes, and he almost always placed himself with his back to the wall so that he could see the entire room. At first, Todoroki wasn’t sure what to do, whether it was his place to intervene or comfort his classmate. So, instead, he started breaking the silence when he would notice the other boy getting twitchy, even if he didn’t actually have anything to say—mostly just ask Bakugou’s opinion about some part of the homework or make idle observations about class. The first few times, Bakugou jumped, startled out of his hypervigilance, but eventually it became something of a routine, with Bakugou tentatively breaking into conversation at times on his own.

He also began staying later and later. This presented a little bit of an awkward problem for Todoroki, as he didn’t really want to kick the omega out, but he also couldn’t just stay up late without compromising his own sleep schedule. He knew Bakugou was having trouble sleeping, but he didn’t think going sleepless himself in solidarity would exactly help either of them. After a couple days of Bakugou pushing the time before seeing himself out, Todoroki tried to think of a good way to start a discussion about it that wouldn’t set Bakugou immediately on the defensive. Bakugou, however, beat him to the punch.

“Could I—” Bakugou cleared his throat, staring intently at the book he was holding. “Could I stay here tonight? To sleep?”

Todoroki blinked, taken aback. “Uh. I suppose.”

Bakugou’s brow furrowed, gripping his book a little too hard. He worried at his lower lip, obviously stressed about something, and after a few beats, he huffed explosively, setting the book down. “You know, nevermind. It’s fine, forget I said anything.” He started to pack up his things, avoiding looking at Todoroki. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Wait, Bakugou. I said it was okay,” Todoroki responded. “I suppose.”

Bakugou stopped packing, but he wasn’t convinced. He tapped the spine of a notebook against the ground, shoulders hunched. “Nah, it’s just. It’s stupid. I need to just fucking deal with it instead of trying to bail.”

When Todoroki responded, he spoke slowly, choosing his words with care. He wasn’t sure what Bakugou was thinking yet, but he wanted to make sure it was clear that he wasn’t going to pass judgment. “I think it’s okay to take breaks from that. You have a lot of stuff to deal with, and it
would be hard to do it all at once. It’s important to sleep, so whatever problem you’re trying to
tackle, it’s okay to wait until a better time after you’ve rested.”

There was no response for a while as Bakugou seemed to weigh the words against his pride, but the
days of sleepless nights had already worn him down. He sighed, a rare exhaustion settling over him.
“It’s just. It’s less than two weeks from my heat and. I can’t fucking relax. You know? I can’t be
alone in there without feeling like the moment I close my eyes, he’s going to be there. It’s driving me
insane.” He rubbed his neck, looking around Todoroki’s room awkwardly. “I mean, I don’t know if
this’ll help. But I’m...willing to try whatever at this point.”

“I agree. Stay here tonight and see if it helps.” Todoroki moved to start setting up his futon. “You
may want to get your own blanket and pillow, but I’m afraid it may be easier to use your own
bathroom.”

Bakugou snorted, starting to pack his things to get them out of the way off of the floor. “Yeah. I’m
not going to fucking move in or anything.” After his things were gathered, Bakugou left to get
changed into pajamas and follow his bathroom routine in his own room. It didn’t take too long, and
because he knew he’d have to return to get dressed in the morning, he didn’t worry about anything
aside from grabbing the necessary bedding. When he got back to Todoroki’s room, the beta was in
the bathroom washing his face, so Bakugou let himself in. The futon was already set out, large
enough that it should be able to accommodate both of them without much trouble. He wasn’t sure if
that was what Todoroki had in mind, however, so he sat on the floor-level chair and waited until the
room’s owner was ready.

When Todoroki returned to the room, he glanced at Bakugou before gesturing to the futon. “It’s big
enough for two, as long as you don’t mind.” He lowered himself onto his preferred side, sitting on
the covers as he waited for Bakugou.

Bakugou slunk over to the free side of the futon, setting up his own pillow and blanket so that they
wouldn’t be competing for covers in the night. He expected this to feel more awkward and unusual,
but somehow it felt like a normal sleepover. It reminded him of the training camp during the few
nights they had before the villain attack. It may have helped that he was with Todoroki, who was
oblivious by default and probably had to be verbally reminded whether or not something was
socially awkward. Either way, as they rearranged and fumbled with the bedding, Bakugou felt no
small amount of relief that this didn’t turn into some sort of big fucking deal. When they were
satisfied, Todoroki shut off the overhead lights and locked the door, leaving the room dim in the soft
yellow glow of a floor lamp.

“So I was thinking,” Todoroki said as he slid his legs under his covers, remaining cross-legged.
“Would you like to form a pack?”

“Ha?” Bakugou responded, glancing over at him.

“A pack,” Todoroki repeated. “It’s okay if you don’t want to, but I’d like to offer.”

Bakugou’s eyebrows furrowed in confusion. “Why?”

“For one, having a pack bond could make it more difficult for someone to take advantage of any
legal loopholes with mate bonds. I remember you were worried about that.” Todoroki explained.
“They’re much less common in modern times after the big shift towards parent-child-only families,
but many of the legal rights to pack mates are still in the books.”

Bakugou waited for Todoroki to continue, and then huffed when he didn’t. “...Like? I don’t know
shit about packs, Half ‘n Half.”
Todoroki hummed. “In a traditional sense, packs are formed by betas, who mediate between their pack members. That includes protecting omegas and alphas from being taken advantage of during their heats and ruts. Basically, it means if an alpha mates you, as your packmate I can challenge his right to have access to your heat, even moreso since he’s not part of the pack himself.”

“Huh.” Bakugou considered the possibility. He hated the idea of someone else deciding who had ‘access to his heat’ by default, but given the harassment he’d been dealing with, it was still kind of an attractive proposition. Plus, the more he heard about the legal side of mate bonds, the less assured he became. “What’s the catch? I mean, why the fuck didn’t you bring this up earlier?”

With a shrug, Todoroki looked away, fiddling with his covers. “Well...it’s still a bond. It’s very different from a mate bond and doesn’t require the sort of sexual intimacy, of course, but there is still intimacy.”

Bakugou’s eyebrow raised, and the awkwardness of sharing a bed that wasn’t there a few minutes ago suddenly reared its head. “What...kind of intimacy?”

“It’s mostly about scenting and scent mingling. Being near each other, frequent touching, that type of thing.” Todoroki murmured, glancing back at Bakugou. “It can be formalized, though. Pack bonds are versatile. They’ve been used between family, between lovers, between mentors and students, between lords and their charges...it’s mostly a promise of commitment and loyalty, both privately and publicly.”

“You’re a fan of this shit, aren’t you?” Bakugou smirked. “You’ve talked up packs before, too.”

Some of the tension faded from Todoroki, and with a small smile, he shifted so he could fold his arms over the tops of his knees. “Yeah. My sister tried to form a pack for us when I was younger. It couldn’t work because of the circumstances, but it feels more like family to me. Like how it should be.” He sighed, voice carrying a softer tone. “It’s much harder to force a pack bond, and it’s much easier to break. It’s all about trust. Respect. Or, it should be, when it’s done right.”

“When’s it done wrong?”

Todoroki shrugged. “Stuff like the joke Mineta told. Betas chaperoning omegas. There were times in the past when society was set up so that betas could enable power disparities. But...that’s true of everything, isn’t it? It’s not what it was meant to be, and in most cases, it’s not like that. It’s just what people remember because pack bonds aren’t as common now.”

Bakugou hummed, thinking it over. He didn’t really like the idea of everyone thinking Todoroki was chaperoning him around, even if that weren’t actually the case. But then again, everyone still thought he was an alpha, so that probably wouldn’t be a big deal, right? Then there was the fact that it was just fucking weird to suddenly be buddy-buddy with a guy that he was openly antagonistic to before. That was already ongoing, though, even though he wasn’t sure how much everyone else had noticed yet. It would just be more obvious, apparently, since scent marking was a part of it. Because he used suppressants, Todoroki probably wouldn’t smell like him, but would he smell like Todoroki? Would that outweigh the possible benefit of having another layer of legal protection against a guy who was actively trying to knock him up? Bakugou looked Todoroki over, considering the events of the past weeks and how easy it was for Todoroki to merge into his daily life. A week or two ago, his response would have probably been a flat “no” with a side of open mockery. Now, though, he found Todoroki to be a source of calm even beyond the beta pheromones, if only because he didn’t have to hide for fear of judgment or condescension around him.

All things considering, if it was just a matter of formalized scenting, he could live with that.
“Alright, fine.” Bakugou muttered, turning to Todoroki. “How does this shit work? You don’t have to bite me, do you? Because I’m out if I have to get bitten all the goddamn time.”

Todoroki blinked before his eyes seemed to take on a subtle sparkle, surprised that Bakugou agreed. He sat up straight and turned to Bakugou as well. “No biting, don’t worry. Hold out your wrists.” Bakugou obeyed, holding his hands out palm-up, and Todoroki smiled softly, shuffling a little closer. In silence, he cradled Bakugou’s right hand with his left, crossing over with his own right hand to gently rub their wrists together, slow and thorough. He repeated the process with Bakugou’s left hand. The touches were soft, almost ticklish, and Todoroki handled it with a sort of personal reverence. When he was done with the wrists, Todoroki looked Bakugou in the eyes, raising his wrists to run over the scent glands on either side of the omega’s throat. The contact, both eye and touch, was intense, intimate exactly as Todoroki said it would be, and Bakugou felt a slight blush rise to his cheeks.

In the soft glow of the floor lamp, Todoroki’s face was gentle, but unwavering in his earnestness. The scenting washed Bakugou in a soothing blanket of beta pheromones, and he found himself relaxing into it. Even before, Todoroki’s scent was oddly comforting, but that had felt annoying when Bakugou didn’t authorize it. Now, though, with his open consent to the bond, it was calming, something he hesitantly welcomed, and he even felt a little disappointed when Todoroki drew his hands away after several long moments of messaging their scent glands together. Todoroki seemed a little disappointed too, but overall he seemed equally contented, eyes lidded and sleepy-looking.

The beta brought his wrist to his nose, inhaling, and he made a contemplative humming noise. “I think I can smell your scent, just a little bit. It’s faint, but it’s there.”

Bakugou grunted in affirmation, shuffling to tuck himself in under the blankets now that he was thoroughly swaddled in pheromones. “Recovery Girl said it wasn’t a full dosage. It just shouldn’t be noticeable enough for people to pick out.”

Todoroki hummed again in understanding. He reached to turn out the light before also settling into bed. After exchanging goodnights, the two fell quiet, and Bakugou couldn’t help but notice that Todoroki was holding his wrist next to his nose to catch the scent as he drifted to sleep. The weirdest thing was, that didn’t even bother him.

He wasn’t able to sleep through the entire night, but it was better than it had been in weeks, and he didn’t take his bedding back to his room in the morning.

Chapter End Notes

Aaand finally! Pack bond: initiated. Some security and found family in much needed dosages

Art for this chapter

I know last chapter I said I was going to have to do work, and then I updated in less than 24 hours, but I’m SERIOUS this time...i really gotta do work and might have to barricade myself from fics for a while :x we'll see
Either way I'm just glad we finally got to this point haha good work everybody
The obvious oddity of it

Chapter Summary

Bakugou hadn’t noticed a huge draw to Todoroki before, but the more often he was around and the more they intertwined scents, the more his scent became something of a familiar comfort, like freshly laundered sheets or a seasonal scented candle.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Todoroki was not a morning person. Bakugou was also not a morning person, but he was much louder about the fact. When the alarm went off, Bakugou cursed and kicked his blankets off violently, scrubbing at his hair while he searched for where Todoroki put his blaring phone. Todoroki, in contrast, sat up and stared into space with lidded eyes, all but dead to the world. When Bakugou finally found and turned off his alarm, Todoroki blinked at him, and then promptly teetered back into the warm covers with a soft Whomp.

“Wake the fuck up, Half ‘n Half,” Bakugou grumbled, pushing at the beta’s shoulders. Todoroki murmured something before rolling away, which pissed Bakugou off. “Oi! Get up! Or I’ll leave my shit on the floor for you to deal with,” Bakugou said as if he wasn’t already folding his blanket and neatly placing his pillow on top.

Todoroki groaned but returned to a sitting position, rubbing the sleep from his eyes and glaring at the blond. “Aren’t you too energetic?”

“You set an alarm for a reason, dumbass. How the hell do you have time for breakfast if you lay around all morning?”

“I eat an energy bar on the way.”

Bakugou clicked his tongue impatiently, leveling an unimpressed look at the other hero-in-training. “How did you get this far with such a shit-tier diet? Breakfast is important, idiot. Get up, I’ll make eggs.”

Todoroki sighed in defeat before it merged into a yawn. After one last beat of tired reluctance, he struggled to his feet, stretching out his waking stiffness. “Do you shower in the morning?”

“Yeah,” Bakugou responded, raising an eyebrow.

“Mm. We’ll scent after, then.” Todoroki paused, glancing towards his new packmate. “If that’s okay? Let me know if you have second thoughts. I don’t want to make you uncomfortable.”

Bakugou felt a little flustered at the reminder of their bond, not yet fully used to the idea, but he nodded. “It’s fine. We’ll do it at breakfast or whatever.”

“Ah. So we’re getting ready before then? I thought you said I had to get up for eggs.”

“Lazy fuck. You would sleep until it was time for class.” Bakugou helped Todoroki put away the futon. “We get ready first. I like to shower early. Deal with it.”
“Hm.” Todoroki leaned into Bakugou’s space, looking contemplative. “Because your suppressants fade?”

Bakugou grabbed Todoroki’s face, glowering. “Don’t be a creep. But yeah. I take my dosage in the morning and if I sweat a lot while I sleep, sometimes you can pick out the scent. Plus, I have nitroglycerin sweat, which is explosive. Also, people are fucking noisy, and I don’t need that shit first thing in the morning. Is that good enough reasoning for you, Sherlock, or are we going to continue with the stupid questions?”

Todoroki breathed in against Bakugou’s palm, catching a slightly stronger whiff of Bakugou’s elusive mystery scent from the proximity to his wrists. He gave a small, amused smile. “I see. No more questions.”

“ Weirdo,” Bakugou muttered as he drew his hand away and wiped it on his pajama pants. “You have forty-five minutes. If you aren’t downstairs then, you don’t get shit.”

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Getting ready didn’t take much longer than it did normally, despite the additional trip to his room before starting his shower-brush-dress-meds routine. Breakfast went smoothly as well, even though he had to make twice as much food. It wasn’t too bad just adding to what he was already doing, although he made a note to make Todoroki pitch in on grocery costs if this became a regular thing. Even the scenting felt fairly normal, much faster since the initial scent mingling was already done—updating the marking was a simple matter of Todoroki brushing his wrists over Bakugou’s and taking a little more time on his neck.

It remained surprisingly nice. Beta pheromones, in general, were fairly non-invasive and pleasant, although compatibility was always a factor. Bakugou hadn’t noticed a huge draw to Todoroki before, but the more often he was around and the more they intertwined scents, the more his scent became something of a familiar comfort, like freshly laundered sheets or a seasonal scented candle. Bakugou wondered if Todoroki got much out of it, or if that wouldn’t come until he was off of suppressants. The beta seemed to be drawn to the hints of his nearly-nonexistent scent, so perhaps there was a similar comfort for him.

In any case, Bakugou let himself relax into it as Todoroki slid the oils of his wrists across his throat. Once he was done, they gathered up the plates to wash before class, making quick work of it without much thought. Only then, after they turned away from the interior of the kitchen to leave, did they see a small audience of their classmates gawking at them. Bakugou froze, and Todoroki paused, looking between the confused and awed faces of Uraraka, Iida, Midoriya, and Kirishima. For a long moment, no one said anything.

“It’s good to see you two getting along!” Iida finally blurted, adjusting his glasses.

“I guess it’s about time Todoroki got a real breakfast,” Uraraka said, trying to hide her bafflement by clapping her hands together in an attempt to act natural. “He normally just eats protein bars every day when we walk to class!”

Kirishima, on the other hand, had no problem being candid. “Bro! What the heck! You never make me breakfast!” He whined, looking a little like a kicked puppy. “And...are you two like...a thing now? When did that happen?”

Bakugou knew he was blushing, but he shoved his hands in his pocket and trudged forward as if he wasn’t. “Shut it, Shitty Hair. It was just last night, I wasn’t hiding it or anything.” He continued past Kirishima—either the redhead would keep up, or he’d get left behind.
“So you are a thing!” Kirishima gaped, falling in step. “I thought you hated each other! Did you make up, or is this one of those pulling-pigtails situations?” He waggled his eyebrows at Bakugou, elbowing him teasingly.

“We—Goddamn it, Kirishima. It’s just a pack, okay? It’s not like we’re dating or anything.”

Kirishima had the audacity to look even more shocked. “A pack?...That’s kind of old-fashioned, isn’t it? Like one of those alpha kings of old, knighting his beta lord or something.” Kirishima mused for a second. “That’s kind of an even bigger deal, isn’t it?”

“I guess? Who gives a shit.”

“Figures that if Todoroki couldn’t compete with you for top alpha, you’d just form some sort of O.P. alliance together to leave the rest of us in the dust. It’s not fair for the top of the class to be ganging up like that.” Kirishima pouted for a little while, until finally he grumbled out an, “I wanna be in a pack. Sounds cool.”

“Make yourself a pack then,” Bakugou snapped back. “Also, I still have no idea what everyone is going on about with the top alpha bullshit. I guaran-fucking-tee it’s not what you think it is.”

“You say that, but that’s just because you got it in the bag, and you’re too manly to rub it in our faces.”

“...You’re an idiot. I won’t go into detail why, but just know, deep in your heart, that you are.”

Behind them, Todoroki was faring slightly better with Midoriya, Uraraka, and Iida. It was normal for them to walk to class together, and fortunately for him, the other three were much more polite and tactful despite their curiosity. It was too difficult not to address the sudden bond, however, and after a few minutes of idle small-talk, Uraraka couldn’t contain herself anymore.

“So...you were...scenting Bakugou? Right?” she started, going for a totally-casual-observation angle.

Todoroki nodded, unfazed. “Yes. We formed a pack last night.” The other three all made shocked noises of varying degrees.

“A pack?” Uraraka repeated, bewildered. “With Bakugou?...Doesn’t that seem, well, high-maintenance?”

Todoroki lips quirked into an involuntary smile. “Most likely. But perhaps that’s why.”

Midoriya stared at Todoroki, wide-eyed. “What’s amazing is that Kacchan let you. I never would have expected him to agree to something like that! Assuming, of course, that you were the one to bring it up, but isn’t it usual for betas to initiate and maintain a pack, generally? I mean, alphas and omegas aren’t usually as suited for the type of mediation, given their hormone cycles, and betas are in a unique position to lead without as much bias (according to Mom anyway, but she seems nervous about bonds, so I don’t think she’s had one herself), but even so, Kacchan isn’t one to give up control so easily, so that makes it even stranger...although I suppose historically, alphas tended to pull control from betas using complex socioeconomic power structures—“

“Midoriya, you’re mumbling.”

“Ah, sorry! I’m just surprised.”

“I suppose it is surprising,” Todoroki mused. “But it seemed warranted. I think it’ll work out.”
The other three lapsed into a sort of baffled silence, until Iida puffed out and resolutely declared, “Pack bonds have a noble tradition. I, for one, support you, and I hope your good nature will help to mellow Bakugou out.”

Todoroki nodded, offering a small “Thank you,” with a smile. The rest of the short journey to class went smoothly, and Todoroki was assured that everything would likely be okay despite the obvious oddity of it. That is, until they entered the classroom, and they heard Mina sniff Bakugou rather loudly.

“Woah, Bakugou, you smell just like Todoroki—” She slapped her hand over her mouth, eyes wide and gleeful. “Oh my god, you didn’t—did you two, you know—oh wow, in the dorms too—!”

As Bakugou began sputtering in flustered indignation and the rest of the class erupted in gossipy chatter, Todoroki began to think that maybe it would take a period of adjustment.

Bakugou had an appointment with Recovery Girl the week before his heat, but he couldn’t bring himself to wait that long. The texts he was getting and the things Todoroki told him about mate bonds were eating away at him, and a few days after they formed a pack, Bakugou decided to try just stopping in after class. The school nurse was a little different from a doctor’s office, after all, and maybe if he got some answers now, he could alleviate some of the worries that plagued him.

Recovery Girl seemed surprised but not displeased when he entered the office. He was relieved that there was no one else there—with hero courses, it was always possible there would be one or several injured students taking up residence. For now, though, the mini-clinic was unoccupied. Bakugou grunted a greeting and sank onto one of the stools near Recovery Girl’s desk.

Recovery Girl smiled at him, warm and welcoming. “Hello, young Bakugou! What can I do for you? I wasn’t expecting you until next week.”

Bakugou nodded stiffly, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees. “I had some things I wanted to ask. Thought I’d come sooner. ‘S okay?”

“Of course,” Recovery Girl chirped, turning to open his file on her computer. “I’m assuming you want to pick up the discussion on mate bonds?”

Bakugou grunted, then added, “And a few other things. About the contraceptives.”

Recovery Girl hummed thoughtfully. “Are you experiencing side effects? There are a few other brands we could try, if that’s the case.”

“No, it’s not that. I was just. Wondering if maybe.” Bakugou exhaled, running a hand through his hair as he coaxed himself into a gruff openness. “Is there something that’s more...permanent? Or doesn’t have to be taken every day, at least?”

Recovery Girl looked a little taken aback before her face took on an expression of reluctant contemplation. “I wouldn’t want to do anything permanent at this point, young Bakugou. It’s a complicated situation, but I think it would be a bit irresponsible of me to make any irreversible decisions so early.”

“Not like...irreversible,” Bakugou grumbled. “I’m just. I don’t know, I’m worried something will go wrong or something. He keeps making—making these threats, and I was wondering if there was anything that couldn’t be tampered with, or that I couldn’t somehow fuck up.” He sighed, looking away and mumbling, “It’s probably wishful thinking but. Thought I’d ask.”
Recovery Girl made a low, thoughtful sound, considering options. She turned away from him to click through his chart before doing a quick scan of some other resources. When she spoke up again, it was pensive. “There might be options, although they tend to be used less often in younger people, and you’ll need to go to a different clinic. I can give you a recommendation, however, and if your parents approve, it should be quick to switch over.” She clicked on a few more things, and the printer kicked to life, pushing out several documents. “Here are some informational packets and the referral. There are implants and IUDs, or intrauterine devices, each with their own set of pros and cons. They’ll both be effective without action on your part once placed, however, so I think either will do the trick. Go ahead and look all that over, and if your parents agree, that clinic should be able to get you fixed up by this weekend.”

Bakugou took the papers, eyebrows raised as he started to read over the documents. He didn’t actually expect that to go so easily, and the fact that there was more than one option was very promising, even if there were still messy matters of cost and safety. He made a note to call his mom later that night and see if they could arrange something.

Recovery Girl interrupted his thoughts, looking at some notes she had jotted down. “I recall the last time you came to me was when you were intercepted off-campus, yes? Since then, Aizawa informed me that you were subdued for the better part of an hour after your assailant’s bite. Is that correct?”

Bakugou furrowed his eyebrows but nodded. “I guess. That’s what they told me.”

She nodded, mouth curving into a soft frown. She sighed before speaking. “I wasn’t expecting the symptoms of the mate bond to show before your pre-heat, but that’s as good an indicator as any. We should prepare for your next heat to come with the side effects of breaking the bond.”

Feeling apprehensive, Bakugou straightened up a little. “Okay. And that means...what?”

“How...bad is it normally?”

“Hm. That, I’m not so sure about,” Recovery Girl responded honestly. “You’re a bit of an unusual case, as I’ve mentioned before. The time you’ve had with your alpha during each heat was brief, which should make the bond weaker, but you’ve also never spent a heat without that alpha, which could make it more resilient. You’re young, which could make it more volatile, and the biting and marking you’ve experienced has been abnormally aggressive for such a brief coupling. It’s difficult to say how strongly you’ve imprinted or how severe your symptoms will be.”

Bakugou shifted uncomfortably. “How...bad is it normally?”

“It varies,” Recovery Girl chirped simply. “I think it’ll help to understand what mate bonds are and their biological purpose. Have you had a comprehensive education about that yet? I think generally that doesn’t come up until at least your third year.”

Bakugou shook his head. Recovery Girl nodded and continued. “Mate bonds are, in their most basic form, an assurance of partnership. Heats and ruts can both put individuals in a fairly vulnerable position, so without a bond, they tend to be in mild remission, with symptoms that allow the individual to still retain relative functionality. Once a bond is made, however, full heats and ruts occur more often. For both parties, this means greater fertility and stronger pheromones, meant to hold a mate’s attention. For the omega partner, this will also accompany cycles of lethargy and arousal, generally influenced by their alpha’s potency and attentiveness, while the alpha partner will experience greater restlessness and territorial behavior, with increased caregiving impulses. In short, mate bonds assure your system that you will have someone to consistently respond to your heightened fertility while also providing protection while you’re vulnerable. This effect comes with both physical and mental side effects.”

“For you, Bakugou,” Recovery Girl refocused, “That means you’ll be more likely to have a full heat,
and experience the side effects without the relief of a mate. In pre-heat, symptoms may include nesting, mood changes, increased arousal, and mate-seeking impulses. During a heat without a bonded mate, many omegas experience more cramping, physical discomfort, emotional distress, susceptibility to exploitation, and inability to find relief without the help of their mate or their mate’s scent. It also tends to take longer before your heat abates.”

Bakugou stared at her, tension holding his arms tight to his sides. “Why the fuck would anyone agree to that? It sounds like a royal shitfest.”

Recovery Girl smiled and shrugged. “Feels nice.”

“Uh.”

“Increased arousal with a mate is certainly quite an experience.”

“Oh.”

“Plus, it’s quite romantic, isn’t it? I think many people crave that level of commitment. A healthy mate bond can strengthen a relationship and greatly increase levels of satisfaction. It does require some planning in modern times, however, and many people are opting not to bond as jobs and travel makes scheduling more inconsistent.”

Bakugou grunted. It kind of made sense, he guessed—his parents were a good example of that. Fuck the romantic shit, though, because he wasn’t exactly dealing with that right now. “So I break it by just...dealing with it for a few heat cycles?”

Recovery Girl nodded. “Yes, that’s basically it. A common practice is to gain an additional mate bond during the recovery period so that this second mate could accommodate the individual during heat and avoid negative symptoms altogether until the first bond fades, but this unfortunately often leads to strings of shaky or unwanted relationships. As susceptibility to exploitation is part of the risks, I would strongly caution against putting yourself into a situation where the temptation to do so would arise.”

Bakugou gave a curt nod, trying to take in all the information he needed. “So, to summarize: it’s going to suck, but deal with it.”

With a small chuckle, Recovery Girl affirmed, “Yes, that’s about it. And if you need anything, don’t hesitate to contact me. There may not be much I can offer you in terms of relief from your symptoms, but I’m here for you nonetheless.”

Bakugou took in a deep breath before nodding and grunting in acknowledgment. “Thanks.” He waved the papers in his hand. “For this, too.”

“You’re quite welcome, dear. And if you have any more questions, visit me anytime.”

Bakugou offered her one of his infrequent small smiles before getting up and slipping out of the office, papers and referral in hand.

Chapter End Notes

This fic might be the only thing keeping me sane at this point. Although perhaps the procrastination is not the best thing to be indulging right now. But
also..........................who cares.

Let me just say: you guys are SO SWEET WITH YOUR COMMENTS HOLY SHIT. I know I say that like every update but like seriously, the amount of compliments on the writing/art and world building really were so absolutely wonderful to read, and I can’t wait until the invitation finally goes through and I can thank you all individually <3 Esp ppl who comment frequently--I see you and I appreciate you so so much <3<3<3<3

taro-k:
"Also another question, I'm not sure if it's been mentioned somewhere, but do betas experience some sort of heat/rut in this universe?"
They don't! Not in the same way, anyway. In that sense, betas are kind of "normal" as we consider people to be. They can react to heat/ruts, however--I mean, if there was someone bein all hot and bothered and v noticeably sexed-up, you don't exactly need a cycle yourself to wanna tap that. But they don't quite have the same intense period of high reactivity and lowered refractory period as omegas+alphas. (Also thank you for such a detailed and thoughtful comment omg <3)

Nou_chowan:
"I wonder if he's going to guard katsuki during his next heat.. since he's a beta he wouldn't be affected by an omega's heat, right?"
On that note--he would be a little, but in time, that might not be so much of a problem ;) (<3<3<3)

aiizucream:
"I've already finished this fic until ch19 (just finished a few hours ago lmao) but its just sooooo good that I had to re-read it so I can make sure I didn't miss a few things in my sleepy state xD
AND I'M THANKFUL I DID OHHH BOOYYYY"
"this chapter is truly interesting sorry for being such a bother with my comments lmao but I really am excited with how this is going!!"
You are absolutely not a bother at all!! I really enjoyed your comments actually, and I'm not going to confirm or deny anything (esp bc I've been dropping a lot of things that may or may not be exploitable later against our firecracker protag), but I will def say that you're very acute hahah it's been an absolute joy watching you pick out some of the subtler lines ;)

Chapter Summary

It was small things, at first. It didn’t feel like any sudden changes, and in Bakugou’s mind, it was all perfectly reasonable at the start.

Chapter Notes

Specs was sure one of the reasons Watanabe entered a life of crime was because he was an incurably obnoxious asshole. The beta doubted anyone would be able to stomach working with him in an office or any sort of nine-to-five. Hell, half the time the alpha didn’t even hang around in the small control center they set up, able to roam free like the opportunist peacock that he was, but even just those few occasions when he did lounge about were tests of patience. Specs might be unhealthily attached to the man, but that didn’t prevent daydreams about strangling him.

Today, Watanabe was flipping between some new meme and videos of dogs trying and failing to catch things in their mouths, making sure to crowd Specs’ space to flash his screen every time he found “a good one.” They were basically all variations of the same thing. Specs had explained to Watanabe multiple times that having a dozen targets moving across the map of his brain was already cognitive load enough without his partner being a chronic distraction as well, but the alpha just insisted on ignoring him. The man really couldn’t live without someone paying attention to him, regardless of whether it was positive or negative.

Specs figured he was probably the only person who actually stuck around willingly, and he both hated and took pride in that fact.

Their work for the League was pretty much done at this point. After a few more documents were processed and relabeled, the contract would be fulfilled, and they’d be free for new opportunities. Watanabe was, as he often was, right about the profit on the black market resale of information. While it was in Specs’ nature to be more cautious, the alpha gravitated toward risks—it usually paid off when he did, even if it probably cut Specs’ lifespan short as a result. In this case, even though they didn’t get much from the League aside from an unpaid debt, they still managed to come through with some cash to spare.

He didn’t tell Watanabe that, although the alpha probably knew just by Specs’ lack of complaining. Specs doubted he even checked his bank account most of the time, just assuming his beta would take care of it for him unless there was a problem to address. At least the man knew to buy his own groceries, because Specs would be damned if he had to do that for him too (he probably would).

One of the marks in his mind drew his attention, as they often do. It was the second time Bakugou had been off-campus, but this time, he seemed to be moving quite rapidly—probably in a car. Specs didn’t say anything until the mark had finally come to a stop, already taking care to check that no one else was out of place. Once it was clear that Bakugou was at the location he was intending to be, Specs pulled up a map. Watanabe, as familiar with Specs’ habits as the beta was to his, leaned in curiously.

“Who do we have moving about today?”
“Your plaything,” Specs grunted. The location was a clinic compound, one of those places that rent out space to doctors and practices of varying sorts. He could practically feel Watanabe’s attention radiating over his shoulder.

“What’s he doing there?”

“Hold on, let me use my secret telepathy quirk to ask him,” Specs responded dryly. “How the fuck should I know?”

Watanabe snorted and drew away, redirecting his attention to his phone. He typed a few things, then moved so that he could lean forward and extend his arms, resting them on Specs’ desk. The result was that Specs could see the conversation take place on the phone, which made him feel both a little annoyed at the frivolous demand of his attention and a little appreciative that Watanabe included him, even if it was probably a dumb, attention-grabbing impulse.

Me:
Aw sweetheart are you sick?
Why are you at the doctor

A little “….” icon appeared, disappeared, and then appeared again as the kid wrote his answer. Specs pretended like he wasn’t interested, even though his work went untouched.

Me:
Aw sweetheart are you sick?
Why are you at the doctor

Katsuki <3:
It’s just a check-up, chill the fuck out.
Creep.

There was another pause, before the cheeky little bitch added some more, clearly just to spite Watanabe.

Being a hero means I have to get a lot of them, obviously.
You’d better get used to it.

Specs snorted even as Watanabe pouted, huffing at the beta’s reaction. He grumbled, “You see what I have to deal with? He’s a stubborn lil’ piece of ass.”

“I think you knew that before you started fucking him.”

“Yeah. That’s why I started fucking him.” Watanabe smirked, drawing back and putting his phone away rather than continue the argument. “You two are gonna get along after I break him in. I can tell already.”

“You think so?” Specs raised an eyebrow. “I’m not going to babysit him. You aren’t going to mate the kid and then just dump him on me.”

“Nah. Don’t worry, I’ll keep him busy.” Watanabe winked.

Specs rolled his eyes. He closed out the map and tabbed back into the work he was doing before murmuring, “Holding you to that pack bond you promised.”

Watanabe leaned in, teasing, and Specs could already tell he had some stupid smirk on his face. “Of course! We’ll be a big, happy family, and you can rub your pheromones all over me, all the time.”

With an exasperated sigh to hide the dusting of pink on his cheeks, Specs pushed Watanabe away. “Don’t be fucking gross about it.”
In the relative quiet that followed, Specs considered a couple of different things. He didn’t really want to encourage Watanabe, given the obvious risks that accompanied his exploits—while the alpha was usually pretty good worming his way out of trouble, the plans he made were usually not so high-profile as stalking one of the most publicized heroes-in-training of the year. However, Specs didn’t really feel right keeping things from his partner, and the end game of everything working out well was...promising. With a sigh, he spoke up.

“Your pet hasn’t been sleeping in his own room.”

“What?” Watanabe’s head whipped around to level him with a harsh look. “What the fuck does that mean? Where has he been sleeping?”

“Another room, obviously, dipshit. I don’t know whose. He does his thing in his own room in the evening and morning, but spends the night somewhere else.”

Watanabe stared at Specs with a dark, cold intensity that rarely got expressed. It sent a chill up Specs’ spine, even if he knew that fury wasn’t directed at him. Watanabe pulled out his phone and opened his chat before stopping himself, eyes narrowing as he thought and planned. He closed the chat and spit out, “You know, when I asked him if he was being a little cumslut at school, I was joking. Didn’t think he’d take it as a fucking invitation.”

Specs swallowed and nodded, not wanting to draw too much attention to himself. Luckily, Watanabe’s anger seemed to be directed into something more productive. The alpha opened a different chat and commanded, “Watch his schedule. Let me know what time he goes to his room in the mornings. And give me the coordinates to his room.”

Specs nodded, reluctantly committing himself to the requests. There were a number of things he wanted to argue, but he knew it probably wouldn’t go well right now. Instead, he just murmured out a simple, “Remember the plan if things go to shit.”

Watanabe grunted, already absorbed in texting someone else.

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It was small things, at first. It didn’t feel like any sudden changes, and in Bakugou’s mind, it was all perfectly reasonable at the start. Spending the night on the futon in Todoroki’s room, it was obvious that a little more bedding would make it more comfortable, especially when he wasn’t used to sleeping on the floor. He said as much to Todoroki when the beta raised an eyebrow at him after he snagged his fourth extra blanket from the linen closet. And sure, he was more irritable, but he blamed that on the extra cramping from having the IUD inserted at the clinic.

A couple of days before his heat, though, it was hard to deny his pre-heat symptoms. After he started bringing articles of clothing into the mass of blankets and pillows, Todoroki sensitively complimented him on his nesting and offered some of his own fabric. The fact that Bakugou didn’t find it demeaning, but rather felt a small swell of pride and an unexpected openness to the idea of weaving the beta’s hoodies and scarves into his growing monstrosity, made it rather obvious that Todoroki hit the nail on the head. Bakugou made sure to handle the beta’s clothing with aggressive spite as he shoved each article into its designated spot, just to make sure Todoroki knew he wasn’t feeling all soft and cushy about it. Todoroki, in response, took care not to disturb anything unless he was invited to, opting to leave the futon set up for the time being.

That is, until Todoroki reminded him that he’d be having his heat in the heat/rut room. When the beta softly pointed out that constructing his nest in his bed probably wouldn’t be good because they’d have to move it, Bakugou experienced a sort of terrible confliction that he never really felt before. It
was purely emotional, entirely reactionary, and something he would normally scoff at in others, but he honest-to-god had a second where he had to will himself not to cry as he looked from the blankets to Todoroki and back again. It was stupid, and he felt stupid, and that just made it worse. The entire process of moving his nest, avoiding prying eyes, and setting it up in the godawful tiny, sterile room where he wouldn’t be surrounded by the soft, familiar scent of his packmate seemed daunting to the point of being insurmountable. Todoroki seemed to catch on, however, and he gently told Bakugou that he would help the omega move it at a later time, when it wasn’t so disheartening.

His other classmates weren’t so understanding. Granted, they didn’t know why he was so pissed off lately, and even if they did, few of them had ever experienced a mated omega trying to prepare for a heat without the presence of their mate, particularly when that omega detested aforementioned mate. They had been giving him more room during his period of sleeplessness before the pack bond, but had returned to normal as Todoroki helped to mellow him out. All that progress went out the window over the course of the last week as Bakugou found himself seething at the mere scent of most of his alpha classmates (and a good number of the beta ones, too, just for good measure apparently). He could control some of it, could talk himself down from boiling over, but certain times when someone approached him unannounced or got into his space would cause anger to bubble up, complete with a snarl or burning glare and smoking palms.

What bothered Bakugou the most, though, was the dreams. Or, it started as dreams. He would wake up, not quite remembering the details, but it would come with the faint memory of the thick scent that filled the room when the alpha entered during his heats, or the nearly normal scent that clung to him after the man subdue him a few weeks prior. Sometimes he would wake remembering the velvet slide of skin, the thoughtless movements of desire, but he didn’t have to remember the arousal because it followed him into consciousness, causing him to sweat and shift and curl uncomfortably until it went away. He was too ashamed to risk waking up Todoroki but too anxious to leave to take care of the problem somewhere else, and it resulted in him losing more than a few hours of sleep over the course of the week.

His fixation on his heat got worse the closer it came. He was dreading it, plagued by the fear that the pervert would come back for him, and sickened with himself at the small, inner voice that was anxious he wouldn’t. He knew that second voice wasn’t really his, was something that his biology was programmed to do—Recovery Girl said so, even—but it came with a sense of hot, caustic shame nonetheless. He found himself rearranging his nest, over and over, feeling like something was missing, and he had a nagging feeling that it was related somehow. It didn’t feel right, and it didn’t smell right, and it was unsettling, to say the least.

The arrangements that were being made helped, though. Aizawa took Bakugou aside during lunch one day and outlined some of the steps that were being taken. They added a bar to the inside of door of his heat/rut room, which could be lowered to barricade him inside without use of a lock (apparently, it took a while to get permission to do that, due to fire and emergency codes—Aizawa subtly hinted they kept the fact that Bakugou had an explosion-based, fire-hazard quirk rather discreet during the petition for its installation). They also added an analog security camera outside of the heat/rut hallway that wouldn’t be susceptible to hacking, and each night one of the teachers would be keeping watch in the common room for extra protection.

Finally, Aizawa reluctantly granted Bakugou permission to have Todoroki stay in the room with him at night, so long as both their parents allowed it as well. Todoroki asked his mom, knowing full well that his father would probably be against it, and when he explained the situation and pack bond, his mother signed off without too much question. Bakugou’s parents not only agreed, but sent three days worth of breakfast pastries and the promise to pay for all meals during the heat as long as Todoroki kept their son safe. They also demanded to meet Todoroki the next time Bakugou came home so they could learn more about their son’s new packmate. They (Mitsuki) also spent about fifteen
minutes reprimanding Bakugou for not telling them about the bond earlier or at least introducing them to the beta. Overall, however, it went well, and they stole one of the mattresses off of the unused beds in the other heat/rut rooms, placing it on the floor so the room became effectively one big nest.

It still didn't feel quite right, but Bakugou felt much more assured than he had for a long time that maybe, this time it would be okay.

Chapter End Notes

Another short one, but that happens sometimes... :)

taro-k:
"Small questions again (i'm so sorry I ask so many questions!), I assume Todoroki and Bakugou will be able to create a mate bond in the future? Is it possible for beta and omega (or other secondary genders combination aside from alpha-omega) to create a mate bond? If so, are these mate bonds any different compared to alpha-omega mate bonds? (like, do these bonds include biting, the ability to render one's quirk useless, etc)"

Don't feel bad about asking questions at all! I like answering them, and it's a fun way to talk about worldbuilding that's hard to sneak naturally into the story haha but in terms of mate bonds, those are only between alpha/omegas, specifically bc their biological purpose is to mediate ruts/heats. But there's a lot of spill-over from other types of bonds-things like scents cancelling quirks include pack bonds as well (I think Aizawa includes that in his discussion w Bakugou the first time). Certain other things are gender-specific-biting is different between the genders, for instance. For omegas, it comes with a subduing effect because biting originally evolved to help with relaxing through a difficult knot (which is to say: alphas don't always knot fully/tie together, as it's more of a full-rutreaction-to-heat thing, so outside of the cycle it's not too much of a problem, and when fully in heat, an omega generally doesn't have trouble taking a full knot...but if the cycles aren't quite synced, like when an omega is just starting/ending heat when their partner is in rut, it can be difficult to handle, and the biting takes place to help that) (--> In a healthy relationship <--). Biting an alpha has a different effect, wherein if an alpha gets too aggressive, their partner can bite them as a way to hone the alpha's attention back to them--essentially, a sort of "pay attention to me" gesture. This, like biting an omega to subdue, can be used to abuse and control, though generally it's seen less often bc of the cultural tendency to assume a one-way mate bond (so alphas don't get bit the same way as often). Betas don't really have a response to being bitten, as most of their role is composed of scent marking and pacification...but pack bonds can only be initiated by betas as a result. And as Todoroki said, pack bonds can include lovers...so while mate bonds affect heat/ruts every like 1.5 months, a pack bond can be a v pleasant emotional connection all the time, which can effect quality of sexual/romantic interaction in a different but still v poignant way. So in short: nah on mate bonds, but who the fuck needs that amiright?? Even a lot of omega/alpha pairs don't fully mate bond. TodoBaku will be just fine w/o it

Rio:
"(im not even that sorry for this word vomit XD becuz you are an amazing writer and i have to say it and get all the feelz and ashfgjkdjueqikjlkjhdksdgf out or else ill combust)"
Don't be sorry omg like I know I don't respond to everything unless it's a question bc of space constraints (for now? until I get a new account at least...) but your comments are so wonderfully enthusiastic and it's super encouraging to read them!! ;;o;; Pls don't ever hesitate, it's so so nice to receive such nice comments <3<3<3

Slyside
"I can't wait for everyone to find out katsuki is an omega and I hope it doesn't take too much longer."
A bit longer...but hopefully just the right amount of longer. Don't give up hope!

ShunsTypos:
"I was wondering and I dont know why but will Mpreg ever be involved in this fic?"
No mpreg in this fic :> Just the realistic nervousness about preg being a thing hahah (also thank you for the rest of your comment that's super sweet of you to say <3<3)

wendydarling and Anoncuzimawuss:
"Also, I remember you being worried about your villain but trust me your villain is TOO DAMN GOOD."
"YES YES YES! I relate to this so much! Watanabe is so disgustingly likable!"
AaaaAAH tysm ;; yeah I was super nervous writing a fic w an OC villain tbh and Im so so so happy ppl are okay with him and Specs...he's actually a lot of fun to write bc he really is fuckin terrible, and I'm really relieved he's been taken so well ;v;
Succeed where they had failed

Chapter Summary

The plan couldn’t have gone smoother, all things considering.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

There was one more day until his heat. Technically, anyway—it could come later this evening as well, but the most important thing is that he had a full day of class ahead of him, and then, it was here. Bakugou’s rational side listed off all of the precautions that were being taken, all of the things that would keep him safe, but he still found it hard not to feel the seeping crawl of apprehension across his skin.

The sun had not yet risen, both because the nights were getting longer and because he had woken up too early again, heart thudding heavy in his chest. Todoroki slept peacefully next to him, and that both helped ground him and made him feel an admittedly unfair sort of bitter resentment. Bakugou knew it would be unreasonable to get mad at the guy for sleeping...but fuck, he wished that could be him. Half ‘N Half bastard was taking that blessing for granted.

He wasn’t even sure whether his heat would afford him the luxury of rest this time around. The last few cycles, before the alpha had interrupted, his heats were generally lazy and involved a lot of dozing. Apparently, though, even if he didn’t get visited by his obsessive stalker this time around, his heat was still going to be a shit time. He hoped he wouldn’t have to deal with discomfort the entire duration, but at this point, he wasn’t about to get his hopes up.

At least he stashed like, 8 blankets, half a dozen towels, a significant portion of Todoroki’s closet, and as many pillows as he could discreetly steal in his nest in the heat/rut room. There were even more blankets in the cabinets, too, which he hadn’t yet arranged. He might have a terrible heat, but at least his nest was going to be cozy as fuck. Todoroki better be grateful that he’ll get the chance to lounge in such a god-tier nest.

Bakugou watched the color of the sky gradually lighten outside of Todoroki’s window. He could get up and do something—read or train or study. The futon was warm, though, and he was feeling reluctant to start the day. He scooted a little closer to Todoroki instead, breathing in the calming beta scent and feeling the warmth radiate from his packmate’s side. If he had to, he’d deny it later, but for now, the selfish prick could share some of his body heat while he snoozed away like a goddamn princess.

Bakugou was almost able to doze again when the alarm went off. He groaned, slowly going to turn the offending device off. Todoroki grumbled and tried to pull the blanket up over his head, to which Bakugou responded by ripping it off of him entirely.

“If I have to be up, so do you, asshole.”

Todoroki glowered at him with all the malice his sleep-saturated eyes could muster before rolling off of the futon and struggling to his feet. Bakugou stood as well, stretching and feeling the queasy flutter that was trying to make itself home in his abdomen. Whether it was anxiety or nausea from
pre-heat, he couldn’t tell. Either way, he let the air puff from his lungs as he released the stretch, already pissed off at the day and not looking forward to being social.

Todoroki glanced at him, some of his orneriness fading as he joined the waking world. He seemed to notice some of Bakugou’s rather obvious irritability, and he yawned before offering, “Want me to make the eggs today?”

Bakugou raised an eyebrow. “Do you even know how?”

Todoroki shrugged. With a snort, Bakugou waved him off and trudged towards the door. He had to go drag himself through his morning routine, moving with no enthusiasm as he walked to his room to pick up all his shower shit. At least the IUD meant he had one less round of pills he’d have to worry about taking, which didn’t change much in terms of time it took to get ready, but did help his peace of mind. Now that it was inserted, he shouldn’t have to worry about contraceptives for at least a few years. With that and all the other things set into place, most of his worries should be handled. All he had to do was get ready, make some eggs, get through school and hole up in the glorified closet for a few days. Easy.

He was reminding himself of this when he got to his room, slipping inside with the intent of getting his shower caddy and leaving again. When he closed the door behind him, though, he noticed that for some reason, it smelled a little strange. Before he even got the chance to look around the still-dim room, he was grabbed from behind, a vice-like grip on his arm and another cording through his hair, yanking his head to the side.

“Morning, sweetheart.”

He only froze for a second in cold shock, but it was more than enough time for the alpha to sink his teeth deep into his neck.

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Watanabe didn’t have much trouble keeping a grip on Bakugou when the omega went limp, but he eased the kid to the floor for the time being. He still had another five or so minutes until Kurogiri was scheduled to open up the warp gate again, and as compact as Bakugou was, his muscles made him rather heavy. There was no reason to hold him up—yet. That would come later.

The plan couldn’t have gone smoother, all things considering. He knew those U.A. coordinates would come in handy, and Kurogiri didn’t really have basis to disagree with his proposal once he contact the warp user with his instructions and timetable. The fact that Katsuki wouldn’t be in his room until he needed to get ready in the morning just made everything easier—Watanabe got here early and simply waited. Knowing the kid was gone at night to fraternize with some other fledgling punk made it feel all the more satisfying, although he was admittedly surprised that the lingering smell clinging to Katsuki was obviously beta. Probably Endeavor’s kid again. Pretty boy thinks that just because his dad is hot shit, he gets to step up to bat, as if he’d ever be able to satisfy.

But, that was actually good news. It just meant Watanabe didn’t have anyone really contending for his place (not that he would take any challenge from a fresh alpha seriously). In any case, he won. Watanabe was pretty sure that some of the League members were even somewhat morbidly curious about his plan—whether he would succeed where they had failed. He had promised to send Toga some pictures later.

Time ticked by, and right on schedule, wisps of black smoke started to form in the center of Katsuki’s room. Watanabe gathered his unresponsive omega up and passed through, first to the League’s hideout, and then through a second gate to his own apartment, where he could tuck his
Bakugou was taking a long time getting ready this morning. When he didn’t show up to start making breakfast at his usual time, Todoroki assumed that maybe he actually did want Todoroki to make breakfast. It didn’t exactly go well, and the eggs ended up accidentally scrambled and a little bit burned, but all things considered, it could have gone worse.

Except even then, Bakugou hadn’t come back downstairs. Todoroki checked the clock, growing a little unsure the closer it got to class time, and eventually, he went upstairs to check on his packmate. Oddly enough, Bakugou’s room was locked, and Todoroki received no answers when he knocked. Todoroki didn’t remember seeing Bakugou walk past him on the way to class, and as temperamental as the omega had been recently, it still seemed a little cold for him to just bypass Todoroki’s attempt at cooking. At the very least, the blond would shout some creative insults at him or maybe even take over, but just ignoring him completely didn’t seem Bakugou’s style. A little dejected, Todoroki checked the showers and the heat/rut room before finally walking to class, just short of being late.

When he walked through the door, however, he was met with an empty seat where he expected to see Bakugou. His brow furrowed, a feeling of unease growing as he considered where else his packmate might be. It wasn’t like him to miss class, and if his heat had caught up to him early, then he’d have been in the heat/rut room. He didn’t say anything about going anywhere, or feeling bad, or anything like that...maybe he was at Recovery Girl’s for some reason?

Todoroki lowered himself into his seat as class began, thinking through the possibilities. He pulled out his phone and sent Bakugou a text, hoping that at least whatever he was doing, he’d reply. As the morning dragged on, though, there was nothing but silence—just an empty seat. By the time lunch came around, Todoroki was getting fidgety, feeling the effects of his bond gnaw at him for going without renewal while he was so unsure. The anxieties about the state of his packmate almost made him itch, made him want sort everything out and put everything into order, and he felt a strange heightened sense to the state of the people around him. His impatience was apparently obvious enough for Midoriya to pick up on it when the alpha approached during the break.

“Todoroki, are you okay? You seem kind of upset,” Midoriya asked tentatively after Todoroki politely refused to join them for lunch. “Is it because of Kacchan?”

Todoroki made a small noise of affirmation. “I don’t know where he is. I haven’t seen him since this morning.”

Midoriya’s eyes widened a bit before his face became concerned but analytical. “It’s about time for his rut, right? Maybe he just went home?”

“No, that’s not it,” Todoroki replied. Then he quickly added a, “Not without telling me,” to make sure Midoriya didn’t follow that train of thought and tempt him to reveal that Bakugou never spends his heat at home anymore.

“Well...Kacchan can be a bit of a loner, sometimes. And he’s been very irritable lately, even more so than usual, so I wouldn’t be surprised if his rut just came earlier than he was expecting. He hates talking about it, too, and pretty much just tells everyone to shut up when it comes up, so don’t take it personally if he didn’t say anything. I think that’s just how he is about it.” Midoriya gave Todoroki a warm smile, but even despite the sunshine in it, Todoroki couldn’t relax. Of course Bakugou wouldn’t talk about his ruts to everyone—he didn’t have them. He had heats, and his heats were supposed to be worse this time around because he was mated, and he was possibly in danger, and Todoroki couldn’t easily argue with Midoriya when the other had no clue about this information.
Todoroki nodded, trying to calm himself if only to not upset Midoriya. He couldn’t ignore the situation, however, and rose from his desk. “I’m going to talk to Mr. Aizawa. Don’t worry about me. Go ahead and enjoy your lunch.”

Midoriya reluctantly relented, joining Iida and Uraraka. Todoroki gave one last placating look to his concerned friend before he made his way to the front of the classroom. Aizawa was eyeing his sleeping bag, but he sighed and acknowledged Todoroki when he approached. Todoroki cut straight to the chase.

“Do you know where Bakugou is?”

Aizawa raised an eyebrow. “I figured his heat started.”

“Are you contacted about that?”

“Not always. It’s something Recovery Girl usually handles, and we just get expected absences. Why?” A darker look started to settle over Aizawa as he took closer stock of Todoroki’s expression and demeanor.

“He wasn’t in the heat/rut room this morning,” Todoroki says, voice lowered so he wouldn’t be overheard. “I checked before coming to class.”

Aizawa leveled a serious look at Todoroki like he was analyzing him, and then he slowly nodded. “Go talk to Recovery Girl. See if she’s heard from him. And then go back and check the dorms again. I’ll talk to Nezu about putting the staff on alert.” Todoroki nodded and turned on his heel to follow his teacher’s instructions. “Wait, Todoroki. Keep this quiet. I don’t want to tempt any of our more protective students.” The last they needed was a repeat of Kamino, especially if this turned out to be nothing.

Aizawa waited until his student was gone before pulling out his phone and contacting the principle. He didn’t want to make Todoroki any more nervous than he was until they knew for sure something had happened. It wouldn’t be the best situation if they overreacted and Bakugou was actually just in his room the entire time.

Something about the situation unsettled him, though. As he typed out his text to Nezu, he made sure to mention the proximity to Bakugou’s heat, which was...concerning. Furthermore, everything about this seemed counter to Bakugou’s style of confrontation. Given all that had happened, it was difficult to gauge how significant that was, or whether it was even strange at all for Bakugou to become more avoidant close to a difficult heat...but it was worth noting. Aizawa didn’t want to overreact, but he didn’t want to underreact, either, and right now the only difference between those two things was the amount of information they had.

Later that night, when all of their leads came up short and no one confirmed that they had seen Bakugou since that morning, the school contacted most of the major Pro Hero agencies in the area, as well the police force and Tsukauchi. Aizawa was careful not to let the rest of his students know the situation for the time being, not wanting to give them the opportunity to meddle or panic again.

Bakugou was missing, and this time they didn’t have a tracker to find him.
Oh man, haha, so much for all those little protections
Shout out to aizucream for picking up the buildup through the fic, like the hints in chps 8 and 15--Watanabe's been cobbling this plan together for a while
For those of you uncomfortable w noncon stuff, pay attention to the tags on the upcoming chapters--they'll be at the start. You should be able to skip, and I'll add a summary of important bits when we pass them

Also!! No longer Anonymous! I'll be able to reply to comments! And you should get notifications now I think? I'll start replying to comments starting from this chapter on (bc there are too many before this bc you guys are super sweet)
The intensity of a cornered animal

Chapter Summary

Bakugou stared at him, waiting for him to try something. Several long minutes passed in tense silence, Bakugou standing rigidly and the alpha sitting with a sort of feigned nonchalance that seemed almost mocking, like he didn’t think Bakugou was worth treating as a threat.

Chapter Notes

CW: (very) dubious consent, manipulation

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Bakugou stared at the ceiling for a long time before anything struck him as strange. His body was heavy, a familiar sensation by now, and nothing in the world was registering aside from the input from his senses. There was the ceiling, white and dimly lit, and he was laying on something soft. What demanded most of his attention was the scent, powerful and all-encompassing, as if everything in the room was covered by it. It was deep, musky, almost smoky, and Bakugou sank into it, letting it permeate his lungs and keep his attention far from any fleeting thoughts that tried to surface.

His body felt warm. A sort of restless energy was trying to find its way past the weight of his limbs, and it was starting to help shake some of the thoughtlessness of his mind. He shifted, sliding his arms against the blanket as he curved his back into a stretch. There was sweat beading on his forehead, and he languidly went to wipe it away, letting his eyes slide from the ceiling to the walls. As his gaze started to roam, he was struck with the odd realization that this wasn’t his room. This also wasn’t Todoroki’s room. This was…where was this?

The thoughts started to be accompanied with muted feelings. He knew this scent. He didn’t know this room. He knew this feeling in his body, the sweaty warmth and dissonant restless lethargy. But he didn’t know this room. Why was he here? Where was here?

Morning, sweetheart.

Bakugou felt a cold wash of realization break through his hazy mind. That guy had been there when he went to his room and had bitten him...and he doesn’t remember what happened after that. How the hell did he get here? It was one thing for the guy to get into U.A. in the middle of the night when he wasn’t expected—it was another thing entirely for him to make it to Bakugou’s room in the morning, when the staff had already started filtering in, and then drag Bakugou’s unconscious body back out with him. There was no fucking way he could pull that off without getting caught...right?

He forced his body to start working for him, slowly easing himself up into a sitting position. He could guess where he was just by the scent—it reeked of that guy, as if every surface was scent marked...which considering the circumstances, might very well be the case. If there was one thing the alpha never took lightly, it was the fact that Bakugou wouldn’t hesitate to blast his fucking head off his shoulders if he got the chance, and with the room scented like this, it was unlikely Bakugou
would even get sparks from his quirk. The smell of the alpha’s pheromones was almost suffocating, and it made Bakugou light-headed and disoriented.

Trying to keep his wits about him, Bakugou surveyed the room. There were two doors—an entrance and a closet, probably. Both were closed. Bakugou didn’t know where the alpha was, so he decided against trying to open them just yet. There was a small window on one wall flanked by heavy light-blocking curtains, so Bakugou tried to coordinate his limbs to go inspect that instead. Maybe he could make an escape, or at least open it to air out the room. When he finally managed to stumble his way to it, however, his heart sunk. There was no way to open the window at all, and the glass seemed to be reinforced with wire, making effectively unbreakable. It was clear why, too—the neighborhood beyond the glass was rough, to say the least, with graffiti, junk, boarded and broken windows...the area was undoubtedly a magnet for crime, both from desperate small-time crooks, and from successful criminals looking to avoid detection. Even though they were several stories up, someone with the right quirk could scale the wall and break in, and if it were a normal window, it was highly likely that someone would.

So Bakugou couldn’t open or escape through the window. He turned back to the room. There was the large bed with an excessive amount of bedding, two dressers, a bedside table with a lamp, and a plain chair. Nothing too out of the ordinary, and not much he could use in a fight. Maybe the lamp, or the chair if push came to shove. He was about to steel himself to try to open one of the doors when it opened on its own.

The alpha walked into the room, shirtless and in lounge pants, carrying what looked like a massive pile of fabric. He paused when he saw Bakugou, a smile curling on his lips, and he gave an easy greeting like this was a perfectly normal occurrence. “Hey, sweetheart. Glad to see you’re awake. I hope you rested well?” As he spoke, he dumped the fabric on the bed, adding to the already overzealous amount of blankets and pillows. Despite his air of casualness, the alpha’s eyes never left Bakugou, sharp and on-guard.

Bakugou didn’t respond. He stood, tense and motionless, watching the alpha with all the intensity of a cornered animal, not missing the way the alpha stared. Without missing a beat, the man continued speaking, “Nice view, huh? It’s a bit of a shithole, but that’s how it is in this line of work. I make a lot of money, but that doesn’t mean anything if I get caught, now does it? So here we are, lying low in this dump.” He started to rummage through some of his dressers, pulling out various articles of clothing and tossing them on the bed. “I splurge on some nice things, though. Like a nice big bed, and a nice big bath. You’ll appreciate those later.” He winked at Bakugou before grabbing the chair and setting it right next to the door.

“How the fuck did you take me,” Bakugou growled, voice dangerous and barely above a whisper.

“Favors. Connections. Doesn’t matter,” the alpha waved his hand to dismiss the question. He lowered himself into the chair, crossing his legs and leaning back as he settled down.

Bakugou stared at him, waiting for him to try something. Several long minutes passed in tense silence, Bakugou standing rigidly and the alpha sitting with a sort of feigned nonchalance that seemed almost mocking, like he didn’t think Bakugou was worth treating as a threat. It pissed Bakugou off, and finally he broke the stalemate with a snarl. “So, what? What do you want? What are you--” Bakugou almost finished with ‘waiting for,’ but that acknowledged something he didn’t want to bring up. “What are you just watching me for?”

The alpha just raised an eyebrow. “You’ll want to nest, right?”

Bakugou wasn’t expecting that, and for a second, he just stared dumbly. “What?”
“You’ll want to nest,” the alpha repeated, as if that was the problem.

“Here?”

“Where else?”

“Where else—you fucker, I had a nest, it was a damn good nest—the fuck do you mean, ‘where else,’ like you didn’t just fucking kidnap me, you crazy motherfucking psychopath—”

“If you want me to fuck you without the nest, you can just ask,” the alpha drawled, looking almost bored as if he was waiting for a toddler to exhaust itself through a tantrum. Bakugou snapped his mouth shut with an audible click.

“I don’t—I don’t want you to fuck me at all, sick bastard, I want you to take me back home—”

“You have two options. If you want to nest, I won’t bother you until you’re ready and invite me in.” The alpha didn’t repeat the other option, letting it loom like a threat. “I even bought some more blankets for you this week to make sure you’d have enough. Come on, I’m sure it’ll turn out nice.”

Bakugou stood, fingers flexing anxiously in and out of fists, reflexively looking for the sparks and crackles of his quirk despite not even summoning smoke. He swallowed thickly, considering his options, but no matter how he looked at it, he was in this man’s room in his pajamas, barefoot, without his phone or anything else, with the alpha blocking the only means of escape. After a tense stare-down, he looked away, wordlessly climbing back into the bed to start rearranging the fabrics that were given to him. He tried to ignore the pleased smugness that settled on the alpha’s face as he watched.

Bakugou’s plan was to just...not invite the alpha in. He didn’t know if that would work for long, but the man did say he wouldn’t enter until Bakugou asked him to, so if he just didn’t, maybe he could reduce the time they spent...doing other things. Maybe he’d be able to think of a plan, or at least take more time looking around and gathering information. He worked on his nest slowly, taking extra care that each piece was placed so that it felt just right, with no room for error. The man did actually give him a lot to work with, so it wasn’t hard to draw it out.

Surprisingly, the alpha didn’t just sit and watch him the entire time. On a few occasions, he got up, leaving the room to do things in other parts of the apartment. The first time, Bakugou froze, considering making a break for it, but he could hear the alpha moving about and rummaging through things not far off. Even if he made it out of the room, he didn’t know if he’d be able to get much further. At least in the bed, he had a safe zone (for now), and he could hold out or plan until he could figure out how to slip past his captor.

Even more concerning was the feverishness that was continuing to settle through him. He felt off when he was coming back to consciousness earlier, but the confrontation with the alpha put it out of his mind for a bit. Now, though, he could feel it again, the creeping warmth that made him flushed and sweaty, the lethargy in his limbs that didn’t lift even when he was fully awake. His heat wasn’t supposed to start until that night, but apparently being submerged in the alpha’s scent had kicked-started the process, and the longer he drew out his nesting, the more insistent it became.

In his earlier heats, there was a whisper of need, a persistent arousal that was distracting, but nothing incapacitating. After an hour and a half of working on his nest, Bakugou realized with a sense of growing dread that it might not be the same this time around. It started with just a weird hollow feeling, demanding and deep, which he tried to ignore as he moved around the bed. The longer he ignored it, however, the worse it got, a sort of ache that started at his base and traveled up his spine, and he couldn’t seem to get comfortable, his hips feeling too stiff and his knees wanting to be wider
apart. He desperately hoped it wasn’t obvious, but his underwear felt wet and stuck to him as he shifted, and he couldn’t stop fidgeting.

After about two and a half hours, Bakugou was finding it hard to concentrate. The alpha had left to do something somewhere, and when he returned, the man paused, breathing deeply. Bakugou glanced at him, and a shiver ran down his spine when the alpha’s eyes met his—there was something carnal in the way the alpha looked at him, and it made something twist in his gut, made him suddenly clench tight through his lower abdomen, followed by a fresh dampness in his boxers. He swallowed, looking away quickly, and it hit him that he wasn’t able to take his suppressants that morning. The alpha sunk into his chair, watching, and Bakugou tried to keep his breathing even as he pretended to look busy.

After about four hours, the cramping started to really kick in. The alpha’s scent in the room had long since shifted from neutral to heady arousal, and over time that morphed into the sinful smell of rut. Bakugou hadn’t really smelled full rut before, never experienced it when it had time to grow and permeate, and it was maddening. Maybe it was just because it came from his mated alpha, but he kept finding himself staring at nothing, mindless as the smell tested his resolve, derailing his attempts to use nesting as an excuse. His body protested at his rebellion, the ache becoming a painful, twisting spasm in his core that demanded the attention that was obviously available. He tried to breathe slow and evenly to push past the pain, limiting his movements and hunching a bit, and he avoided looking over at the alpha, who he knew was fixated on his every move.

Bakugou made it almost to the six hour mark after starting to nest before his willpower began to crumble. The nest was completed three times over, and he gave up trying to appear like he was still working on it. He had buried himself under a blanket in the center, trying to keep the alpha’s hungry gaze off of him as he curled over himself, knees parted wide and arms hugging himself in a sort of mockery of a child’s pose. He tried fingering himself, barely able to give a shit about his shamelessness, but that wasn’t nearly enough, and he felt like he was burning, sweaty and soaked in slick. The cramping would occasionally rip through him, and he would contort to try to ease it, curving his back and sliding across the sheets to try to find some comfortable position. When he couldn’t stand it anymore, he would poke his head out, panting as the cool air hit his feverish skin.

It went on like this until he made the mistake of turning his head the wrong way when he stuck it out of the blanket. His eyes locked onto the alpha, still sitting in the chair next to the door. The man was leaning forward, nostrils flaring as he caught the fresh wave of scent from Bakugou surfacing, and he was touching himself, hand slowly moving over the length of his exposed cock. The sight sent an unexpected, dizzying cascade of heat through Bakugou, made his heart beat faster and his face flush, and he didn’t even notice when his hips pushed up under the blanket. The alpha’s eyes flashed, and he slowly stood, eyes never leaving Bakugou’s face as he started to pace at the edge of the bed, predatory and animalistic.

Bakugou couldn’t think. His breathing was rapid, and everything ached, and he was so mindlessly aroused that he felt like nothing else in his mind or body was working. There was nothing in the world except for his feverish need and his pacing mate. For several long minutes, he watched, almost falling into a sort of trance with the motion of the alpha and the thick scent in the air. Maybe he could have held out longer, but in a moment of weakness, his eyes fluttered closed, and he licked his lips…and he nodded.

The alpha was on him in a heartbeat, ripping the blanket off of him and wrenching the waistband of his pajama pants down over his hips. Bakugou yelped, alarm piercing through his heat-dumb mind and causing him to immediately regret the thoughtless decision, and he tried to jolt away. The alpha gripped his hips, holding them in place, and Bakugou realized that he was presenting unintentionally from his attempts to alleviate the ache, ass tilted in the air. He was internally kicking himself and his
stupid fucking body—until all thoughts were shook from his mind as the alpha pressed his face between his legs, breathing deeply as he mouthed against his slick-covered skin. He swallowed and panted, pressing his cheek into the mattress as the alpha kissed and licked and sucked until he was nearly trembling from the arousal coursing through him, but he needed more than that, he needed something deeper, inside, needed more—

The alpha growled and nipped at one of his cheeks before pulling away, mounting him without pause, and Bakugou shuddered as he felt the cock drag up to his entrance. The alpha wasn’t slow as he pushed in, but he wasn’t rough either, and Bakugou felt another staggering flush rise behind his eyes as the cock speared him open. It was still too big, too much, but the pain seemed to join and blend with his burning need, until both were indistinguishable, nothing but liquid heat dripping up his spine and swirling through his core. He moaned, a desperate, careless noise, and the alpha responded with a low rumble, leaning forward and starting to rock.

There were no taunts or words exchanged between them this time. The alpha seemed to be as taken by his rut as Bakugou was with his heat, and the only sounds between them were gasping, breathy noises, and the senseless slap of skin. Each thrust dug at the need in Bakugou’s core, blunted but searing, but somehow it didn’t seem deep enough. Everything in his perception shrank to chasing the relief his body desperately craved, to tilting back into the steady ravishment of the alpha’s body joining his. His first orgasm overtook him unexpectedly, ripping through him as he clenched down on the still-thrusting cock, and he keened deliriously as his body jerked and quivered. There was a wave of lustful pheromones from the alpha as he slowed, running his hands along Bakugou’s sides, and then he was growling and pushing Bakugou’s hips flush against the bed, pinning him and rutting deeper into him.

The orgasm didn’t offer Bakugou much relief, and after a few minutes, he was back to square one, getting built up as his alpha drove into him, forcing him to take the full brunt of his thrusts. Bakugou furrowed his brow, panted wetly, and took it, bracing himself against the bed as the pressure built inside of him again. His alpha was losing pace, fucking into him almost frantically, and Bakugou could feel his knot begin to catch, growing at the base. He tilted his hips up, sliding his legs to open himself up for it, and some primal part of him was waiting for it, craving it. His alpha was nosing at his neck, mouthing at him as his pace slowed to compensate for the increased power needed to keep pushing the swelling knot into him, and when the knot was fully inflated, his alpha shoved it in, tying them together, and pressed his teeth against Bakugou’s scent gland...but didn’t bite down.

Bakugou came again anyway, overstimulated and overwhelmed by the stretch of the knot and the sudden spill of hot seed inside of him, filling him up in that place deeper where the cock couldn’t reach. He panted, groaning until the tension subsided and he was left with shivery aftershocks, and the alpha on top of him weighed him down in a way that was almost calming. The alpha shifted slightly, settling against Bakugou more comfortably while they were tied, and the movement ground the knot into him with another release of cum, making him shudder and sigh. The alpha nuzzled him, pulling the blankets of his nest closer to cradle them in soft fabric before murmuring to him, low and husky.

“Knew you could take it. Woulda helped, but wanted you to be conscious.” He sighed, pressing a kiss against Bakugou’s scent gland. “Did good, baby, did great. A natural.”

Bakugou preened a little under the praise, feeling floaty and mellow, but he wasn’t quite in a place to respond. He simply laid under the alpha, feeling the intensity of his heat dial down to a still mind-numbing but less uncomfortable degree.

When the knot went down, he didn’t protest when the alpha flipped him over and sunk back in, didn’t think of anything at all, and after two more rounds, his alpha finally bit him before wrapping
around him to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Art time! I made some profiles for Watanabe and Specs just for fun, kind of trying to match the style for the casual clothes profiles (The Shifuku?), but apparently he doesn't do those for villains, so it's kind of roughly like it haha

Watanabe Touma
Specs (Kanbe Tadao)
Think I'll go back and add these to their intro chapter too..

Also finally some quality smut time. How about that mated heat, huh? Bakugou held out for a pretty long time, though, stubborn as he is, so big props for him
Clear boundaries

Chapter Summary

He felt good, he felt powerful, and he loved every second.

Chapter Notes

CW: Mind fuckery, bigotry, corrective abuse, victim blaming, control/manipulation, (mentions of) hitting/spanking, choking

All in the first half--if you want to read Aizawa/Todoroki pov, scroll down until the - - -

See the end of the chapter for more notes

This might’ve been one of the most satisfying plans Watanabe has ever had. Money was great, and some jobs were exciting, but having his mated omega in heat in his bed was the sort of hedonistic reward he’d been craving for a while. The little firecracker was all his, for as long as he wanted, and Watanabe indulged fully in the natural urge to breed his omega up until no one could challenge his claim. He felt good, he felt powerful, and he loved every second.

Watanabe did his rounds through the apartment, itching the scratch that demanded he lock down the perimeter and make sure everything was secure and safe for his sleeping mate. He got himself some food, filled up a water bottle for later, and scent marked whatever surface that he felt needed it. He’d managed to get a few naps in here or there after fucking his omega senseless, but his rut never really allowed him much sleep, and this time was no exception. On a normal cycle, it was annoying, but he couldn’t say he minded too much now.

When he returned back to the nest, his mate was curled in the center, resting. He would sleep for a little while longer, until either the need of his heat or Watanabe woke him up. Sometimes he woke up coherent, sharing conversation or grousing about something or another, and Watanabe would give him some water and keep him company until either they fucked or he went back to sleep. Other times, he woke up aroused and wanting, eyes glazed over and body squirming against the sheets. Those times, Watanabe’s rut would take the reigns, responding to his omega by slotting against him and taking him as many times as he needed until the kid collapsed back into unconsciousness.

Watanabe took care to be attentive. Katsuki didn’t have to wait long before his alpha responded to his needs, and sometimes Watanabe would wake the omega up early if there was too long a pause between mating. It was said that the alpha set the pace, and he wanted to make sure that his omega was taught to be open and needy. He wanted to train Katsuki’s body to like and crave it, to demand it often, now and every heat after.

It wasn’t quite time for the omega to be up yet, though. Watanabe followed the natural alpha urges that guided him, pacing along the nest’s perimeter and fixing little bits that became dislodged. He spent a healthy amount of time appreciating his mate’s form while he was at it. Katsuki was muscular for an omega, fit and powerful (perhaps moreso than Watanabe would normally like), but he was
abundant in all the places that counted, with a narrow waist and generously curved butt. It wasn’t obvious, normally—he always seemed to wear shirts that showed off his neck and collar, tantalizing and teasing, but his pants tended towards baggy and completely failed to show off the glorious padding of his ass. Watanabe didn’t know if that was a shame, or if he was grateful that he was one of the few who really knew how grab-able his omega’s hips and thighs were. The kid was flexible, too, with a back that didn’t resist bending as needed, and that was something Watanabe spent a lot of time appreciating.

There were marks over his body—bites from mating, hickies and bruises just because. He still had a red mark on his face from when Watanabe slapped him during one rut that was maybe a little too rough. A tad too much manhandling, a bit too much choking, and even though Katsuki was feisty and could definitely handle some harsher treatment, it took a little extra cooing, snuggling, and praise to calm him down after that. It wasn’t the first time his omega cried from an intense bite-induced orgasm, but Watanabe still promised to be a little gentler...at least until Katsuki got more practice with it. After a couple rounds of more slow, sensual fucking, Watanabe was sure Katsuki probably forgot all about it.

Despite all the token protests, this was what the omega needed. No hesitation, no fumbling, no awkward testing-the-waters like he would get with the fawn-like alphas at his school or the domesticated, “nice” alphas that society demanded in modern times. He needed someone to hold him down and fuck him like a real alpha, virile and dominate, who could make him tremble and moan and force him to submit so beautifully. Katsuki needed an alpha that could reign him in, and Watanabe wanted more than anything to do just that.

He knew it wouldn’t be easy, necessarily. Katsuki was headstrong, used to being the strongest in the room, and Watanabe had to compensate for that. He had a simple set of rules that he set out for his omega early on:

1. No fighting.
2. No back talk.
3. Earn your keep.

“Earning your keep” meant just doing what omegas were meant to do: basic housework and meeting the alpha’s needs. To start off, Watanabe broke it into an easy, action-reward system: a kiss to use the restroom, oral for a shower, and sex for a full day’s meals. It was a little primitive, but at least it didn’t leave room for argument or loopholes while Katsuki got with the program. Watanabe figured it’d become a Pavlovian response after a while, so Katsuki would just have to deal until he got used to it.

That didn’t stop Katsuki from arguing at first. Even through his heat, he bitched about it, threw a huge fit about how ‘fucked up’ it was, like he always did. He probably grew up in a soft omega-run household where if he had a big enough tantrum, someone would relent to him. Watanabe wasn’t that sort of limp-dicked cuck, though, and given that it was in clear violation of rule #2, he couldn’t exactly let it just go. He set up the camera on his phone (after all, Toga asked him for content, and the online heat hunt community would thrive off this shit), nipped his omega’s neck just enough to make him numb and floppy, and spanked him hard until the brat repeated back the rules without snark. Only then did Watanabe bend him over and fuck him stupid until he slept.

Watanabe took no pleasure in punishing his omega (well, okay, maybe he did, but he’d prefer it if he could spank Katsuki for sexier reasons), but the little firecracker needed clear boundaries. Maybe someday, when Katsuki stopped being so resistant and came to realize it was better this way after all, some of the rules could be relaxed a little. Of course, by then, they probably wouldn’t need to be.
The hard part would be handling the omega until that point. Once his heat ended and he was free of
his high on hormones and arousal, Katsuki would probably be a bit of a handful. The rules would
help, and Watanabe could keep him here without too much worry—the windows and doors were
reinforced, and the front door locked automatically inside and out with no means to open without a
key. The only one with keys to the apartment was Specs, given that Watanabe didn’t need to own a
pair himself with his quirk. As an extra precaution, Watanabe had been looking into some custom-
made gloves that could withstand explosions, and while he had to do a lot more research to compare
price and materials (Zetix? Aramid? Kevlar? You’d think there wouldn’t be so many options), there
were some promising offers from vendors the black market. All he needed was a pair with bands that
could be locked into place around the wrist, and Katsuki’s quirk should be manageable even when
Watanabe wasn’t dousing him in pheromones. And it would be an important precaution—it took a
good two weeks before the burn on his knee healed decently last time he’d slipped up. Better safe
than blown up.

For now, he just needed to get Katsuki through this first heat together. If all went well, the sheer
number of times they coupled through this cycle should lead to the biggest factor for his omega’s
compliance. Katsuki might not like it much, but a pup would mellow him out a lot and lock him into
the bond pretty much permanently. Watanabe suspected Katsuki was on birth control, but he
wouldn’t have been able to take any pills recently, so that wasn’t a concern. And even if it didn’t
take this time, well...Watanabe definitely wouldn’t mind sharing another heat cycle or two until it
did.

There was a sound of sheets rustling, and Watanabe’s attention immediately shot to his mate. Katsuki
shifted, eyes blinking open slowly, and he looked dazed under the deep red flush of his heat. The
rich spice of his arousal wafted through the air, freshening the scent that hung heavy in the room and
joined in with the heady musk of sex. Watanabe smiled when his mate’s eyes landed on him,
unfocused but with some recognition, and Katsuki stretched out on his back, letting his knees fall
apart at his alpha’s attention. So it was a heat-dazed, half-awake round this time...Watanabe rumbled
in satisfaction, climbing onto the bed and over to his omega.

He loomed above his mate, leaning over for a kiss as he flattened his palm against Katsuki’s chest
and dragged it down. Sliding his hand gently over the sensitive flesh of Katsuki’s inner thigh, he
appreciated the shaky sigh against his lips before slipping two fingers into his mate, just to pet and
tease at the sensitive places inside of him a little. It was sometimes hard not to spend a little extra time
spoiling his omega when he was like this, receptive and half-conscious and candid, and it stroked his
ego to feel and listen to the other respond.

Watanabe couldn’t hold back anymore when after a few minutes, Katsuki’s head was tilted back,
brow furrowed and mouth hanging open, lips glistening as he panted. His hands were gripping the
sheets, loosely at first before tightening as Watanabe sunk his thick cock into him. Watanabe knew
his dick was a little difficult to handle at first and was unashamedly proud of the fact, but Katsuki
was deep in heat and well-fucked by this point. The alpha knew he could handle it.

His senses were filled with the wet sounds of Katsuki taking his cock and the shameless “a-ah, ah,
ahn”’s falling from Katsuki’s mouth as he picked up his pace. The room was hot, humid after more
than a day’s worth of slick and sex, and the slide of their skin against each other felt right, even if his
omega still was resisting the other calls of his gender. Watanabe ignored all the work he’d have to do
to make his mate accept his place, letting himself indulge in the rhythm of their bodies until it became
almost a trance. Before long, his own mind started to drift away, joining his heat-dumb mate in the
senseless pursuit of pleasure.
It was the second day waking up in his room with no word on Bakugou’s whereabouts, and to say Todoroki’s fuse was short would be an understatement. Thankfully, it was Saturday, and he wouldn’t have to try to hide it like he did yesterday. He was successful for the most part, but he could tell Midoriya was side-eyeing him, which was bad news. Midoriya was too good at catching on when something was off, and as much as Todoroki wanted to just sit down and vent, he wasn’t permitted to right now.

It would help if there was any sort of clue or lead or anything, but they haven’t even been able to figure out how the alpha got into and out of the building. All of the surveillance footage showed nothing, not even a blip in the feed that was apparently there the first time the villain broke in, and no one saw a thing despite everyone still being in the dorms before class. There wasn’t even a sign of a struggle. Aizawa got a master key to open Bakugou’s room, and there was a lingering misplaced scent...but nothing else. No burn marks or explosions, no furniture overturned, no sign of even the slightest scuffle. Bakugou’s phone was placed neatly on his desk, and that was it.

It was as if he was teleported, spirited away out of nowhere. Or, Tsukauchi pointed out, warped. That connection sent shivers down Todoroki’s spine—last time Bakugou was warped, it was by the League of Villains, and it resulted in the premature retirement of the Symbol of Peace. If he was warped again, Bakugou could be anywhere, with more than a few dangerous villains around him.

Todoroki had demanded that he be part of the investigation. He was Bakugou’s packmate, he was the last one who saw Bakugou, he knew Bakugou was being targeted, and if he had to sit back and do nothing, he wouldn’t be able to forgive himself. It took a lot of persuasion and tenacity, but eventually, Aizawa relented on the condition that none of the other students be alerted until it was absolutely necessary. For the moment, their classmates just thought Bakugou was at home for his cycle, and Aizawa wanted to keep it that way.

Todoroki couldn’t really blame him too much. Their track record as a class of keeping calm and staying put when someone was in danger was abysmal. Bakugou, in particular, seemed to attract rescue-happy friends who would practically implode if they knew he was missing and they couldn’t do anything about it. While Kamino might have ended well, Aizawa was clearly not happy with the class for their involvement (or tolerance of those involved), and he was in no mood to tempt anyone into repeating the situation.

Todoroki, in this one case, was an exception. And unlike last time, he had a provisional license. Thus, he found himself ghosting Aizawa at a meeting on Saturday morning, trying to figure out what to do next.

“So you think he was warped?” Nezu said, looking as serious as his fluffy animal face would allow.

Aizawa nodded stiffly. “I can’t say anything for certain, yet. We don’t have any hard evidence, but we have suspected some involvement with the League since the last encounter.”

“That was also incidental,” Tsukauchi added. “The suspect seemed to have some forewarning of the League attack against Ryukyu. While it’s a start, it’s far from conclusive. One could call it conjecture.”

“Conjecture or not, there’s not a lot of other explanations for Bakugou’s disappearance,” Aizawa shot back. “The type of information the villain stole from our archives only adds to that suspicion. Blueprints and floorplans are only useful for certain applications, and we know the warp quirk can’t just be used freely.”

Tsukauchi hummed in reluctant agreement. “Honestly, I think you may be right. My main concern is that this won’t be enough to implicate either of them in a court of law, unless we somehow show a
“Let’s not worry about that right now,” Aizawa grumbled. “Our first concern is finding him. We’ll deal with the criminal charges after the fact.”

With a sigh, Tsukauchi flipped through his notes. “That’s easier said than done. For one, even though we suspect the League may be involved, we don’t know to what extent, or whether Bakugou’s even with them. If we track down the League—which is already an ongoing process—there’s no guarantee we’ll find Bakugou. To add to that, the League seems to have spread out, so the concept of ‘finding the League’ is more a matter of tracking down individual members. Finding an epicenter where Bakugou might be located would be...difficult.”

Aizawa made a frustrated sound, glowering over tented fingers. “And the Locksmith? Do we have any leads on him?”

“We’ve narrowed down the suspects,” Tsukauchi answered. “Given what we know, our main suspect is someone by the name of Watanabe Touma, and we believe he is working with an unknown accomplice specializing in hacking and cyberattacks. Their current location and center of operations is something we’re looking into, but their patterns are frustratingly difficult to nail down. We’ll need more information on them to draw together a solid case.”

Todoroki could feel the agitation roll off of Aizawa, and it did nothing to help his own complicated feelings. Nothing about this sounded anything other than grim. With a grunt, Aizawa spoke, voice tired, “Is there anything else we could go on? Anything we could do?”

Tsukauchi sighed, eyes as tired as Aizawa sounded. “...Right now, just keep open to any communication that might come. I have a couple of different teams working on this from the angles we have. I’ll keep you posted if anything comes up.”

Aizawa nodded, and the group rose, shuffling out of the room. Todoroki followed silently, expression simmering and intense. Before he parted from Aizawa, he caught the teacher’s attention. “If...when you do find him, I want to join the raid.”

Aizawa regarded him with quiet scrutiny. “I know this means a lot to you, but you’re inexperienced and you’re compromised. If the League is involved, this won’t be easy.”

Todoroki nodded, having already prepared for that response. He presented his own side of the argument. “I have my license now, so I won’t be a liability. As his packmate, I’ll be able to calm Bakugou down once we retrieve him. I won’t...I won’t fight or get in the way. I swear I’ll focus on rescue and extraction.” He lowered his gaze and bowed, tense from the anxiety of the past few days and the fear that his request will be denied. “I just want to be there. Please.”

Aizawa sighed heavily, waving his hand to tell Todoroki to stand up again. “...Fine. But your only focus is Bakugou, and you will defer to the Pros at all time. Do you understand?”

Todoroki nodded with a clipped, “Yes, sir.”

“Good. Go back to the dorms. I’ll update you if anything comes up.”

Todoroki returned to his room, not wanting to be around anyone who might catch on to his terrible mood. He didn’t want anyone to start making connections. Not yet. He just hoped that the next few days would bring good news.
Listen...I'm sorry. I know it hurts but just hold out haha
It took me a little while to figure out how I wanted this chapter to go...ended up re-writing and patchworking it out, but hopefully it's still ok :x I know some ppl wanted a Watanabe pov, and I think some of his motivations and thought processes might be clearer this way. His moral center of right vs wrong is off by a few meters, in case that wasn't clear before haha
In over his head and out of his element

Chapter Summary

He still didn’t know where he was or how far away from home he was taken. And, on top of that, hanging around this strange alpha while off his heat, fully conscious and without buffer, made him feel an unpleasant, bubbling insecurity.

Chapter Notes

CW: Sexual content, dubious consent

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Bakugou knew Touma was on his goddamn phone even though he couldn’t see it. He was facing forward in the alpha’s lap, riding reverse-cowgirl to chase away the last needy vestiges of his heat, and the alpha was being uncharacteristically quiet behind him. The guy had an over-inflated ego big enough to make Bakugou look modest, and whenever Touma was given the chance, he was spewing some bullshit or another about alpha-this or omega-that. The only time he was ever quiet for long was when Bakugou was in heat-dumb subspace, and even then, sometimes it was a coin-flip. The silence was obvious.

“You’d better not be taking pictures.”

The only response was some muffled snickering.

It wasn’t too much of a stretch to say Bakugou fucking hated the guy. It was strange how the familiar rage he felt towards the text on his phone could so easily be transferred to someone as if they’d been talking in person the entire time, but the irritation felt natural. Watanabe Touma, as he was finally informed of after he remembered to ask a day-and-a-half into his heat (Touma had the audacity to look confused and then laugh like he forgot his little game. He insisted Bakugou use his given name off the bat), was as much of a douche as he expected. He was provoking and obnoxious, and the fear Bakugou used to have for the guy had all but melted into an acute loathing...or, most of the fear, anyway. The alpha was still able to keep Bakugou on his toes when he really wanted to.

It was a confusing experience. As much as he knew he despised the guy, there were definitely times during his heat that were...nice. More than nice. He wanted to pretend like sometimes at the height of it, it didn’t feel kind of mind-blowing, but the fact of the matter is, it did. A handful of times, getting fucked when he was half-out of it on heat-induced arousal was awesome, physically, mentally...it felt like he was a man in the desert dying from thirst, and he stumbled upon an oasis from which to drink, except he also flopped in full-body and floated in the cool, sparkling water.

But there were other times that were overwhelming, too much, even outright painful, and still other times that would’ve been nice if it weren’t for the noisy, self-absorbed bastard that was attached to the dick. Touma didn’t ask what Bakugou might like, didn’t convene or discuss—he just did what he wanted, and afterwards decided whether or not it was fine. And half the time Bakugou, in his heat-dumb state, just took it, protesting how he could, which sometimes was limited to mindless squirming
or sharp cries. In all cases, the alpha purposely kept him unbalanced, made it so even when it felt
good, Bakugou felt in over his head and out of his element. He made Bakugou feel small,
inexperienced and naive in a way that facing villains or challenging battles never did.

Bakugou knew Touma filmed some of his heat. He didn’t know exactly which parts, since he
usually only caught on after the fact, and he didn’t know what Touma was planning on doing with
the videos. It made him uneasy.

And then there were the rules. The stupid fucking rules. Bakugou honestly couldn’t believe the guy
could come up with that shit and say it with a straight face. The rule against fighting made some
sense from a captor-hostage standpoint, Bakugou could respect that as being reasonable for the
situation, but the rest of it was ridiculous. The alpha seriously expected Bakugou to give him a kiss
whenever he needed to take a piss, or even worse, suck his nasty-ass dick whenever Bakugou
wanted to get clean. Bakugou got access to the bath yesterday half by accident (like okay, he didn’t
mean to, but Touma just kind of sat on his chest and pressed the cock into his mouth, and he just
kind of let it happen), which was nice except the alpha followed him in. If there’s a rule about being
allowed to shower after giving head, then he should at least be allowed some privacy, especially
after discovering that getting choked by cock wasn’t exactly great.

Bakugou hated the rules.

He didn’t know what was going to happen now that his heat was ending. Touma hadn’t really talked
much about whether or not he was going to keep Bakugou here, or whether he was going to
let Bakugou go back home until next time. The rules made Bakugou think it was the former, and that
left him with a gnawing sense of anxiety. The apartment, from what he could see on their short jaunts
to the bathroom or water closet, was decently sized but not exactly huge, and the idea of just being
left in this place for hours every day was stifling. He still didn’t know where he was or how far away
from home he was taken. And, on top of that, hanging around this strange alpha while off his heat,
fully conscious and without buffer, made him feel an unpleasant, bubbling insecurity.

Bakugou tried to stamp down those thoughts and focus on the task at hand. He leaned back against
Touma’s chest, both to cut off any view Touma might have while trying to be sneaky with his phone
camera, and because everything lower than his waist was sore as hell. It was hard work riding cock,
he had discovered over the last few days, and at this point, he really couldn’t go very long at
anything that required thigh muscles. Leaning back, though, he could roll his hips and grind down
using mostly just the muscles of his back, which were also sore as hell but maybe could hold him
over until his legs worked again. Admittedly, if it weren’t for the soreness, Bakugou would like
riding like this, setting his own pace and choosing how deep or rough they were. Most of the time,
he felt like a plaything, something to be moved and grabbed and used, but being on top let him feel a
little more in control.

Touma chuckled, setting his phone aside and tucking his face against Bakugou’s neck. Bakugou
huffed, leaning away, but Touma wrapped his arms around Bakugou’s chest to keep him near,
planting kisses along the juncture of his neck and shoulder. “You’re so docile like this.” And cue the
chatty bullshit. “I knew you were just a little pent up. Needed a heat with an alpha who could handle
you, calm you down a bit.”

“Can you shut the fuck up?”

“Mm.” Touma sucked a hickey at one of the few points that wasn’t already marked, raking his teeth
over Bakugou’s skin. “I can’t help it.”

“You’re a big boy, I’m sure you could if you tried.”
“You’re too sexy. It’s impossible.”

There was something off about being called sexy by this man, like it was something prescribed to Bakugou and entirely outside of his control, something that was pinned to him whether he wanted it or not. “Die, asshole, it’s not impossible. It’s not even hard.” Bakugou’s voice was breathy and labored, and his lower back was protesting, burning with the effort of moving over the girth inside of him. He took a break with some bare-minimum grinding. “Just shut your goddamn mouth.”

Touma chuckled, slipping a hand down to cup his ass and encourage him to keep moving. “You’re such a tease, too.”

“Oh fuck off, I-I’m not, I’m just taking a break.”

“Too much for you?”

“No, ‘m just sore,” he huffed, before adding a mumbled, “No thanks to you, dick-for-brains.”

Bakugou felt the alpha’s hands snake down his thighs and underneath his knees before hoisting his legs up. “Let me give you a lil’ hand, then.” Touma shifted until he could wrap his arms comfortably around Bakugou’s thighs, keeping the omega folded in half and pressed against his chest. When his grip was secure, he snapped his hips up, setting a faster pace than Bakugou could alone and using gravity to bounce the omega deep onto his cock. He didn’t ease into it, thrusting relentlessly and without moderation. Bakugou swallowed thickly, pinned into place, and he held on the best he could, feeling the overwhelming molten pressure of being built up faster than he was ready for as Touma fucked up into him. He couldn’t move away like this, couldn’t adjust to make it more bearable, and it made him feel little in a way that he hated even though he knew he was going to come anyway. Touma would remind him later that no matter what he said, he still got off on it. For now, he just weathered it, resting his head back on Touma’s shoulder and trying to hold in the clipped moans that were being knocked out of him until the long strokes of his alpha’s cock pushed him over into a tense, jerky orgasm.

Touma used him until he finished, pulling out with a wet pop from his half-inflated knot before releasing Bakugou back into his lap. Bakugou leaned heavily against the alpha’s chest, boneless from his climax, and he let Touma loosely hold him, begrudgingly relaxing into the way the alpha idly brushed his thumb against his skin. In a few minutes, the sticky contact of sweaty flesh would become uncomfortable, but for now, Bakugou didn’t rush it.

They sat like that for a while, almost starting to doze off when there was a sound of the living room door opening. Touma perked up, depositing Bakugou to the side and rolling out of bed, looking around for a pair of lounge pants to pull on. He paused, apparently deciding to throw on a shirt too for good measure, and then he left the room to talk to whomever just arrived. Judging by the sounds of their conversation, there was probably only one other person, but it still made Bakugou feel a sludgy unease.

After a few minutes, Touma returned, smiling brightly. He grabbed a soft button-up shirt from one of the dressers and tossed it at Bakugou. “Here, put this on and get up.” He waited at the door as Bakugou dressed, growing impatient as Bakugou hesitated to follow. “Chill, it’s nothing bad. I just want you to meet someone.”

“I don’t have any pants,” Bakugou grumbled quietly. He moved to the edge of the bed and eased his legs to the floor, but as he went to stand, his muscles strained in protest from days filled with rough sex and void of nutrition. He wobbled, grabbing the bed to steady himself, and tried not to look as embarrassed as he felt. He’d been sore before, knew pain and strain intimately—he’d been punched by All Might himself even—but this particular type of sore was entirely new territory, as was the
shaky weakness that joined it. Everything was made worse by a trickle of moisture leaking down along his thighs, made up of various fluids pressed out of him from his movements and gravity, and he hastily grabbed a blanket to clean himself the best he could.

Touma gave an amused huff before going over and moving behind the unsteady omega, bracing Bakugou up and crowding him to push him forward. “You don’t need ‘em, that shirt’s long enough. Besides, I’m not sure any of my pants would stay up on you anyway.” Touma jostled Bakugou down the hall, ignoring his nervous ‘wait’s, and Bakugou clung to the alpha’s arms as his legs threatened to give out, feeling humiliation and apprehension grow in his chest as he was pushed out into the open.

Bakugou had never been in this part of the apartment before, even though he could see part of it from the hall or the bedroom when the door was left open. It was an open living space, and when he was pushed past the hallway threshold, Bakugou could see that it was complete with an entertainment system against one wall and a wide sofa in the center of the room. Opposite of the hallway entrance was a kitchen, half-open to the living room via a counter-space flanked by a set of stools, and there were a number of shopping bags placed on top of the counter’s surface. The entrance to the apartment was on the remaining wall, opposite the entertainment system, and the door looked heavier than normal. The man that Touma apparently wanted Bakugou to meet was standing near the kitchen counter, watching them approach.

The man was shorter than Touma, maybe around Bakugou’s height, and he was wearing a many-pocketed vest that looked more like fishing gear than a fashion statement. His expression was calculative but guarded, like he was sizing Bakugou up and being cautious with his judgments, and his eyes darted over Bakugou’s entire form without passion or warmth. His expression became pinched, but Bakugou realized after a second that his irritation seemed directed at Touma.

“You could’ve gotten him some pants.”

Touma rolled his eyes. “Mine aren’t going to fit.”

“Well, if you’re going to keep him around, buy him some clothes or something. I know you probably get off on this or whatever, but at least try to be a little pragmatic.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Touma mumbled dismissively. He brushed it off and nuzzled Bakugou, redirecting his attention. “Katsuki, this is Specs. He’s my beta, and he wants to make us into a happy lil’ pack together.”

“...I already have a pack,” Bakugou growled, glowering at Specs. The beta didn’t strike him as threatening, but he still didn’t like being in a room with two strangers negotiating his bonds over his head.

Specs, however, just shrugged. “Whatever. We’ll figure that out later. There are more important concerns right now.”

“Are there now?” Touma said, almost mockingly. He pushed Bakugou forward, moving him over to the sofa before extracting himself and letting Bakugou flop onto the cushions. “That’s surprising. You’ve been so eager for this pack bond.”

“We can initiate a bond now, but if the kid wants to get used to the idea, then whatever. It’s not like he’s going anywhere,” Specs shot back, a look of mild annoyance settling across his features in a way that suggested it was a common emotion. “That was the point, right?”

Touma hums in affirmation, looking very pleased with himself. “That was the point. He’s mated up
and gonna stay right here.”

Specs scoffed. “The fact that you’re so goddamn proud of yourself after risking all of our shit for some jailbait ass blows my mind. You’re a piece of work, Watanabe.”

Touma rolled his eyes again. “Mm-hmm. Anyway, what are all these ‘bigger concerns’ you’re working yourself up over now?”

“Oh, I don’t know. The fact that you’ve kidnapped a high-profile, dangerous brat that we’ve got to care for now? Or did you forget that the reason you started drooling after him was because *everyone knows* who he is, what he looks like, and what he’s capable of?” Specs deadpanned. “I know I’ve asked you this before, but I don’t think you’re taking it seriously. How, exactly, do you plan on containing him?”

Bakugou decided he liked this guy better than Touma. Sure, he still talked about Bakugou like he wasn’t even there and was trying to dictate his future for him, but at least the guy had a healthy respect for what Bakugou was capable of. Plus, the beta was clearly used to dealing with Touma’s bullshit and more than willing to throw it back in his face, which Bakugou could appreciate.

“I have plans.” Touma puffed up, showing off like a tropical bird. “The apartment was already set up well for keeping him. I’ve been negotiating explosion-resistant gloves from a few vendors, and I figure we could dye his hair or something if we start taking him outside. To keep him in line here, I’ve set down some house rules: no fighting, no back-talk, take care of household chores, and sex in exchange for things like food and showers.” He ticked the rules off on his hand.

Specs looked briefly appalled, nose wrinkling. “‘Sex in exchange?’ What sort of horror film bullshit are you on? Like what the fuck, let the kid take a damn shower, Watanabe.”

Touma sputtered, indignant. “‘Horror’—it’s just for a blowjob, goddamn, it’s not like I’m torturing him. Calm down.”

Specs raised an eyebrow, leveling Touma with an unimpressed stare before very pointedly turning his gaze to Bakugou and looking him up and down, eyes lingering over the bruises around his neck. “Yeah?”

“That’s—that’s different, Specs, it was rut—look, you’re a beta, you just don’t get it, okay? Fuck off.”

Specs gave a low, disapproving hum, staring Touma down like a displeased mother. “Fine. Whatever. You’ve fed him, right, chief master alpha? If he’s coming off his heat?”

Touma was pouting, and he huffed defensively, “You *just* got here with groceries. Don’t be a bitch.” He ducked into the kitchen and started going through the bags on the counter. Specs pulled out one of the stools and sat to oversee Touma’s work, propping his chin on his hand. Bakugou, in turn, huddled against one of the armrests, where he could watch the two over the top of the sofa while otherwise not drawing attention to himself.

After a little while, once there was the sizzling sound of food in a pan, Specs spoke up. “You don’t have any electronics here that can browse the internet, right?”

Touma glared at him, still sulking, but considered the question anyway. “Just my phone. Oh, and the gaming systems, I guess.”

Specs made a low sound, glancing at Bakugou, brow furrowed. “Probably best not to cut off internet from those, unless we want him to hate your guts even more. I doubt he’d be satisfied if we locked
him in here with nothing but a fucking daily crossword or something.” Specs hummed again, turning back to Touma. “But we can’t let him contact anyone...I’ll find a workaround.”

“That’s sweet of you,” Touma responded, teasing.

“Yeah, well. I’m not a dick. Unlike some people.”

Touma snorted darkly. “You’re on one today. You’d better watch it if you want that pack bond.”

“Fuck no, Watanabe, you gave your word,” Specs snapped. “You’re not backing out on me now, asshole. In fact—" He walked around the counter to join Touma in the kitchen and glared up at him formidable despite being nearly a head shorter. “Stick out your wrists.”

“I’m busy—“

“Touma, I swear to god, I will delete every nasty porn file—“

“You’d better not touch any of my files if you know what’s good for you—“

“Stick out your wrists!” Specs snarled, grabbing the spatula out of Touma’s hand and tossing it to the side.

Touma sighed dramatically, rolling his eyes yet again before a small, impish smirk found its way on his face. “Alright, alright. I’m just fucking with you. You know I wouldn’t do you dirty, babe.” He winked and offered up his hands, palms up.

“Why I stick around with you, I still don’t understand,” Specs muttered as he grabbed Touma’s right hand and began rubbing their wrists together. “You are easily the most obnoxious person I have ever met, and I think half the shit you do is purposefully just to annoy me.” His muttering was losing its edge as he moved on to Touma’s other wrist, becoming more like a soft mumbling. “Don’t care about anyone but yourself. I must be insane. This is stupid, and I’m stupid for doing it.” He finally sighed, growing quiet as he brought his wrists up to massage at the scent glands of Touma’s neck. The alpha leaned into it, letting his eyes slip shut, but the smug smile never left his face.

When Specs finally got his fill, Touma opened his eyes, smile widening. “All better?”

“Shut up,” Specs grumbled, though a lot of the tension had left his shoulders. Touma brought his own wrists up to rub against Specs’ throat and leaned in to plant a chaste kiss on the beta’s forehead.

“Nah. Get out of my kitchen.” Touma spun Specs around by his shoulders and gave him a gentle push, and Specs huffed before returning to the stool he vacated. “I’m almost done here, anyway. Are you staying to eat?”

“No, I have shit to do, and you’re pissing me off.”

“Aw. You sure you don’t want to watch a movie or something?”

Specs glanced over at the sofa again. “Maybe another time when your new roommate doesn’t look like a raccoon cornered in an attic. I’m kind of afraid he’s going to bite me or something.”

“Hm. He might.” Bakugou bristled at the way they were talking about him, like he wasn’t literally right here listening, or worse, like he was an animal and couldn’t understand. Touma chuckled at the way his omega’s eyes narrowed. “Yeah, he probably would.”

“Call me over again when he chills the fuck out. And when the place doesn’t smell like a
whorehouse.” Specs stood up, shoving his hands in his pockets. He leveled one last serious look at Touma. “And I’m gonna stress this one more time. Don’t tell him shit. I know you’ve already spilled some details about yourself because you’re an idiot, but don’t give him anything else. Don’t tell him my name, don’t tell him my quirk, don’t tell him what I do, what we do, how we do it, where we do it, who we know or don’t know, what we’ve heard or haven’t heard—nothing. You keep your fatass mouth shut until we know we’re out of the woods, Watanabe. At least for a few months. Get him Netflix and some games, maybe a dumbell or something—I don’t give a fuck, but don’t let him have access to shit. If you’re going to do this, do it right.”

Touma waved him off, shoveling food onto two plates. “Yeah, yeah, I know. I’ll talk to you later.”

“Don’t fuck it up,” Specs muttered before unlocking the door and slipping outside.

Chapter End Notes

And we're moving out of heat into new uncharted territory...

Also for those that don't have tumblr, Ultra Lineart has been making fanart, which blows my mind ;O; Pls check them out!!
**Face trained to defiance**

Chapter Summary

Then there was the question: if he did manage to get the upper hand, what would he do? It was a question he normally saved until after he jumped into action, but given the circumstances, he begrudgingly considered it now.

Chapter Notes

**CW: Emotional abuse, assault, gaslighting, victim blaming**

See the end of the chapter for more notes

They had dinner on the sofa, and it was weird. Touma pulled up some stupid edgy drama on Netflix, and they sat there and ate like it was a normal thing. The alpha seemed at ease, almost cheerful, and every once and a while he made some comment about one of the characters on the show. Bakugou felt like something in reality had tilted and left him sitting in a stranger’s body, like everything was as it should be, but only for someone that wasn’t him.

The food wasn’t terrible. He didn’t realize how hungry he was, even though eating made him a little nauseous.

Bakugou knew he could take Touma in a fight. He knew if it was a one-on-one, he’d come out on top, hands down. The problem was that Touma seemed to realize that too, and he always approached Bakugou at a time or angle when Bakugou was disadvantaged. Even now, this lull of activity would be perfect for action, for taking back control...except he could barely stand up straight with how achy his lower half was, and he felt weirdly bloated and still lethargic. He didn’t know how many days he’d been here (3? 4?), and he had no idea how many times he was fucked, but regardless, it was infinitely more than he was used to. What he did know was that Touma was more than willing to subdue him with a hard bite if he stepped out of line and trying anything right now would probably end with him half-conscious for the better part of an hour.

Then there was the question: if he did manage to get the upper hand, what would he do? It was a question he normally saved until after he jumped into action, but given the circumstances, he begrudgingly considered it now. The door and windows were reinforced, so he couldn’t just power through them, especially without his quirk. He saw Specs use a key to leave the apartment, so it seemed that the door was locked from both sides, but he hadn’t seen another key inside the apartment that he could use to get out. He had a sneaking suspicion that there wasn’t one, given the Locksmith’s quirk. Finally, if he did manage to get an upper hand on Touma, where would he go from there? From what he could deduce, the end result would be 1) he wouldn’t be able to get out and Touma would just end up pissed, 2) he would force Touma to open the door, which, without his quirk to use as intimidation, might require stealing a knife or straight-up blunt force torture, or 3) he’d incapacitate Touma long enough for the pheromones to fade and let him use his quirk again.

The second choice seemed most doable, but he’d have to wait to enact it until he could steal a knife
and wield it confidently, which meant waiting for his legs to stop threatening to cramp at every
movement. The only other possibility would be to swipe Touma’s phone and somehow get past the
passcode. He knew from the times he saw Touma on the device that the first number to the code was
a 3, and that it was about five numbers long, but that was all he had to go off of. In any case, Touma
seemed pretty glued to his phone, so he’d have to be careful with that option. Stealthy.

...Bakugou wasn’t great at stealthy.

He also wasn’t great at waiting. This entire situation made him antsy, irritable and anxious, and he
wanted to fast-forward a day or two when his body was back to normal so he could do something.
Sitting on this sofa and acting like a bastardization of a normal couple made him want to break
something.

Touma didn’t seem to have that problem. After he was done eating, he set his plate on the coffee
table in front of the sofa, and then stretched out to prop his legs up. He glanced over at Bakugou,
content and self-satisfied. Bakugou didn’t look at him, but in his periphery, he saw the alpha’s smile
widen, like he thought Bakugou’s irritability was a funny little joke.

“Have enough to eat?” Touma said conversationally.

Bakugou grunted and set his own plate down.

“Good.” The alpha sighed, lacing his hands behind his head. “What’d you think of Specs? I think
you’ll get along.”

Bakugou grunted again. Touma reached over a rapped a knuckle against his head. “C’mon, don’t be
rude.”

“...He’s not bad, I guess. Better’n you.”

Touma snorted. “I should’ve expected that. Now that I think about it, I might regret introducing you
two.” He sighed and didn’t pull his hand back. Instead, he draped his arm over the back of the sofa
and let his hand rest on the back of Bakugou’s neck, brushing his thumb against the soft hairs at the
base of Bakugou’s skull. “When are you gonna take him up on the pack bond?”

“Never, probably.” Bakugou grumbled, leaning away until he felt Touma’s fingers tighten around
his neck to keep him in place.

“Aw, you’ll hurt his feelings.”

“Not my problem.”

“You’ll give in eventually,” Touma said resolutely. His thumb continued rubbing when Bakugou
stilled again.

“I fucking doubt it.”

Touma chuckled, low and dismissive. “You will. You know, pack bonds are bullshit. They don’t
actually mean anything. Once you realize that, there isn’t much point in resisting unless it’s for
leverage. It’s basically just to throw betas a bone and let them feel like they make a difference.”

Bakugou felt a new, protective anger start bubbling up to join the other dark emotions congealing
inside of him. “...That’s not true.”

“Keep telling yourself that. Idealism doesn’t trump reality, kid.”
"You say shit like that, but I think someone dropped you on your head as a kid and fucked up your notion of 'reality,'" Bakugou bit back, losing patience. "You only see the world like that because you’re an asshole who doesn’t play fair and treats people like shit."

"'Playing fair' is a false truth, babe. There’s no cosmic judge that stopped me from overpowering you, was there? It’s all just bullshit boundaries made up by weak people who were afraid of being taken advantage of by those stronger than them." Touma’s grip was tight around the back of Bakugou’s neck, a quiet show of power. "You’re either gifted with the right set of skills and get ahead playing by the rules—that’s you, by the way, cutie—or you recognize that the rules don’t matter and get ahead anyway."

Bakugou glared at Touma, heckles raised, but the alpha had moved his hand up to lightly grip a handful of his hair as a silent warning. Bakugou reminded himself of his options, his plans, and wrenched his gaze away with a frustrated growl. "You’re fucked up. You’re seriously fucked up."

"Yeah, yeah," Touma responded, relaxing a bit and letting his hand drop back to Bakugou’s neck. "But seriously, you should give Specs a chance. I’m sure he won’t be able to resist helping out with the kids. It’ll be good to get him on your side."

"What kids."

"Ours, obviously. I wasn’t joking about shoving a pup in you."

"And I wasn’t joking about not fucking letting you do that."

"Yeah? What’s gonna stop me?" Touma said, smug and mocking. "You got any birth control pills you’ve been taking behind my back?"

"No. Don’t need ‘em."

Touma eyes narrowed in suspicion. "Don’t need them? What the fuck does that mean?"

Bakugou shrugged, but he couldn’t help the devilish smile pulling at his lips at finally, finally having one up on this asshole. Everything else might have crumbled, but at least he had this one thing to thwart the alpha’s plans. He didn’t even wince when the alpha’s hand went back to gripping his hair, tugging sharply.

"Hey. Answer me."

"Got an IUD," Bakugou drawled, lips curled in victory.

"What the fuck is an IUD?" Touma growled, expression unusually cold.

"Look it up, asshole."

Touma leveled Bakugou with a stare for a long minute, sizing him up before fishing his phone out of his pocket. He kept his hand against Bakugou’s neck, and with his free hand, unlocked his phone (3-5-4…9?..fuck) and opened up his browser. As he searched the term and started to read through some of the websites, his expression slowly hardened, lips tightened and downturned.

It was Bakugou’s turn to sit with a smug look on his face. He felt a derisive satisfaction at the tense silence coming from Touma as the alpha realized that the IUD was inserted inside of him and would be for years, unless a doctor removed it. The sociopath was going to have to change his angle, and Bakugou felt like he won.
That is, until the alpha threw the phone on the table, wrenched Bakugou’s head down by the hair, and maneuvered to roughly pin him against the sofa cushions with a knee. The position felt familiar, and Bakugou tried to push himself back up and shove the alpha off of him. His struggles were even less effective than they were that time in HR1, already too sore to make much use of his legs, and he snarled as he thrashed, “What the fuck, get off of me, seriously—”

He was interrupted by a pair of fingers getting shoved into him, forcefully probing in a way that was both violent and distinctly non-sexual. Bakugou squawked and jerked away, but Touma held him, growling, “Hold still. I’m going to pull that fucking thing out.”

“Pull—you can’t pull it out, a doctor’s got to—agh shit, Touma, stop—” Bakugou tried to reach back to discourage the alpha, grab his wrist or whatever he could manage. The way Touma was digging in him and pushing and searching was painful, especially when he was already raw and over-sensitive. The alpha responded by pressing his knee harder against Bakugou’s torso, aiming to hurt.

“There’s a little string to yank it out, and I’m going to find it, even if I have to stick my entire goddamn hand in there,” Touma snarled, pressing deeper and twisting in emphasis.

Bakugou gasped, tears springing involuntarily to the corner of his eyes at the mistreatment of his already overused body, and he squirmed, protesting, “Wait, wait, y-you can’t—ow fuck, wait! If—if you pull it out, it could—it could puncture, or—or—fuck, Touma, you could actually fuck me up, just, wait—”

Touma finally stopped, standing suddenly and removing his weight from on top of the prone omega. Without missing a beat, he turned and hit Bakugou with an open-hand slap so hard across the face that the sound seemed echo through the room, leaving behind an angry red mark that slowly began to welt. He loomed over Bakugou, face contorted in cold rage. “You think this is a game? You think I’m playing?”

Bakugou stared up at him, swallowing. It wasn’t the hardest he’d ever been hit, not by far, but something about the situation made it stand out more than a blow at training or a scuffle with Deku. He tried to keep his face trained to defiance, to keep any smallness out of his expression.

Touma’s voice increased in volume and intensity at Bakugou’s rebellion. “You’re mine, Katsuki, I mated you, and you’ll take my cock and you’ll take my seed whenever the fuck I want you to,” Touma shouted, teeth bared and shoulders tense, before he dropped his voice to a low, menacing hiss. “As soon as I get the chance, I’m getting that thing removed, and you’re going to bend over for me like a good little bitch until I get what I want. Understand?”

Bakugou didn’t answer, keeping the alpha’s eye contact with as much steadiness as he could muster. Touma’s eyes narrowed, and after a second, he sneered, “Keep quiet if you want. You’ll figure it out.” With that, the alpha dismissed Bakugou, turning away and angrily grabbing the plates on the table. Bakugou released the breath he didn’t realize he was holding and shakily pulled himself back up, ignoring the throbbing pain between his legs.

The alpha ranted while he went about cleaning up in the kitchen, and Bakugou tried and mostly failed to tune him out. It was clear that it didn’t actually matter whether Bakugou was listening or not. “You’re lucky I’m patient enough to wait for you to get with the program. I could just tie you down or beat you up like some assholes out there. But here I am, being nice while you’re being a fucking brat.”

The alpha slammed a few cabinets between the sounds of the faucet running or the clanking of pans. Bakugou didn’t bother to look over to see exactly what he was doing. He focused on finding a
comfortable position on the sofa. “What are you even resisting for? Even if you left, you’d be
drooling after another alpha within two cycles to help you through your heat, bouncing between dick
like a slut just like every other unfaithful mated bitch. No one goes for sloppy seconds unless they’re
planning on tossing you back later, Katsuki. No one wants to pity fuck an omega through a nasty
breakup unless they’re in it for themselves.”

There was the hissing sound of air leaving a can, and then the alpha’s voice was much closer.
“You’re ruined goods. Quit fighting it.” Touma took a swig of his beer before taking a deep breath.
After another long drink, he heaved a sigh. “...Fuck. Pissed me off. I’m going to do some laundry
and clean up the mess from your heat. Just...behave, alright?” Bakugou gave a stiff nod and didn’t
look around until he heard the sound of Touma retreating.

The alpha had left his phone on the coffee table.

Bakugou stared at it, readjusting himself on the sofa so that he could see the entrance to the hallway
more easily. With his heart hammering in his chest, he hastily grabbed the phone, staring at the lock
screen. He was confident on three of the numbers, but the other two were only vague guesses, more
on the right side than the left. He started trying combinations, anxiety mounting the longer he went
without knowing when Touma would return. 3-5-4-9-3? No... 3-5-4-9-6? Nope. 3-5-4-9-5? No,
fuck. 3-5-4-8-6?

The phone unlocked. Bakugou felt like he couldn’t breathe.

He navigated to the alpha’s contacts. As he suspected, there were his own contacts, stolen off of his
phone well over a month earlier. He worked quickly, opening a message to Aizawa and sharing his
location, sending another message with just his name. He repeated the process, sending location and
name to Todoroki, to his parents—

The sound of the washing machine door slamming made him jump, and he scrambled to set the
phone back where he found it before trying to look natural on the sofa. There was silence for a while
longer, but Bakugou’s body vibrated with adrenaline, and he didn’t dare risk his plan by getting
captured red-handed. It was only when Touma finally returned to the room that Bakugou realized that
the alpha could see the messages he sent, or even that someone could respond and blow the entire
thing. With cold, nervous dread settling in his gut, he started churning through ways to keep the
alpha’s eyes off of his phone.

Bakugou wasn’t great at stealthy, but he didn’t have much choice.

Chapter End Notes

Whoops! Looks some true colors are showing through...

Fanart for this chapter by Ultra LineArt! (colored version in the comments!)
It was Monday around four in the afternoon when Todoroki and Aizawa simultaneously received texts from an unknown number. It was cryptic—just a location and a name. But it was enough. Both sprung into action, and by the time Todoroki found to the lounge where Aizawa was, the teacher was already on his phone, making calls to numerous hero agencies and police stations, prepping for swift action.

Aizawa acknowledged Todoroki with a nod when he entered, and Todoroki could only wait, tense and occasionally pacing, as the plans were set into motion. His only job, for now, was to be available until it was time to move.

“Look, I might’ve lost my temper a little bit,” Touma began from the hallway entrance. “Which, to be fair, you obviously knew that was going to piss me off, so I’m not the only one to blame here.” His footsteps approached the sofa, and Bakugou stared forward, pretended he was engrossed in the shitty drama playing on the television even though it was obvious to both of them that he was sulking.

Touma plopped down onto the sofa, closer than necessary. “Let’s just do a restart, hm? Have a nice, relaxed evening. I’ll call up one of my friends later for a little under-the-table doctor’s visit, we’ll get everything sorted, and it’ll be like the whole thing never happened.”

Bakugou felt a clench of panic at the mention of calling someone, knowing the dangerous game he was playing with Touma’s phone. He needed this to go right. If Touma caught on, the alpha could bite him and whisk him away to who-knows-where again, ruining this plan and cutting off this avenue for escape later. He could not blow this. He peeked over at the alpha, mind racing through his options, whether it would be better to be difficult and rebellious, forcing Touma to keep all his attention on containing him, or should he play nice, make some attempt at being docile, and hope it wouldn’t be obviously out of character—

“Yeah? No harm, no foul.” Touma leaned forward and tilted his head to catch Bakugou’s eye, apparently taking the omega’s peeking and silence as a reluctant meekness. Bakugou swallowed the snide comment about ‘no harm’ being bullshit when his face and ass still stung, and nodded, opting to play along for the moment. Touma smiled, ruffled Bakugou’s hair, and got up again.
Touma walked into the kitchen, and Bakugou heard the door to the refrigerator open. “If you want, you can choose something to watch. I don’t know what you go for, but you can look through the options.” The refrigerator door closed, followed by the sound of another can being opened. “If it’s not on Netflix, we could probably find it online. Take advantage of that before Specs puts the network on lockdown.”

Touma returned into view, setting his beer on the table. “You want one? You don’t strike me as a beer guy.”

“Uh.” Bakugou blinked, thrown off-balance again. He’d never actually tasted beer before, but he could guess from the smell that he would hate it. He’d also never been offered any alcohol whatsoever, and it made him feel really uncomfortable, even though throwing a ‘that’s illegal’ out at this point would be kind of laughable. “...No, I’m...Good.”

Touma hummed as he grabbed the remote and navigated to the Netflix home screen. “You’d like more of that fruity shit, probably,” Touma mused. “You like orange juice?”

“Yeah,” Bakugou responded, tentatively. Orange juice was safe, right? Touma tossed him the remote and went back to the kitchen.

“I’ll mix you a screwdriver. Even got some flavored stuff—passionfruit, I think? Specs bought it like three years ago and hated it, so neither of us drink that shit. You’ll be doing me a favor by helping me get rid of it.” Touma began rummaging around again, and Bakugou glanced over at the kitchen to try to see what he was doing. What the fuck was a screwdriver?

Uneasy, Bakugou turned back and started flipping through the options. He knew he’d prefer to watch either something sports-related or something with lots of explosions, maybe a gritty history documentary…but he wasn’t trying to distract himself. The problem was that he was never very good at picking up on (or giving a shit about) what other people like, and as he scrolled through the shows, he drew a blank on which would capture and keep Touma’s attention enough to divert it away from his phone. Every little thing he was doing felt too tense, too high-stakes, and he hated planning step-by-step like this when it was all so...non-combative.

He jumped when a glass was set in front of him, looking to be just normal orange juice. Touma chuckled and sidled past him to sit back down on the sofa, close enough that their elbows could brush. “Easy, champ. You’re too fucking tense. You ever have one before?”

“One...what?”

“Screwdriver.”

“I...no? What is it?”

“Try it,” Touma urged, gesturing to the glass. Bakugou hesitated, unwilling and suspicious but torn up with what he should be doing to make this go right. He swallowed, grabbing the glass and staring at the contents for a few seconds before finally taking the plunge with a small sip. It...was basically orange juice with some other syrupy fruit flavor mixed in, except with a weird aftertaste. Touma laughed. “What’s with this timid weak shit all of the sudden? Try it, sweetheart, don’t just wet your lips with it. I’m not gonna poison you.”

Bakugou shot him an irritated glare, some of the indecision bleeding away in the face of a challenge. He took a larger gulp, making it about halfway through the glass before setting it down again. It still tasted mostly like orange juice with a fruity overtone and weird, slightly unpleasant aftertaste, but the larger quantity seemed to go down with an odd resistance, warming and a little like it sat both too
light and too heavy in his stomach.

Touma hummed, satisfied and amused. “Not bad, right? Probably better for you anyways. Figure the orange juice will replenish some vitamins after your heat, or something like that. Whatever, as long as it relaxes you a little bit, you’re making me tense just looking at you.”

“I guess,” Bakugou responded, for lack of anything better. He glanced back at the television, hesitated, and then shoved the remote into Touma’s hands. “I don’t care what we watch. I...don’t get a lot of time to watch things normally, so I don’t know.”

Chuckling, Touma started to sift through the options, capturing Bakugou’s hand with one of his own before he could pull it away. The alpha looked content as he scrolled, rubbing his thumb over the back of Bakugou’s hand, until he chose some artsy, racy-looking French film with subtitles. “I’ve seen this one before. It’s pretty good. Nice to look at, anyway.” He released Bakugou’s hand in favor of sliding his arm over the top of the sofa and behind Bakugou’s head.

Bakugou hated how everything the alpha did, he seemed to do with a sort of practiced ease. Bakugou hadn’t kissed anyone before, hadn’t even really held hands, barely even thought about it, but Touma made each movement feel premeditated and obvious. It was nerve-wracking, especially when Bakugou was trying to somehow distract the guy, and yet here he was, watching some art-porn European film with the alpha’s arm around his shoulders and a strange, airy lightness starting to settle in his limbs.

About twenty minutes in, Bakugou could feel the alpha’s attention start to wane. At some point, Touma leaned forward and grabbed his beer, sipping at it as he watched, and his fingers started to draw little circles against Bakugou’s upper arm. Touma had said he’d seen this film before...which either could be good or bad news, depending if he was the type who rewatched obsessively or if he just needed an out but was otherwise uninvested. Regardless, Bakugou needed to think of something to do in the case it was the latter.

Around ten minutes later, Touma tapped Bakugou’s shoulder as he shifted. “Finish your drink. I’ll mix you another.”

Bakugou shook his head. “I’m good.”

“Nah, come on. I’m getting up, it’ll be easier.” Touma leaned forward, grabbed the glass, and shoved it into Bakugou’s hands. Bakugou glared at him for a second before begrudgingly complying, drinking it down in a few long gulps and handing Touma the empty glass. Touma smiled and stood, bending over to press a kiss to the top of Bakugou’s head before heading to the kitchen.

The artsy film continued playing as Touma rummaged around the kitchen. There was a lot of flesh in the film, Bakugou was realizing. He couldn’t say he was honestly paying much attention to it. It was a little obvious what Touma’s angle was, though, given the film and the touching and the orange juice that Bakugou suspected had alcohol in it...not that the alpha’s angle had ever been anything else. He only brought Bakugou here for one reason, after all. Knowing that did little to ease Bakugou’s anxieties, as the more he thought about it, the more his options were narrowing down to that avenue.

Touma returned with another beer and a glass full of orange-juice-plus-whatever, setting the beer down before plopping onto the couch, this time basically flush against Bakugou. He returned his arm to its place around Bakugou’s shoulders, pulling him close, and shoved the orange juice concoction into Bakugou’s hands. Bakugou raised the glass to his lips and slowly sipped, mostly to give the illusion of drinking, and Touma asked, “What do you think of the movie?”
Bakugou shrugged with a gruff, “It’s..interesting.” He leaned forward to set his glass down on the table, hoping it’d be enough to appease whatever expectations the alpha had for him for now. Touma leaned forward with him, and his heart seized with the alpha grabbed his phone. The alpha didn’t look through it yet, just placed it closer to him in an almost thoughtless preparation for later distractions, but it was enough to signal to Bakugou that his time was running short. He needed to quit being hesitant and act.

Bakugou cleared his throat and quietly murmured, “I’d...like to take a shower.”

“Hm?”

“I feel gross. I want to shower.”

Touma’s eyes flashed and an expectant smirk curled over his lips. “Oh? You know what that entails, right?”

“Yeah,” Bakugou responded softly, failing to meet the alpha’s eyes. He kept his gaze on his hands folded in his lap, feeling his heart hammer in his chest as he prepped himself for the next step. He really did need a shower, honestly, so it wasn’t a farfetched request, but he couldn’t help the flush that rose to his cheeks as the alpha shifted to make his lap easily accessible. He felt weird, too, a little fuzzy and unfocused, like some of the sharpness of his senses was falling away.

“Go for it.”

Bakugou looked over at Touma’s face, catching those burning, expectant eyes before his gaze dropped to the alpha’s crotch. He swallowed, breathed in and out, and then shifted, readjusting so he was sideways on the sofa. It wasn’t like it was the first time dealing with the alpha’s dick, so he really shouldn’t be so shy about it, but there was something immensely different between going with the flow in his heat and actively pursuing it while fully cognizant.

He tucked his fingers under the waistband of the alpha’s lounge pants, and his mate lifted his hips so that Bakugou could pull the clothing down far enough to reveal his flaccid dick. After a shaky breath, Bakugou reached forward and wrapped his hand around the alpha’s member. He touched it, a little clueless on technique aside from how he’d touched himself (and even then, the angle was all wrong), but it was enough that the dick began to swell. He took another shaky breath, paused to grab the weird drink he was offered and down half of it, and then resumed, leaning forward.

He honestly didn’t know what the fuck he was doing. He didn’t watch all that much porn, and the only other time he had dick in his mouth was almost entirely out of his control during his heat. The one thing he did know was that he had to suck, so he just kind of...went for it, taking the head of the cock into his mouth and clumsily working it over. It wasn’t great, both in terms of his technique and in terms of the experience. Touma was thick enough that he couldn’t touch his thumb to his pointer finger around the base, and although it tasted mostly just like skin, there was an addition musk that permeated his senses, in a more bad than good way.

After a few beats, Touma hummed thoughtfully from above him. “You know babe, no offense, but you’re pretty fucking bad at this.”

Bakugou felt a hot flush of humiliation run through him, and he pulled away to level Touma with a venomous glare. “It’s not like I get a lot of practice, dipshit. I don’t know what the fuck you were expecting.” He never really aspired to be great a sucking dick, but being told so blatantly that he was bad at it triggered something in his pride that made it difficult to back down.

Touma made a low sound before tapping on Bakugou’s shoulder. “Here, sit up.” When Bakugou
complied, pouting a little bit and reaching for his drink to wash the taste from his mouth, Touma grabbed the remote. “Let’s just look at some technique. You’re clever, I’m sure you’ll catch on quick.” The alpha fiddled around, switching to one of the consoles, and searched through a browser until he came to a porn site, deftly searching to find a specific video.

An omega woman appeared on the screen. Before long, she was kneeling before a ridiculously massive alpha cock, moving over it with clear intent and enthusiasm. Touma spread out again, arms over the back of the sofa with one hand carding through Bakugou’s hair, and he began to narrate over the lewd sounds of the video. “Look, you don’t just dive right in. You gotta start by working it over a lil’, taking some time and showing some eagerness, you know? It’s sexy when you show you’re into it, when you wanna drag it out some, put your mouth all over it. And you gotta watch the teeth, use your tongue and lips more, I know you got a big mouth but you can’t just rely on that—”

Bakugou tuned him out, feeling like his face was on fire from the flush brought on by the triple threat of the noisy video, the alpha’s narration, and the erect cock waiting for him to finish the job. He watched, though, taking mental notes and trying to figure out how not to embarrass himself. Before long, he had finished the last of the juice in his glass, and he felt the alpha tug at it to pry it from his hands. Bakugou let him take it, if only because refilling the glass would shut up Touma’s commentary for a while. In the meantime, he watched the way the omega actress used her hands, how she paced herself, how she moved.

When Touma returned, Bakugou took the glass and another big gulp before setting it down and turning back to the alpha. “...I’m ready.”

“Go for it,” the alpha repeated, opening another beer and leaning back.

Bakugou slid down to the floor, shuffling between Touma’s knees with a little bit of difficulty from his protesting thighs. He shifted so he could kneel at the right height, gripping the base of the alpha’s cock and pumping it slowly, reminding himself to take it slower. He glanced up at the alpha’s face before nervously swallowing and leaning in once again, teasing his tongue over the slit on the head before mouth ing down along the shaft. Touma sighed, running his fingers through Bakugou’s hair and letting his knees part wider. “Better.”

Bakugou pulled away for a second, sliding his hand over the cock to compensate. “Don’t...force me, okay? Don’t choke me.”

Touma chuckled, a low sound in his throat, and his eyes were lidded and hungry as he pushed the hair from Bakugou’s face. “Alright.”

Bakugou huffed, looking back at the task at hand, and he leaned forward to run his tongue over the length of the cock. He kissed and mouthed over it for a while, trying to ignore the way it made his face feel messy and wet, and eventually he worked his way up to the head. He swirled his tongue over it, trying to flick and tease over the slit the way the actress did, until it felt right to sink down and take it between his lips. He was more aware of the different parts of his mouth, where his tongue and teeth were, and he almost felt so focused that it ceased to be a sexual act altogether, just moving parts that needed to work in tandem. That is, until he heard the soft sigh from above him, and he glanced up.

Touma’s gaze was dark, carnal, and he flash Bakugou an impish smile. “That’s it. Good boy.”

Bakugou dropped his gaze quickly and felt himself flush, the head of the cock feeling heavy on his tongue. He refocused, steeling himself before he started to bob, shallow at first, and then longer, clumsily trying to coordinating his sucking with the slide of the cock over his tongue. It was difficult, and his jaw started aching after a while, but he could hear the husky sounds of pleasure from the
alpha, and the thought that this could be done with just a little more kept him going.

A couple of times, he had to stop to gasp for air, pumping the cock in his absence, and he couldn’t take the full thing into his mouth, not yet ready for deepthroating, but otherwise he thought he was doing alright. At one point, the alpha gripped his hair and held him in place, hips twitching up into his mouth, but after a whine in objection, he was released again. He pulled off, coughing and breathing deep, but he didn’t wait too long before diving back in, not wanting to lose any progress he’d made. It felt like it took too long, like maybe he was still doing something wrong, but eventually he felt the hand tighten in his hair, pulling him back, and suddenly there were hot strands of cum shooting across his face and into his mouth. He held his mouth open more in surprise and disoriented confusion than conscious decision, but it didn’t take long for him to sputter around the thick globs hitting his tongue.

Touma used his free hand to grab Bakugou’s nose, holding it shut and whispering, “Swallow it.” Bakugou looked up at him, at the intense glint in his eyes, and did as he was told, trying not to gag. He would’ve thought it would have affected him more, but somehow the world seemed a bit further away, and some of his actions happened before he decided to do them. The taste left in his mouth wasn’t great, though, and he felt a little nauseous, so he grabbed his juice and drank a few big mouthfuls to chase it away.

As Bakugou was flexing his jaw to try to work out some of the strain, Touma sighed contentedly and said, “Shower’s all yours.”

Bakugou glowered up at him, a mix of resentment, shame, and insecurity in his sharp gaze, but he wiped his mouth and set the glass back down. When he tried to get up, though, he found the muscles of his legs refusing to cooperate, his thighs not letting him pull himself up to a standing position. He tried a few times, discreetly, before finally groaning and letting his head tilt forward against Touma’s thigh. He took a long moment to dredge up the will to speak, even though most of him recognized this as a helpful distraction.

“...Can you. Take me to the bathroom.”

“Hm?” Touma glanced down at him, still relishing his afterglow.

“.......I can’t get up.”

“Ah. Yeah.” Touma gave Bakugou a lopsided smile, like this was a cute little snafu rather than possibly one of the most embarrassing moments of Bakugou’s life. There were probably more during the last heat, but at least he didn’t have to be so starkly aware of them. He could feel the cum cooling against his cheek. “I could probably stand a rinse too.”

Touma pulled himself away and stood, and Bakugou downed the last of his spiked orange juice before allowing himself to be hauled to his feet and guided to the bathroom. He didn’t want to take a bath in case he risked taking too long and being found by heroes fully naked, but a shower would be more than welcome.

At the very least, he managed to get this far without letting the alpha look at his phone once, which probably counts as a victory despite everything else.

Chapter End Notes
I still have a lot of work I need to do, but honestly it was driving me insane and I needed a break orz
Hence update :>
And so...you get a bad blowjob. Did I need to play out the whole scene to get the idea across? No. Did I anyway? Yup.
Aizawa considered himself a patient man (even if that sentiment wasn’t shared by everyone) but sometimes he felt very tested by the cautions and precautions needed in heroism.

Bakugou could admit to himself that he physically felt a lot better after the shower, even though he was scrubbed more thoroughly than was really necessary due to Touma’s desire to ‘help.’ Thankfully, the alpha mostly just ran his soapy hands over Bakugou’s skin, admiring the marks and bruises across his shoulders, hips, and thighs, and his fingers didn’t dip into any place too intimate. Bakugou got a new, fresh-smelling button up to wear, too, but his request for pants was once again flippantly denied.

It was also probably a good thing that the alpha was helping him walk because over the course of the shower, the world seemed to tilt on its axis. If his legs weren’t unsteady before, they sure as fuck were now. Everything was a little fuzzy somehow, took more effort to focus on, and there was this floaty quality to his mind and body that was toeing the line between pleasant and unnerving. When Touma braced him up and led him back to the couch, he leaned back against the alpha’s torso, swaying lightly within the alpha’s grasp. He could feel the vibrations of Touma’s muffled laughter against his back.

Touma didn’t plop him on the sofa, but rather stretched out sideways against the armrest and pulled Bakugou into his lap. Bakugou landed heavily, pushing a loud grunt from Touma, which in turn made the omega let out a snide cackle. After a gentle revenge shove, Touma reached for the remote and navigated back to the weird French film, then pulled Bakugou down to snuggle against his chest and lay his head on the alpha’s shoulder.

At this point, Bakugou was mostly just going with the flow, thoughts traveling through a thick mud of muted emotions and odd sensations. His body felt both too light and too heavy, and while he kept an eye on the alpha’s phone, not losing sight of his goal, he also couldn’t dredge up the same panic as before as long as they were just laying here like this. He shifted to get comfortable, watching but not watching the film with his cheek pressed against the alpha’s collarbone, and the warmth of the post-shower mixed in with the swimming of his mind, making his eyelids feel droopy. The room was dim, the light from outside beginning to slowly fade, and everything felt a little softened and far away.

He didn’t know how much time passed—it could have been twenty minutes or it could have been an hour—when Touma brought a hand up to his chin, tilting his head back and meeting his lips in a soft kiss. Bakugou felt a weird mix of emotions, but his normal knee-jerk reaction was dulled by his heavily tipsy state and the drowsiness that had settled through him, and the only real response he felt was a shiver down his spine. The alpha seemed to take this lack of response as a reciprocation, and he deepened the kiss, cupping Bakugou’s jaw and sliding a thumb up to the omega’s lips to ease his mouth open. Touma sighed softly before tilting and slipping his tongue into the opening provided,
shifting their bodies and running his free hand up Bakugou’s thigh, bunching the hem of the shirt above his mate’s hips and leaving his lower half exposed.

There was a startling dissonance between how Bakugou knew he would normally react, how he was reacting, and how he should react given the circumstances. The reality was, everything seemed to happen before he really knew what to do about it, and by the time he had any thoughts about it, it was already happening. The kissing was happening, and Touma’s hand was gliding and groping along his thigh, fingers teasing at all of the sensitive parts at the juncture between his legs, and the only thing he was doing was gripping the alpha’s shirt and shivering against any well-placed touches.

His breathing was getting shallower, and he wanted to pull away but Touma’s hand had slid behind his neck to cradle his head in place, and the alpha was getting more aggressive with his teasing—when there was a knock at the door.

Touma paused and pulled away, looking at the door with a sort of offended disdain, eyes narrowed in suspicion. He huffed, completely ignoring the door and leaning back in to brush his lips against Bakugou’s again, licking lightly before capturing the omega’s lower lip between his teeth. Only when there was a second, more insistent knock did he groan in annoyance and disentangled completely. He maneuvered Bakugou out of his lap, unceremoniously dumping his mate onto the sofa as he got up.

“Probably the landlord or something. Stay put.”

Bakugou rested his chin on the back of the sofa as he watched Touma go to the door and check the peephole. His heart began beating harder in his chest in desperate hope and anticipation, a strange sensation with the way the world seemed so fuzzy and distant, and for a second, everything stayed still.

Then, with a resounding boom, the door caved, and Touma jumped back in alarm. One more deafening crash, and the door was thrown open.

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Aizawa considered himself a patient man (even if that sentiment wasn’t shared by everyone) but sometimes he felt very tested by the cautions and precautions needed in heroism. When they first got the text with the location, he wanted nothing more than to pack up and go, process be damned. Unfortunately, even he was aware that it would be foolhardy to do so.

The location was within the city, but in a shady district a fair bit away. It would take at least a half hour to get there from U.A. Not wasting any time, he contacted the police branch closest to the area and the hero agency that commonly patrols nearby, requesting some much-needed reconnaissance.

While this information was being gathered, he contacted a few heroes he knew would be reliable and capable of acting on short notice. A number of agencies were on stand-by since the word of Bakugou’s disappearance several days prior, so the transactions were swift. The location made Cementoss a good option, and outside of U.A. staff, Death Arms and both Mt. Lady and Kamui Woods were able to confirm that they could meet for the raid. Aizawa was ending his call with the latter when he received word from the scout team.

From what they could gather, the League was nowhere to be seen, and the location appeared to be a residential apartment. While there were some security measures and reinforcements, a quick
assessment made it clear that there were only two current occupants, one of them likely to be Bakugou. The difficult part would be gaining entry, but even that was relatively doable compared to the worst-case scenario.

That was all the information Aizawa needed. With a quick word to Cementoss and a nod to Todoroki, who was waiting none-too-patiently as he made his calls, they set out to meet the small team of police and heroes who would be backing them up. At this point, Aizawa doubted even that much would be needed, but it would be better safe than sorry.

After a long and tense ride to the rendezvous location, a quick briefing was conducted. It was decided that Mt. Lady and Cementoss would remain outdoors with the majority of the team of police, guarding any possible escape routes. Death Arms, Kamui Woods, Todoroki, and Aizawa would be spearheading the raid, with Aizawa leading the team and calling the shots. Death Arms would be able to break down the reinforced door, and Kamui Woods could assist in capture if the perpetrator was able to slip by somehow. Todoroki was under strict orders to only enter the fray when it was cleared and to focus on collecting Bakugou.

With the plans set in motion, Aizawa knocked, a simple technique meant to draw the captor away from the hostage, and waited.

As soon as the door collapsed inward and the shocked face of the inhabitant came into view, Aizawa’s capture weapon darted forward. It was almost too easy to bind the man, his face contorting between confusion, outrage, and fury, and immediately Kamui Woods passed by them to secure the perimeter, checking the rooms beyond the hallway for any potential back-up. Aizawa only needed to take one sweeping look over the room to confirm that this was the right place.

Bakugou was on the sofa, only his face visible over the top as he watched the scene unfold. Aizawa couldn’t see the entirety of his state, but the stark relief on the boy’s face and the bruising handprint on his cheek were enough. It might be uncharacteristic and it was definitely unprofessional, but Aizawa felt a hot rage buzz through him, and he felt no remorse when he swung his fist and cracked it hard against the restrained villain’s face. The man went briefly limp before shaking his head and groaning with a gravelly, “Fuck,” sniffing against a budding nosebleed.

It might get him in trouble later, but Aizawa couldn’t say he was sorry for doing it. He was tempted to do it again when the alpha leveled him with a dark, murderous glare, which only stayed on him for a few seconds before the man seemed to piece everything together and shift over to bore into Bakugou. The omega, ever the picture of meekness and situationally-appropriate timidity, shot the alpha a wicked, triumphant grin, all sharp teeth and vengeful malice.

Aizawa rolled his eyes and motioned to Todoroki that it was clear for him to enter.

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Todoroki hated all this waiting. He hated it especially when the heroes opened up the apartment and moved in while he had to wait in the hall, buzzing with nervous energy and cold anger. He knew he couldn’t act against the villain, which in itself was feeling like an unfair restriction, but just sitting here doing nothing felt almost like a punishment.

As soon as the all-clear was given, Todoroki shot into the room, following Aizawa’s motion to the sofa. Bakugou was watching the action over the top of it, which immediately seemed kind of odd given that Bakugou never really bothered to wait for someone to invite him into a skirmish. Todoroki didn’t pause to ponder on the fact, navigating around to join his pack mate and assess the situation.

Things seemed off almost immediately. Instead of charging over to meet him, Bakugou just watched
him approach, expression a mix of elation and some sort of shaky relief. When Todoroki moved around to the front of the sofa, Bakugou turned and flopped down onto the cushions, nearly toppling over for a second before resting his cheek against the back of the sofa as he looked up at his beta. Todoroki sat next to him, perched on the edge, and reached out to scratch the insistent urge he had to scent mark, to comfort and to freshen the bond, running his wrist along Bakugou’s neck.

Bakugou stiffened before his expression relaxed out of his lopsided smile, tilting his head even further and letting his eyes flutter shut. Todoroki took the opportunity to take inventory of the omega’s state, and as he did so, he felt bile climb in his throat and disgust crawl along his skin. Underneath where he was marking with his wrist, Bakugou’s neck and shoulders were covered in bites, hickeys, and bruises, continuing under the collar of his too-big shirt and almost systematic in the way they were placed. His face was bruised, and a glancing assessment lower than the shirt confirmed that he wasn’t wearing anything else. The shirt pooled over his legs and covered anything above his mid-thigh, but there were occasional dotted bruises that hinted at more further up.

For once Todoroki could even smell him, but the scent was polluted with the mark of the alpha and the coupling during his heat. There was something infuriating about that, the fact that Todoroki could finally catch more of Bakugou’s scent without suppressants, but it was altered during a mating that was never meant to take place. The foreign twist was fresh, too, recently renewed through some form of intermingling, and there was an inorganic smell of something else drifting on top of it.

While he was trying to calm himself, it took Todoroki a few seconds to notice that Bakugou had opened his eyes again and was watching him, hazy and unfocused. Todoroki tried to shake off his own feelings and reorient to his current task, clearing his throat and asking, “Are you okay? Are you hurt?”

Bakugou responded with a reflexive, “No,” before seeming to actually think over the question. He furrowed his brow, huffed, and replied more hesitantly, “...’M sore? Not like, hurt, I ain’t a weak bitch or nothin’, but, kinda, I dunno, fucked up a ‘lil, I guess. My legs are kinda wob’ly.” His words were a little less coherent than normal, and he had a sort of airy lethargy that sent warning bells through Todoroki’s mind.

“Are you...drugged? Did he drug you?”

“No...I think ‘m drunk, though.”

Todoroki took a deep breath, trying to keep himself calm. He would really love to freeze the offending alpha’s genitals off at this point, but that wouldn’t be very heroic. “Okay. Well, that’s...not ideal, but it’s not the worst thing that could happen. Maybe.” Todoroki looked over the sofa at Aizawa, who was watching them. After a second of hesitation, he waved the teacher over. Aizawa reacted by handing off the pervert to Kamui Wood and his lacquered prison, letting the other heroes take him into custody while he approached the teens.

“What’s the situation?” Aizawa asked Todoroki, looking Bakugou over and clearly already catching on that something was amiss.

“He’s...drunk?” Todoroki supplied. “And he needs some pants.”

“Drunk?” Aizawa repeated, eyes narrowing.

“You know what a screwdriver is? ‘S got alcohol in it, yeah?” Bakugou slurred, blearily craning to look up at Aizawa.

“...Yes, it has alcohol in it.” Aizawa sighed heavily, taking another moment to assess the blond. His
eyes followed the pattern of marks that disappeared under Bakugou’s collar, and his lips pressed into a thin line. “...Alright, let’s go find you some pants you can wear until we get to the hospital.” He started towards the hallway, pausing and waiting for Bakugou and Todoroki to follow.

Todoroki got up and took a few steps forward before waiting as well. The seconds stretched out, and Bakugou just stared at them, growing more tense the longer they watched him. He seemed to be warring over something in his head, his normally expressive face hiding even less than usual with his inebriation, and he was fidgeting uncomfortably. Finally, he mumbled something while staring at the sofa, too quiet to hear.

“...What?” Aizawa responded.

“I can’t,” Bakugou repeated, fingers pulling and worrying at the hem of his shirt.

Aizawa seemed to ponder over this for a second, expression serious, before nodding. “I won’t make you go back in there. Wait here.”

Bakugou blinked as Aizawa disappeared in the back room, and understanding seemed to dawn on Todoroki’s face. Bakugou looked between the beta and the hallway a few times before blurring out, “That’s not it, I’m not scared. Fuck.”

“Oh,” Todoroki replied dumbly, before seeming to come to some conclusion before quietly reassuring him. “It’s okay, Bakugou. No one’s going to hold it over you.”

“No, listen, ’m not fuckin’ scared, okay? ‘S not why.”

“....What is it, then?”

Bakugou shifted stubbornly and huffed out a clipped, “Can’t walk.”

“You can’t walk?”

“’S what I said, innit? You deaf now, Half ‘N Half?”

Todoroki sighed. “No, I heard you, I just needed to confirm. Because you’re drunk?”

“No, ’cause I’m sore.”

“Because you’re—oh.” Realization dawned on Todoroki, and he swallowed thickly and nodded. “Noted. Do you need...do you need me to carry you or...?”

“Fuck no. Just...” Bakugou seemed to struggle to find a way to word it without damaging his reputation. Todoroki would’ve found humor in it if it weren’t for the situation, but it did help him feel just a little better to have that glimmer of normalcy. “Lemme use you as a crutch.”

“Alright.”

Aizawa returned not long after with a pair of lounge pants. The two rescuers turned away as Bakugou shimmied into them, doing his best to quell the sounds of discomfort that wanted to escape, and he tied the drawstring as tight as it would go before rolling up the bottoms so he wouldn’t trip. The two turned back around when Bakugou gave his signal.

“Let’s get going,” Aizawa said, moving around the sofa to the door. Once again, he paused, waiting for his students.

Todoroki hesitated before approaching Bakugou, whispering, “Can you stand?” Bakugou moved to
try, using the armrest to brace himself, but sharp pain shot up his back and his thighs burned with the effort. He clenched his teeth, and with a soft, “No,” allowed Todoroki to help him up. Todoroki didn’t assist like Touma, didn’t jostle or push, but rather let Bakugou sling an arm over his shoulder and used his own arm to support Bakugou’s back to help ease him up.

It was much more dignified than being carted along, but it came at the price of requiring more work. Todoroki helped, but it didn’t keep Bakugou from limping, wincing when he shifted wrong, and it was slow going. Aizawa seemed to catch on to the actual reason Bakugou was hesitant to move earlier, and his expression clearly said that if Watanabe was still in the room, he would’ve decked him again. Maybe twice. Or until someone forced him to stop.

Aizawa was patient with the two, hovering close enough to help if needed without being patronizing, respecting Bakugou’s already wounded pride. As they made their way out of the apartment, the team of police took over, commencing a full sweep and scouring the apartment for any possible evidence needed for conviction. The evening air was cool against their skin, and although the night was just starting, it came with the knowledge that a heavy shackle had finally been removed.

Chapter End Notes

Whew! The closing of an arc! When I first was hit w the idea of this fic, this was around the end of it....however, there's still some loose strings, and where's the fun if we don't even get to play w pack bonds and all that, right?? And so, that ends Act 1, for lack of better term heheh
But Watanabe is finally in custody! That means he's finally gonna get his due!........right?

Edit (with mild spoilers but important CW info):
I should note that there won't be any new instances of rape after this point! Other tags (e.g. harassment, violence, mental trauma, etc) still apply in various forms, there will still be heavy themes, and there may be instances of harassment or attempts at violence, but no new instances of completed rape or dubious consent
Next steps

Chapter Summary

But he had prepared for this. He knew it was going to happen someday. He had hoped he would never have to carry out those plans...but he had prepared.

Chapter Notes

Part II: Overcome

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The trip to the hospital went about as well as one would imagine with a slightly drunk, incapacitated Bakugou. He almost fell asleep on the way there, but as soon as they reached their destination, he jerked awake with a renewed orneriness. It only got worse when the hospital staff was informed that he had difficulty walking and graciously provided a wheelchair, which Bakugou immediately rejected loudly and abrasively. It took Todoroki a lot of persuasion, and a little help from a stern Aizawa, to get Bakugou to sit in the chair and let himself be wheeled into the building.

Todoroki was not allowed to accompany Bakugou during whatever testing and treatment they were administering, despite the fact that he was a packmate. Apparently he needed to fill out some civil paperwork before the pack bond would be recognized in official situations, which he was pissed about despite acknowledging the necessity. He sat in the waiting room with Aizawa, bouncing his leg and glowering over his tented fingers, and he vowed to put in an official declaration of pack establishment in the morning...or at least review the paperwork required for such. He might need some signatures from their guardians given their ages, but maybe he could get his mom to sign on...or even Fuyumi…

Todoroki’s train of thought was interrupted when Bakugou’s mom burst through the doors of the waiting room with all of the power and gusto of a drill sergeant. Her husband was not far behind, his expression subtler but with a deadly undertone, and Todoroki watched as the pair approached the desk and then disappeared into the inner sanctum of the ward, where Todoroki was not allowed to enter. Todoroki knew he didn’t have even half the concern that Bakugou’s parents must feel...but he still felt a bit envious that they could see him while he was stuck in this miserable room.

It took a couple of hours. Todoroki wasn’t sure what they were doing, but he didn’t particularly care, as long as Bakugou wasn’t hurt. When the omega was finally wheeled back out, Todoroki perked up, but his packmate was nearly passed out in the wheelchair. It shouldn’t have been a surprise given the circumstances, but Todoroki felt himself deflating a bit anyway.

“He’s cleared to leave?” Aizawa asked Mitsuki, rising to his feet to join them.

“Yeah. There’s nothing critical...mostly just a lot of bruising and muscle strain. That bastard’s an animal,” she sneered, stroking Bakugou’s head protectively. “The doc prescribed some painkillers for the next few days.”
Aizawa nodded. “You’ve talked to the police?”

“Some. We’ve been asked to go to the station later, when the brat’s had some time to rest.” She sighed heavily.

Masaru placed a hand on his mate’s shoulder, murmuring, “We’ve already been talking to a lawyer, but there’s a lot to do. I’m not...sure how this works from here. But first, he has to rest. We all do.”

“I agree. Take some time for your family,” Aizawa responded. “I doubt Bakugou will want to stay away from class long, but it would be good for him to be home for a few days.”

“Thank you. For everything.” Masaru smiled weakly, looking a little relieved but mostly just tired. “I know you’ve been doing all you can. I wish...I wish we could have done more, but I don’t think we could have had anyone better to watch over him.” He paused to look at his family, clearly ready to return them to the comforts of home. It was uncharacteristic for the two to be so quiet, and the solemnness he felt was clear across his features. After a moment of thought, he collected himself and turned to Todoroki, who straightened at being addressed. “You’re Katsuki’s packmate?”

“Yes,” Todoroki responded. “I’m Todoroki Shouto. Thank you for accepting our bond.” He gave a small bow, both out of politeness and to make a good impression at such a sensitive time.

Masaru smiled, soft and warm. Todoroki wasn’t sure how Bakugou could be related to him. “And thank you for looking out for him. I doubt he would be easy to handle as a packmate even in good circumstances, and we’re endlessly grateful you’ve supported him through...all this. The last few days must have been difficult for you as well.” Masaru glanced back at Mitsuki, and she nodded, idly running her fingers through her sleeping son’s hair. “We discussed this earlier, and we would like to invite you to stay with us until Katsuki is ready to return to school. I know that would mean missing time from class, but it might help him to be close to his beta, and we want to do everything we can to...to make things easier for him.”

Todoroki’s eyes widened, and he looked at Aizawa as if to ask permission. Aizawa sighed before shrugging and waving his hand. “...Given the circumstances, I can excuse you from class.”

Todoroki gave a small smile before turning back to Bakugou’s parents. It was a bit sudden, and he’d never really spent much time at other people’s houses, but it wasn’t hard to find his answer. “I’d like that.”

With that, a few more words and plans were exchanged, and then the Bakugou family left the hospital with Todoroki in tow, confident for the first time in months that their own meager security would be enough for now. Mitsuki agreed to take Todoroki to pick up some clothes and supplies from the dorm in the morning, after classes started so as to be discreet, and they decided it would be best for Todoroki to sleep on the couch for tonight even though the boys had been sharing a futon (which Todoroki felt embarrassed about admitting, but Bakugou’s parents seemed fairly unperturbed). When Bakugou was awake enough, they could consider which sleeping arrangements he would prefer and be comfortable with, but it seemed better to err on the side of caution until a discussion could be had.

That first night was a little awkward, and Todoroki stayed awake on the couch long after the lights went out. Regardless, it was still much better than the last few nights of frustrated stress, and when he did drift off, he slept soundly.

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Specs knew something was going to go wrong. Watanabe had grown cocky after years of getting
away with almost anything, and Specs could feel the clock ticking to the moment when it would all crash down around them like a flimsy card castle built from luck and boldness. But that was partially his fault, right? He always enabled the alpha, always went with his stupid schemes despite knowing they were bad ideas. It was bound to go wrong eventually.

He just wasn’t expecting it to happen quite so soon.

Specs had come home, done some cooking of his own, and was reviewing some of the possible additional security measures they could take when he felt some of his internal marks move. Watanabe was leaving his apartment...which seemed odd. Then, separately but not long after, Bakugou’s mark left the apartment as well. Immediately, the hyperactive alarm bells in Specs’ mind started blaring, and he quickly moved to pull up the security feed to apartment’s hallway, a well-traveled digital path to the cautious beta.

There were police. Heroes too, from the looks of it. Specs felt his blood run cold and his hands shake.

But he had prepared for this. He knew it was going to happen someday. He discussed it with Watanabe more often than the alpha had patience for, so they should both know what to do. He had hoped he would never have to carry out those plans...but he had prepared.

Specs immediately went through to steps to remotely wipe Watanabe’s phone, hoping his partner remembered not to save anything to his SIM card. The last backup was conducted about a half hour ago, so all of the information should still be preserved. Any transactions or connected accounts to the videogame systems and other frivolities should already be dispensable, made under false names or forged identities with just barely enough funds to keep them going.

He was going to have to move, pack up shop and set up somewhere else, just as a precaution. That would take a bit longer, but he should have time. Watanabe should know not to try to contact him and not to give any information about his whereabouts, but they both agreed that if one was caught, the other was to vanish to remove any temptation.

Which wasn’t to say that Specs was going to jump ship altogether. He just knew to operate from afar. For now, that meant contacting people who could pull strings. Before the last few months, they had a number of potential lawyers on file, but the nature of Watanabe’s crimes meant that a different type of attorney might be needed. While burglary and theft might come into play later, especially if they’re able to prove the connection between the stolen documents at U.A. and Watanabe’s visit to Bakugou, the bigger issue for now would be defending against assault charges. Watanabe mentioned a fairly successful lawyer that was also member to the heat-hunt site he frequented, a clever alpha rights proponent that subtly wormed his ideology into his practice, and Specs made him write down the man’s pseudonym for exactly this reason.

Specs didn’t find any joy in navigating to that site, but he was at least grateful he set everything up so even Watanabe would be difficult to track on the dark net. He made a note to spend a few days reviewing the alpha’s trails and plugging any possible holes in their security. It was highly possible they were onto him, and if they weren’t, they might be soon.

Getting in contact with the lawyer would be harder. People don’t make themselves easily available on sites like this, and they give personal details even less often. Watanabe was a lot better at making connections and charming people into trusting him than Specs was, and Specs was glad the alpha at least managed to start that connection before he fucked everything up. It was only through Watanabe’s account that he was able to find and pursue the lawyer in question, and he made contact with nothing else to do except hope he’d get a quick response.
As almost an afterthought, he also contacted the League. They weren’t exactly connected with the group yet, having only completed one job with them on contract, but Watanabe did try to set themselves up to have a debt from the villains. He didn’t know what the League would be willing to do for him, if anything at all, but it would be better to exhaust all options.

He texted Dabi and got word back quickly, confirming his suspicions. They would be willing to help in some smaller capacity, but anything like warping or direct action at this point would be too risky for their own operations and position. Unless Specs and his partner were willing to join the League and actively help in future missions, it wouldn’t be worth the potential cost, at least at the moment. There were a few additional messages that were apparently from Toga given that they were 80% emojis, all gushing about how she’d miss the videos Watanabe was sending. The conversation concluded with Dabi agreeing that the videos were rather satisfying, reminding Specs that the League was always looking to expand membership, and promising to keep options open in the future if there were avenues where they could offer assistance.

After a couple of hours of working, most of the immediate precautions were taken care of. The evidence that might appear on Watanabe’s devices should be handled, the legal defense was contacted, and Specs’ position should be secured. Specs wouldn’t be able to contact Watanabe directly, but hopefully he would be able to hear updates through the lawyer, if he agreed. After this point, it was smaller details, maintenance, and reacting to events as they occurred.

And with the last piece of the plan set into motion, Specs leaned back in his chair and felt the silence of the room press against him, a weight that demanded he do more. He knew this was going to happen, and that knowledge had gnawed at him, prickled under his skin for so long. It did nothing to ease the stress of it actually happening.

Specs hated Watanabe sometimes. The alpha was incurably self-centered, arrogant far beyond what was reasonable, and he didn’t feel any sort of deep empathy for anyone else. Specs knew that Watanabe would risk everything, knew he would be the reason it would all go to shit, and knew that if (..when, when) things worked out, he would just wave it off like Specs was overreacting the entire time. Specs had known this for years, even before he ended up falling from grace and joining the alpha in a life of crime.

But to imagine what his life would be like without Watanabe, what his life was before...Specs couldn’t handle it. He couldn’t deal with that apathy, that emptiness. Specs couldn’t feel whole as a person without Watanabe demanding his attention anymore, and he wasn’t sure exactly when that change took place, but he’d known for years that he was half a man woefully adrift in the magnetic pull of another. There would be no one waiting for him if Watanabe never came home again.

Specs wasn’t a strong man. He was cautious, efficient, calculating...but he wasn’t strong. And as he waited at his computer for a response from the lawyer, shaking and counting the seconds as they ticked by, he carefully went over any and all steps that needed to take place. He knew this would happen, but he wasn’t prepared.

Chapter End Notes

Another short chapter >.< But the breaking up of things necessitates..
One beta gains and another loses
Chapter Summary

It was good to be home, to talk with his parents, but somehow it didn’t feel like it was supposed to, and he wanted to go back to something that kept him occupied, that felt normal.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Bakugou felt like he got hit by a car. He had hoped that some of the soreness would improve with some sleep, but that was wishful thinking—like a harsh workout, it got worse overnight instead. Half of it was a familiar muscle ache that came with exertion, particularly in his lower back and thighs, well-toned but completely inexperienced with the rhythmic motions of rolling and rutting demanded of them in the past few days. He didn’t really stretch during his heat, either, just slept when his alpha’s attention was elsewhere, and he kicked himself over his lack of foresight now that he could feel the resulting stiff joints and muscles.

Mixed in with that familiar ache were the pains of rough treatment. He could feel deep bruises all along his hips and ass, and the only way he could position himself without being acutely aware of them was lying on his stomach. His shoulders and neck didn’t fare much better, but at least he didn’t have to sit on those. On top of that, his stomach was upset, and he had a budding headache, and everything just sucked.

He wished he knew how normal this was. He definitely never saw his dad come out of a heat with anything more than a slight bit of stiffness, and it wasn’t like he’d seen many people walking around with collars of hickeyes. But despite that, multiple nurses at the hospital took one look at him before shaking their heads with an offhanded comment along the lines of “your mate’s one of those, huh?” like this was some sort of common occurrence. One well-meaning nurse, who was charged with doing a few tests and was otherwise unfamiliar with his situation, even gave him a number of tips for his next heat, from balms to try to simple between-mating yoga poses. He wasn’t sure how he felt about that.

For now, though, all he cared about was the fact that he felt like hell. He was back home, in his own bed, and safe, with his stalker in custody, and everything finally had a sense of closure...which left him nothing to focus on except for feeling like shit. He glowered at the wall, laying on his stomach, and tried to dredge up the will to attempt to move. He wanted to go downstairs, get breakfast, bicker comfortably with his parents—he hadn’t been home in a long time, and he probably wouldn’t admit it out loud, but being here made him realize how much he’d missed it.

He just wanted things to be normal. He had a feeling his obvious limp and discomfort with any regular position would ruin that pretty quick.

He was about to finally try getting up and seeing if his legs would support him when there was a knock on the door. He considered not answering, reluctant for anyone else to bear witness to even more of his vulnerability, but after a few seconds he heaved a sigh and responded with a begrudging, “Yeah?”
To his surprise, the voice responding wasn’t either of his parents. “Can I come in?” Todoroki asked, muffled by the door between them.

Bakugou couldn’t quite decide whether that was better or worse than his parents. He was appalled at the events of last night, even though it didn’t bother him much at the time given the relief and tipsy carelessness he was caught up in. Now, though, he couldn’t help but feel a burning shame at being found drunk, pantsless, and incapacitated, at being seen like that by so many people, and he knew he had been a pain in the ass at the hospital for no good reason. Todoroki was a safe zone, was someone he had come to trust with some deep issues naturally and unexpectedly, and he couldn’t help but feel insecure about how the beta’s impression of him might have changed after having to deal with him when he was such a complete fucking mess.

But the other option was to sit here and wallow about it, and that didn’t seem much better. After a long silence, he responded with a gruff, “Yeah.”

The door cracked open, and Todoroki peered inside. Bakugou was still lying on his stomach in his pajamas, and he crossed his arms in front of him so he could prop his chin up to look at the beta. He snorted when Todoroki gave him an awkward wave, moving into the room and shutting the door behind him.

“How are you feeling?” Todoroki asked, approaching the bed and sitting on the floor next to it. He reached out, then hesitated. “Is it okay if I scent you?”

Bakugou grunted. “Do whatever. And I feel like shit, obviously.”

Todoroki hummed sympathetically, being careful not to add pressure when he ran his wrist over the bruises on Bakugou’s neck. Bakugou let his head sit heavy on his arms and relaxed into the cover of beta pheromones, not even minding that Todoroki continued to gently scent as he started speaking. “I can get you some painkillers, though it would be best not to take those on an empty stomach. Do you think you could walk? I could help you downstairs, or I could bring some breakfast to you. A hot bath might help, too, but you should probably eat first.”

“You need to stop hanging out with Deku, his stupid mumbling is rubbing off on you.”

Todoroki cracked a small smile. “Maybe so.” He gently traced his thumb over the bruise on Bakugou’s cheek, his smile faltering slightly. “Nonetheless, what would you prefer? Your parents are out at the moment to work through some details about the investigation and legal steps, but your mother left some breakfast for you.”

With a sigh, Bakugou considered the options. “Breakfast up here. Walking later.”

Todoroki nodded. “I’ll be back, then.” He got up and left the room. After about ten minutes, he returned, carrying a plate of food and a bottle of water. Bakugou maneuvered himself into an upright position, wincing against the discomfort, and took what was offered to him, including two painkillers. “I’ll draw a bath in a while. The heat should help. Some stretching would be good, too.”

Bakugou grunted, pushing his food around his plate for a second. “...Thanks.” He took a few bites before breaking the silence again. “What day is it today?”

“Tuesday,” Todoroki responded.

“Why aren’t you in class?”

“Your parents invited me to stay with you,” Todoroki said. “I wanted to, too.”
Back to pushing his food around, Bakugou made a soft sound in response. He opened his mouth to speak, but instead just sighed and looked away. After another beat of silence, he murmured, “You didn’t have to.”

“I wanted to.”

Bakugou felt a mix of emotions that he wasn’t sure how to untangle, a jumble of gratefulness mashed against a revulsion at himself combined with an impulse to withdraw. He felt exposed and weak, and he hated it, but he also didn’t really want Todoroki to leave. In any case, he didn’t know how to express himself, didn’t even know where to start. He swallowed, feeling his chest constrict, and opted to speak on the most easily traced set of feelings. “I was. Kind of a dick to you last night. I think.” He cleared his throat. “...Sorry.”

There was a pause, and Bakugou glanced at his packmate. Todoroki looked surprised and a little confused, and he seemed to take a second to piece together his thoughts. “Bakugou, no one could blame you for that. Any of it.” He leaned back, seeming to consider something. “Honestly, I think I would have been more concerned if you weren’t being a dick. Something would’ve had to have been very wrong for that.”

Despite himself, Bakugou snorted. “Shut the fuck up, Half N’ Half.” In a weird way, it did help him feel a little better, and he could see the faintest of smirks on Todoroki’s lips. The quiet of the room felt a little bit more casual, and he finished eating his breakfast while Todoroki leaned against the side of his bed. He normally didn’t like how it felt for someone to dote on him, as if he couldn’t take care of himself, but at the moment it felt more like companionship, and that made it easier as Todoroki assisted him through the rest of the day.

The two of them ended up taking the rest of the week off, agreeing to return to school on Sunday so Bakugou could visit Recovery Girl and meet with Aizawa. A couple of times over the week, Todoroki returned to campus just long enough to pick up homework and notes so they wouldn’t get too far behind. There were more than a few concerned questions from classmates regarding Bakugou’s absence, but Todoroki simply responded vaguely with “health complications.” Not everyone was satisfied with that answer, but given the clear connection to Bakugou’s “rut,” it wasn’t difficult to deflect additional inquires for privacy reasons.

Bakugou appreciated the time at home, but after several days, he was more than ready to return to classes. It wasn’t in his nature to bum around, and something about the empty time seemed to amplify his instability. He felt both strangely fine, like the events didn’t really affect him as much as they should, and completely out of place, like every little thing had changed subtly to accommodate what had happened to him. It was good to be home, to talk with his parents, but somehow it didn’t feel like it was supposed to, and he wanted to go back to something that kept him occupied, that felt normal.

When Sunday finally arrived, Bakugou bundled himself in a scarf that hid everything except for the yellowed bruise on his face, and he and Todoroki returned to U.A. They parted ways near the entrance, Todoroki taking their stuff back to the dorms while Bakugou slipped into the main building to visit Recovery Girl. His soreness was almost entirely gone, but the bruises and bites still looked pretty nasty, and a quick peck would cover up the final signs of what happened.

Recovery Girl greeted him sweetly when he entered her office. She normally wasn’t on campus on the weekend, so the room was quiet and private, but she didn’t seem upset with being asked to come in outside of her normal hours. With a peck to his cheek, all of his fading bruises were gone, and he didn’t even feel excessively exhausted given how far healed they already were. Bakugou breathed a
sigh, some of the tension bleeding from him at the erasure of the marks.

Recovery Girl hummed in approval at his improved appearance. She turned back to her computer, looking over a few notes and tapping her cane against the floor. “The bastard has been taken into custody, correct?” she said after a moment.

Bakugou blinked in surprise at hearing anything close to vulgar language coming from the old woman, but recovered quickly. “Yeah.”

“Good,” she responded resolutely. “That man deserves to rot.” She clicked around a bit until she was staring at Bakugou’s prescription record. “This also means we can take you off suppressants, which is well overdue.”

Bakugou tensed, his stomach rolling nervously. “Right now?”

Recovery Girl shook her head. “Not right away. We’ll wait a few weeks so your mate’s scent has time to fade from your own. Two weeks should be enough time.”

Bakugou nodded, not quite able to quell the anxieties that boiled up at the notion of being exposed. There was no way he would be able to hide his omega status, not with Mina’s nose. Logically, he knew that was inevitable, but he still couldn’t shake his apprehension.

Recovery Girl seemed to pick up on this, at least in part. She offered Bakugou a soft smile. “I know it might seem sudden, but you’ll be okay. Being on suppressants for so long when you’ve just recently presented is not good for your system, and it won’t give you a chance to learn to control your own pheromones. It’ll be better to learn how to do it by yourself rather than rely on some pills.”

With a sigh, Bakugou nodded again. It was necessary. It was something that had to happen eventually. He would deal. “Yeah. I’ll manage.”

Recovery Girl kept her smile, but it seemed a little melancholy. “We’ll all be here to help you if you need it. Please don’t hesitate to talk to me if you experience any problems. I’ll refill your prescription to cover the next few weeks, and let’s make an appointment for a month from now to discuss how everything’s going.”

Bakugou grunted in affirmation. On the plus side, he wouldn’t have to take any more pills in a few weeks, at least… He sighed and stood, ready for the appointment to come to an end. “I’ll come back if I need to.”

“Okay, young Bakugou. Take care, and please remember we’re here for you,” Recovery Girl chirped sweetly, walking with him to the door. She waved at him as he walked down the hall, and he hesitantly offered a weak smile and a wave back.

The smile faded immediately as he turned to go to his next appointment. He wasn’t sure what Aizawa wanted to talk about, but he wasn’t exactly looking forward to the conversation. He had a feeling it was going to be personal, messy with feelings, and probably come with a reminder that he’s more than a little fucked up in ways he might not have realized yet.

When he got to the designated lounge, he knocked before peeking his head in. Aizawa was already there with two cups of tea set out, and he looked up from his phone to acknowledge Bakugou. The teacher waved his hand at a chair to indicate that Bakugou should sit.

“How are you doing?” Aizawa asked as Bakugou sank into the chair.

Bakugou grunted. “Been better, but it’s not like I’m dying.”
“I should hope not,” Aizawa responded. “I do hope your time at home was restful.” He looked Bakugou over as if trying to assess him.

“It was alright,” Bakugou mumbled. “But I want to get back to training.”

Aizawa hummed like he wasn’t at all surprised. He paused for another second before sighing and leaning forward. “I’ll admit that I’m not experienced enough with situations like this to feel comfortable gauging your state at the moment. As much as it pains me to say it, I’m going to have to rely on you to let me know when you need breaks or assistance. Can I trust you to do that?”

It felt like a trick question, even though Bakugou knew it probably wasn’t. He fiddled with the hem of his shirt and shrugged. “I guess. I feel fine.” Everything about the situation felt awkward, and Bakugou hated it.

Aizawa’s gaze bore into him for a few seconds longer before he nodded. “That’s good, but if anything changes, you can let anyone on staff know. We’ll be discreet about it. No one’s expecting all your problems to disappear just because the perpetrator’s in custody. You have an appointment with your therapist this week?”

“Two,” Bakugou responded, assuming the same weekly schedule would remain until he had a chance to talk with her.

“Good. I suspect you may need to take additional time off for court appearances and legal proceedings. If that comes up, notify me, but assume your absence is approved.” Bakugou nodded. He hadn’t thought much about the legal process coming up, and he wasn’t sure what to expect from it. Thinking about it made his gut clench uncomfortably, so he pushed that away to deal with later.

Aizawa paused, taking a sip of his tea. He seemed a little reluctant, but even so, he spoke when he put down the cup. “There have been other attacks against a few students at Shinketsu, though none of them were mated or targeted the way you were. Some heroes have noticed more gender-based crimes as well, both against omegas and alphas. Whether this upsurge is just another trend in crime after All Might’s retirement or whether there is something more insidious at play, the fact of the matter is that this type of violence is something we have to take seriously. For that reason, we will be conducting some of our second-gender practicals early.”

Bakugou shifted in his seat, growing uncomfortable with the conversation. It seemed weird that Aizawa would be telling him about this now, and he didn’t like the sound of whatever it entailed. Aizawa continued, “Normally, we don’t hold those until your third year so that students have some time to familiarize themselves and gain better control over their pheromones. That’s a luxury we don’t feel we can afford now. The reason why I’m bringing this up with you is because the practicals are hands-on and will require some second-gender interaction, which I am not yet sure you’ll be comfortable with, and it will necessitate exposing yourself as an omega to the class. What are your thoughts on this?”

“Shitty,” Bakugou grumbled. “But I have to come off my suppressants anyway so they’re already going to know.”

“And the interactions?” Aizawa asked, before adding, “At first, we’ll be grouped up according to second-gender, so you won’t be dealing with alphas right away. But over the next few months, you’ll be practicing disarming and subjugating other genders as well as overcoming attacks directed at you. I understand that this might be taxing for you given past trauma, and I want you to be both prepared for it and honest with us if or when it’s too much. We want to help you and your classmates, not just give you a series of panic attacks.”
Bakugou swallowed, trying to keep himself from fidgeting too much. “I...Yeah. I want to learn how to fight it. If it happens again. I don’t know if I’ll freak out or whatever, but I don’t want to not do it. I’m not going to bitch out on practice.”

Aizawa hummed thoughtfully. “We’ll play it by ear, then. I know this isn’t your strong suit by a long shot, but I cannot stress this enough: talk to us if something is amiss. Each group will be led by a teacher of the appropriate second-gender, so I will be overseeing the omegas in your class. If you need a break, we can work out a subtle way to communicate that.”

Bakugou lifted an eyebrow, lips curling into a teasing smirk. “Doesn’t that mean everyone’s going to know you’re an omega, too? I thought you were going to expel me if I told anyone.”

“Aizawa corrected him dryly. “And some things are more important.”

“Hm.” Bakugou took a few sips from his tea. It was already lukewarm. “I guess.”

Aizawa took a second to finish his own tea as well. “Do you have any concerns? I believe that’s all on my agenda for now. I mostly just wanted to see how you were doing.”

Bakugou shook his head. “Nothing right now.” He paused, opening his mouth hesitantly before finding the words. “I expected to feel worse. I dunno.”

“That’s okay,” Aizawa said. “There’s no script on how you should or shouldn’t feel. Don’t pressure yourself.”

Bakugou made a low sound, brushing his thumb over the rim of his cup. “Then I don’t really have anything right now.”

Aizawa nodded, reaching for Bakugou’s empty cup. “You know where to find me. Contact me any time if you need to. Otherwise, I’ll see you in class.”

With one last nod, Bakugou got up and left the room to return to the dorms.

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Later that evening, Bakugou grabbed his bag of clothes out of Todoroki’s room and trudged back to his own, planning on dropping it off and maybe doing his bathroom routine early so he wouldn’t have to leave Todoroki’s again for the night. He wasn’t even sure if anyone had caught on that they were back yet, since so far no one had bothered him, and the hallway was quiet and empty for a change.

He reached his door and dug through his bag for the key. The silence in the hall settled over him as he stood, key in hand, staring at the keyhole. After a moment, he brought the key up to the lock, but for some reason, his hands were shaking. The key clinked around the opening, but he couldn’t quite bring himself to push it in.

Of course there wouldn’t be anyone in his room. There was no reason for there to be. Touma was in prison. It was fine. There was nothing to freak out about. He just had to open the door. It was fine.

A small voice echoed in his head, like a record on repeat. Morning, sweetheart.

Bakugou turned abruptly and walked back the way he came, figuring he might as well keep some clothes in Todoroki’s room anyway.
Getting back into the swing of things!
Sorry for the longer wait between updates guys--I had to get some schoolwork done and had to move out of my apartment, so it's been a busy few weeks :x hopefully updates will be more regular again, but things are still a little odd, so I can't promise that! In any case, thank you for being patient w me as we keep this story moving forward <3
Ease back into the normal cadence

Chapter Summary

As the days went by, and more importantly, with the steady foundation around him, Bakugou slowly began to acclimate back.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Bakugou returned to Todoroki’s room with his bag still in hand and a sheen of cold sweat on his brow, Todoroki didn’t call him out. The beta looked a little surprised, his eyes darting from the bag to Bakugou’s face, but he kept any direct comments to himself. Bakugou wasn’t sure whether Todoroki’s tact was because he was just naturally reserved or because he had his own set of skeletons in the closet and could relate, but in moments like this, Bakugou appreciated it.

“I might have some room in one of my drawers, if you want to keep some clothes here. Could be easier,” Todoroki said offhandedly, looking away to make it seem casual. “Those clothes are clean, right? Your mother washed them before we left?”

Bakugou grunted in affirmation, pacing and fiddling with the bag’s strap. He knew that it wouldn’t be a permanent solution, but he felt a bit more at ease nonetheless, and it helped him focus on deepening his breathing.

Even when he calmed down, though, he felt a sort of creeping instability under his skin, like one errant thought could send him over the edge. It took him a few hours to admit to Todoroki the reason for his panic attack, and he hated how much relief he felt when the beta offered to join him during his morning and evening routines until he felt safe to do it alone again. When they settled in to sleep, he found himself laying awake, testing scenarios in his head to try to guess what else might set him off, what else might be a trigger point. It was a pointless activity, and the most he managed to do was keep himself awake much longer than was necessary.

That, of course, only made dealing with the following day harder. Every single person seemed to want to get in his face and his business with “welcome back”s and “I hope you’re feeling better!”s and “It was so quiet without you!”s, which was not something he wanted to deal with in a normal situation, let alone after what had happened. It was made worse by some of his more affectionate classmates who got too close or touched him unexpectedly, and on more than one occasion he barely caught himself from jumping or jerking away. He accidentally almost hit Kaminari, snarling a, “Will you stop fucking touching me?” and stomping away before he could catch anyone’s reactions.

Todoroki, once again, turned out to be a subtle savior. By the time he calmed down and returned after that incident, Todoroki had moved in to explain to his friends that, due to the medical issues, he was “sensitive to touch” and experiencing “sensory overload,” which was a half-truth that Bakugou probably wouldn’t have come up with himself. His idiot friends bought it wholesale, though a few other people like Yaoyorozu and Deku seemed a little perplexed.

He knew Todoroki had simply made it sound like it was a medical problem, which was not entirely untrue, but it still felt too transparent. It was hard not to feel a buzzing paranoia that anyone could look at him or put together the pieces and just know.
Not that everyone on staff didn’t already know. Bakugou once again thanked whatever deities that Aizawa was his homeroom teacher because if he was stuck with someone like Present Mic or All Might, he would explode. While Aizawa was a little more cautious with him in coursework, especially the first few days, overall he was very discreet and treated Bakugou more or less the same. All Might, on the other hand, clearly had no clue how to handle the situation and ended up approaching him like a glass figurine that was on the verge of shattering, and he hated that. Nothing made him feel more self-conscious and aware of his mountain of issues like being treated like a child, like he was fragile, and it made everything feel out of place after those types of interactions. After half a week, it got so unbearable that he gave in and actually talked to Aizawa about it, asking his professor to confront his more emotionally expressive colleagues and give them some tips on how to not treat Bakugou like a ticking time bomb.

His classes were made up of his teachers figuring out how to handle him and students who were completely unaware that anything beyond a health issue had happened, and it drove Bakugou up a wall. More than panic, he found himself feeling angry most of the time, little things setting him off far beyond what was necessary. His normal temper, the rage he was familiar with, felt out of his control and sometimes startled even him, and innocuous things like breaking the lead of his pencil made him feel a rush of extreme destructive impulse that he could barely contain. He found himself shouting at teachers, shouting at classmates, even shouting at Todoroki a few times, always over stupid shit, but each time he was nearly blind with hot fury and couldn’t seem to ground it. Even he could tell it was excessive, and he felt embarrassed by how out of control he felt, guilty at times when he later reflected and realized just how undeserved the outbursts had been.

His therapist told him that was normal. She said that it wasn’t unusual for people to feel hair-trigger anger rather than sadness or fear when they’ve had traumatic experiences like his, that he wasn’t just the massive asshole he felt he was. Bakugou had never appreciated having therapy appointments quite as much as he did that week because he just couldn’t make sense of himself—he didn’t understand his emotions or why he got slammed with panic attacks when he was alone but was overcome by impulsive rage around others. It wasn’t like this was his first time being kidnapped or assaulted, after all, and he expected it to be more predictable, the same sort of static anxiety as before, but the mood swings and periods of feeling fine or apathetic just felt wrong. It didn’t feel like what he should be feeling, how he should be reacting, and he felt a weary relief at being told that it was, in fact, normal, even if it still sucked.

But just because it was normal didn’t mean it was necessarily acceptable to be blowing up at his friends and teachers, so his therapist once again reworked his treatment plan and gave him some exercises to work on. His issues with anger, with panic from touch, and his newly identified triggers were laid out and potential solutions proposed, with his therapist expressing no small amount of approval over his pack bond and support network. The appointments were much needed, but they were also emotionally charged, raw, and draining, and although he had grown to appreciate them, he left them feeling exhausted.

After the first day back, he didn’t really talk to anyone for the first half of that week, outside of the necessary interactions in class and the occasional incidental blow-up. He could tell some of his friends were a little hurt by his avoidance, but he felt unstable. Half of the time there was too much going on in his head, and the other half he felt too tired, too unsteady. He ended up spending almost all of his time in Todoroki’s room, trying to concentrate on his homework or flopped on the futon to seethe, wallow, or complain. Todoroki was almost endlessly patient, although he did snap back now and then when Bakugou was being excessively irritable or aggressive for no real reason, but Bakugou could even appreciate that when it was warranted. Moreso than ever, Bakugou found he could relax the most when he was in Todoroki’s space.

Todoroki had apparently started talking to the therapist at the recommendation of Aizawa as well.
The exact reasoning was, “It’s available and it can’t hurt. Do it while it’s free,” which was enough for Todoroki. They spent one night staying up and talking together in hushed tones about it, huddled a little closer than necessary in the dim golden glow of the floor lamp. Todoroki confessed that Aizawa thought the stress from being a main pillar of support would be worth talking to someone about, which Bakugou felt bad about but could admit was fair. But even beyond that, the teacher didn’t know much about the details of Todoroki’s home life, and Todoroki admitted in whispered tones that it was probably for the best that he talk to someone about it instead of just looking up related topics online. When the conversation ended and they settled for sleep, Bakugou felt a guilty relief at no longer feeling like the only guy in class who was broken enough to be psychoanalyzed.

They were scenting fairly frequently, with Bakugou engaging a little more often on his own because his beta’s pheromones helped him calm down. Todoroki had taken to asking every time before he initiated any touch, which was both kind of nice and incredibly annoying. After a day or two of this, Bakugou finally snapped, “For fuck’s sake, if I can see you coming, you don’t have to ask every goddamn time,” resulting in a discussion of ways for Bakugou to communicate when he doesn’t want to be touched. Bakugou found it to be obnoxious, but a few times later when Bakugou really didn’t want to be approached, the little ‘stop’ hand gesture that Todoroki invented came in handy, and he begrudgingly appreciated it.

As the days went by, and more importantly, with the steady foundation around him, Bakugou slowly began to acclimate back. In the latter half of the week, he even tried to spend more time in the common areas to help his friends study, glaring at anyone who got too close and trying to keep his mood and grasp of the present steady.

It only worked for a short while most of the time, but during the times he could ease back into the normal cadence of friendship, it was nice.

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“I’ve been in touch with Mr. Watanabe and reviewed the information provided so far, and I believe we can take on his case.” The lawyer’s voice came through Specs’ headphones, professional yet smooth. He sounded effortlessly confident, and Specs felt both reassured and intimidated. It was exceedingly rare for Specs to conduct business with anyone outside of familiar connections, usually keeping with a handful of known brokers...and beyond business, he almost never talked to anyone at all, with the exception of Watanabe. He was too abrasive, too curt, and in times like these, too easily cowed by those more charismatic than himself. He was grateful that at least the lawyer on the other end of the call couldn’t seem him sweat.

Kaetsu Gou was an attorney with an impressive reputation and a tendency to inspire strong opinions about himself, both good and bad. His name was gaining a lot of traction, and after Specs learned more about him, he was actually surprised the lawyer bothered with their case. Specs could only assume it had something to do with Watanabe’s previous online interactions with the man...and perhaps their shared illicit interests. Unknown to the public, Kaetsu was on the same heat hunt forums as Watanabe and had the same set of beliefs about the roles of second-gender in society. Unlike Watanabe, however, he kept his influence in the mainstream, subtly undermining omega rights in law and upper society whenever it was convenient.

Specs figured the alpha had ulterior motives aside from helping out Watanabe with his case. Specs also figured that it wasn’t any of his business, as long as it meant better odds for his packmate.

“Oh, of course,” Kaetsu’s charming voice hummed over the line, “you’ll be playing a background role in this. Any correspondence between us will be off the books, and I can’t have you directly interfering at any point, lest it undermine the whole operation. That’s clear, yes?”
“Yes,” Specs croaked in response. He was already expecting as much, and he was used to operating in the background anyway. The only downside was that he wouldn’t get a chance to speak to Watanabe.

“Good. Your friend got himself into quite the bind. If kidnap and rape weren’t enough, there’s the additional criminal investigation of multiple accounts of burglary being conducted. I’ll do what I can, and I can do a lot, but I’m not a miracle worker. That being said, there are ways you can help me, and I fully expect your cooperation if you want this to work out.” Kaetsu paused, letting that information sink in. His next words were sharper, more direct. “In other words, do what I tell you, when I tell you, understand? We don’t have time to play games, and I can’t afford to babysit you.”

Specs felt a stab of irritation at that, but he didn’t voice it. Instead, he responded with a simple, “I understand.”

“Good.” There was a sound of paper rustling, and Specs tapped his pen against the desk as he waited for Kaetsu to speak again, ready to jot down notes. “Here's the basics of what you need to know. It is unlikely that we’ll be able to completely avoid any prison sentence at this point, but we can greatly reduce it. Thus, the first step is to take advantage of some loopholes and get the charges against him changed. This, of course, will not involve you.

“The second step will be to attack the victim’s credibility. This is where you can start to be useful. We will be making arguments in court, but a reputation is a fickle thing.” There was another pause, and Specs suspected it was for dramatic effect. “You have videos and pictures, yes?”

“Yeah,” Specs responded. “You'll want them?”

“Yes, but as long as you’re laying low, I can’t receive them from you directly. It was smart of you to wipe Mr. Watanabe’s phone, but that means that those files are not currently among the evidence we have available. I would like you to change that, but discreetly.”

Specs thought for a few seconds before speaking tentatively. “Well, if I uploaded them, it would be obvious that someone else was involved, since it would be after the arrest...But I could set up a private drive somewhere, alter a few details, and make it look like they were put there by Watanabe beforehand...”

Kaetsu hummed, pleased. “That sounds doable. Mr. Watanabe can ‘tell’ me where to find the files, then. That will work.”

Specs nodded, even though Kaetsu couldn’t see him. “Okay. I’ll set that up later tonight, I guess.”

“Good. That leads us to our third step: try to pressure the victim into dropping charges. This part is entirely your domain, as it cannot, under any circumstances, be traced back to me. It should be fairly simple, though, if you already have access to the heat hunt forums. All you need to do is ‘hack’ into that drive you set up, take the files, spread them around a bit, and let the community know Mr. Watanabe is being ‘wrongfully accused.’ They should help take care of the rest.”

Specs felt a little uneasy at that. He didn’t really like the ideology of that forum, and he wasn’t keen on contributing to it...but desperate times call for desperate measures. If that was what was needed, then was what he would do. “Okay.”

“Good,” Kaetsu purred distractedly, rustling his papers as he considered any additional points. “We might have a shot at cutting down your packmate’s sentence by quite a bit. There’s still the matter of the burglary, but they have to be able to prove his guilt, which is going to be difficult for them to do without footage or any information about the accomplice. If we play our cards right, this might even
make quite an interesting splash.”

Specs hummed in response, not quite sure what the alpha meant by the last bit and aware that he wouldn’t want to know the answer if he asked. He wasn’t excited about the things he had to do…but he would do it. “That sounds good. I’ll lay low, and you can contact me if you need to.”

“Excellent. It was good talking to you, Mr. ‘Specs,’ and I’ll keep my eye out for the results of your work.”

“Likewise. I’ll get started tonight.”

“I look forward to it.”

Chapter End Notes

Set up chapters are the hardest chapters...these last few have been a little more difficult to write. But, they're necessary nonetheless..
Therapy is good and important for anyone who feels they might need it *thumbs up*

Edit:
This seems to be a point of concern, so I wanna address it: I will add CWs to the start of the chapters featuring the video uploads in future chapters, and (mild spoilers but for those concerned) I'm planning on making it less of a huge blow-up or giant public humiliation and more of an undercurrent in certain circles, so it'll still be a huge stressor but not Ruin All Facets of Life material.
I'm here to deliver heavy material and mess w some serious problems in real life, but this isn't a mind/spirit break fic, and I'm not here to kill any sparks permanently. It'll be hard for him, but Bakugou's not alone in this
Pack or not

Chapter Summary

Todoroki made another soft sound of acknowledgment before freezing. “Wait, what?”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The problem with the weekend was that there was no set schedule and, therefore, no way of predicting who would show up where or when. While U.A.’s campus was large, and even the 1-A dorm building in Heights Alliance was big enough that it was fairly easy to avoid people when necessary, certain places were unavoidable hotspots for activity. The common areas usually had at least a few people mulling about, and on the rare occasion there wasn’t, it wasn’t long before someone would inevitably pass through.

This was how Bakugou found himself seething in the kitchen, making breakfasts of veggie omelettes, grilled tomatoes, and toast for himself, Todoroki, and, apparently, Deku. It was fairly early on Sunday morning, and the coast should have been clear, but the nerd had materialized out of nowhere before Bakugou had even finished cutting the vegetables. And worse, before Bakugou could tell him to fuck off and die, the nerd had engaged Todoroki in conversation. Now the two were chatting like they hadn’t talked in days.

“How have you had breakfast yet, Midoriya?” Todoroki had asked.

“No, not yet! I was about to grab some,” Midoriya had responded. Then Todoroki had looked at Bakugou with the most obvious intent, a glance of ‘while you’re at it…’, and Bakugou narrowed his eyes.

“Nerd can make his own damn food,” he barked, pointedly grabbing the next pepper to chop.

“I can pay a little extra for this round of groceries,” Todoroki suggested, as if that was the problem.

Deku’s eyes grew wider as he caught on, and he nervously waved his hands as he looked between Todoroki and Bakugou. “Um, you don’t need to cook for me, Kacchan! I wasn’t trying to suggest—! Don’t worry, I don’t want to bother you, I know you already cook for Todoroki and that’s a lot, especially because you’re such a good cook, and I was just going to get some fruit and maybe an energy bar, or a protein shake, or maybe some oatmeal? I haven’t really decided yet—”

“For fuck’s sake, Deku, shut up,” Bakugou finally snapped. He turned to Todoroki, waving the knife in his hand for emphasis. “I am not playing personal chef for any asshole that wanders their way downstairs, so if anyone else comes, you can tell them to fuck off immediately. Got it?” With that, he grabbed a few more vegetables and eggs, and started prepping for three portions instead of two, grumbling under his breath.

Todoroki rolled his eyes but still gave a small smile in thanks before turning back to their conversation. Deku looked a little awestruck, glancing at Bakugou in what he probably thought was a discrete way as the two of them talked. It was mostly about stupid shit—updates on Round Face and Glasses and other members of the class, discussing hero news and analysis, and tidbits from
coursework that they were interested in. Bakugou pretended not to listen to the entire conversation, even though he occasionally gave it away on accident by grunting in agreement to some points.

When Bakugou was done with the food, he dumped it onto three plates, setting two in front of the others before sitting across the table with his own. Todoroki thanked him, and Deku looked like someone handed him a rare piece of hero merch, eyes wide and shining. He chirped out a giddy, “Thanks, Kacchan!” before carefully beginning to eat, like each bite needed to be carefully savored. Bakugou clicked his tongue and ignored him.

“Waah, Kacchan, it’s so good!” Deku gushed. He put his hand on his cheek for emphasis, turning to Todoroki. “You’re so lucky you get to eat Kacchan’s cooking every day!”

Todoroki smiled and nodded. “I’ll admit it’s better than the energy bars.”

“Damn straight,” Bakugou grumbled.

“Sometimes it’s a bit too spicy, though.”

“Don’t blame me for your weak constitution, bastard.”

Deku looked between them thoughtfully. “You two really do get along, huh?” Bakugou shot him a glare, and Deku quickly waved his hands to placate. “Not to say anything bad about that! It’s just...it was so strange when you suddenly formed a pack. No one expected it, but it makes sense now when I think about it.”

Todoroki made a contemplative noise. “I’m sure it did seem sudden. But it’s worked out for us so far.”

Deku nodded. “It seems like a good balance. And it’s nice that you could help Kacchan out when he needed it—not that he did! Of course! Just, a bonus!” he added hastily, remembering that Bakugou was, in fact, still listening. Bakugou rolled his eyes and continued eating.

“Yeah. I’m glad we did it,” Todoroki said softly. Deku smiled warmly at him, and the two shared a sort of genuine moment of goodwill between friends. Bakugou tried not to gag on his food.

“Honestly, I never thought much about packs...or anything really, as far as bonds go, since I didn’t grow up around any,” Deku picked back up, eating while chatting away. Bakugou was already almost done with his food, and he was sure that if the other two would shut up long enough to eat, they probably would be too. “You don’t hear much about packs in particular...But after seeing yours, I think it might be something I’d like to try someday. It seems really nice just to have someone in your corner like that.”

Deku was basically thinking out loud, looking off wistfully, but something about the nerd’s ramblings had Todoroki leaning in just slightly. Bakugou glanced at him, catching the strange sparkle that seemed to light in the beta’s eyes, and he was immediately struck with a wave of suspicion. That suspicion was all but confirmed when Todoroki looked back at him with an expression not unlike a child preparing to beg their parents for a brand new toy or puppy from a pet store.

Bakugou’s eyes darted from Todoroki to Deku, then he shook his head almost violently before shoveling the rest of his food in his mouth. He stood as soon as his plate was clear, marching off to the kitchen to begin cleaning up while Todoroki subtly pouted. Deku blinked, taken aback at Bakugou’s sudden exodus, but after a second he picked back up in his musings.

Bakugou couldn’t hear any more of their conversation over the sounds of the running sink and the
clang of pans he was aggressively washing, and for that, he was glad.

“I’m just suggesting you think about it. An alpha in the pack could help discourage unwanted attention.”

“Fuck no, no alphas!”

“Just listen—”

“We are not inviting him in!”

As soon as the door shut to Todoroki’s room after the pair extracted themselves from conversation with Deku, the argument started. Todoroki barely opened his mouth before Bakugou cut in with a loud, “No. Hell no.” Undeterred, Todoroki pressed on.

“Midoriya is as relaxed as alphas come. He would be respectful,” Todoroki insisted, brow set low in irritation at Bakugou’s complete refusal to even try to listen. “You might actually like a bigger pack and more people aside from me to talk to.”

Bakugou bristled, snarling with a sudden flash of rage. “Look, I know you just latched on to me because of my fucked-up problems, and it’s pretty goddamn obvious you’d rather be buddy-buddy with Deku. Why don’t you just fucking make a pack with him if you want it so bad?” He yanked up his bag and started to grab his notebooks and supplies, shoving them into it to leave. “My shit’s done, you don’t have to deal with my baggage anymore.”

Eyes flashing with anger, Todoroki strode forward and grabbed the other side of the bag, halting Bakugou’s progress. He held fast when Bakugou tried to yank it away, hissing, “You think that’s all I’m doing this for? Some sort of—of complex?”

“Aren’t you?” Bakugou spat back. “We weren’t friends before this, Half N’ Half, what else would it be?”

“I wasn’t friends with Midoriya before he knew about my past, either,” Todoroki retorted, ice forming where his hand met the bag. “You think he just hangs around because he pities me? Do you really think so little of the people around you? Just because a relationship starts out of hardship doesn’t mean it’s defined by it forever.” Todoroki locked eyes with Bakugou, a little bit of hurt crossing his features. “I’m not going to leave you. I...I would like a bigger pack, but if the bond was that flimsy, it would defeat the point. You’re the one I’m devoted to.”

They kept eye contacts for a few long, tense seconds, and Bakugou was the first to break it. With a huffed sigh, he let go of the bag, letting Todoroki take it from him and set it back down. “How the fuck do you say shit like that with a straight face?” Bakugou grumbled. Todoroki only snorted in response, but it was enough for some of the tension to bled from the room.

After a few moments of awkward silence, Bakugou gave a frustrated growl and plopped onto the futon. He picked at the edge of a blanket while he grumbled, “...I don’t want any alphas. We’re fine. It’s not like we need more people.”

Todoroki sighed and settled next to him, sitting cross-legged over the bedding. “We don’t have to rush anything. I just...thought it’d be nice.” He paused, stretching his legs out and leaning back on his arms. “I’d like a big pack someday. I mean, you know how my family was. How I grew up. I told you how my sister tried to make a pack with us. It didn’t work because of my father, but...it felt like the only real thing close to what a family should feel like. The idea of choosing people who care,
who would be loyal and respectful and compassionate...I can’t help but want it.”

Bakugou remained silent, sulking slightly as he listened to Todoroki talk. His shoulders remained tense and his brow furrowed, but he didn’t interrupt, and he seemed to mull over the things his packmate was saying. He kept his gaze on his hand as he idly picked at the bedding.

“I...I do think Midoriya will be a great alpha. I respect him. I always have. But I’m not going to do anything unless you agree to it. I’d just...appreciate it if thought about it, at least.”

Bakugou grunted in response. He stayed silent for a few minutes longer, before mumbling, “I just...It’s. A lot, okay? I know Deku, and he...he’s just...” Bakugou huffed, frustrated. “I don’t want him to fucking know about it, you know? He’s just like that. I can’t stand thinking about it.”

Todoroki hummed. “I know you have a complicated relationship.”

“Yeah,” Bakugou murmured. “And I just, don’t want an alpha. Not yet. It’s...maybe I could handle it, but...I don’t think...I’m not ready to share my heat again yet, just. Give me a while, okay?”

Todoroki made another soft sound of acknowledgment before freezing. “Wait, what?”

Bakugou glanced over at him, hesitant. “Don’t make me repeat that bullshit—”

“No, I mean, do you...what do you mean ‘share your heat again?’”

Bakugou blinked, shrinking back a bit out of self-consciousness at Todoroki’s intensity. “...Isn’t that...part of it? With alphas and omegas...?”

Todoroki gaped for a second before responding. “No! No, Bakugou, I’m not trying to—to pimp you! You don’t have to—to never have to share your heat. With anyone! Ever! Pack or not!”

Bakugou shrunk back further, a flush creeping up his neck and ears. “I just...I dunno, I just thought —“ He cut off with a frustrated noise, putting his face in his arms to hide his embarrassment.

Catching on to his packmate’s distress, Todoroki dialed back a bit, though it was difficult with the targetless indignation he felt over Bakugou being made to feel that way in the first place. He took in a deep breath and tried to speak calmly. “Pack bonds can be between close friends and family. It never has to include sex at all, even if there’s a mix of alphas and omegas.” He paused, swallowed, before continuing. “Did you...did you really think I was trying to set you up with Midoriya, to...”

“I don’t know!” Bakugou bellowed, cutting Todoroki off. “I don’t know anything about this shit! You don’t have to fucking rub it in, alright? Everything about becoming an omega so far has revolved around being groomed by a psychopath, so cut me some fucking slack for not always being the expert on what’s normal or not.” Bakugou hid his face further, shoulders hunched from the moment of vulnerability.

Todoroki took a deep breath and shifted a little towards his packmate. He spoke gently. “Yeah. I know. I’m sorry, that was...I was taken off-guard.” He reached out. “Is it okay if I touch you?” Bakugou nodded, so Todoroki began to gently rub his back. “It’s understandable. That was a misstep on my part.”

Bakugou surfaced, glancing at Todoroki with a hint of irritation. “Quit babying me, bastard.”

Despite himself, Todoroki cracked a small smile. “Sorry. Won’t happen again.” He continued to rub Bakugou’s back, letting his scent sink into the fabric. “But still. We’ll go at your pace. I shouldn’t’ve pressured you.”
Bakugou huffed, rolling his shoulders some and moving into a more comfortable sulking position. “You have your own needs too, idiot. It’s fine to talk about them.”

“Yeah, but that can wait. We have a lot of time to expand the pack, so there’s no rush.”

They sat in silence for a few minutes, with Bakugou tilting his head so Todoroki could scent him properly. Todoroki was about to suggest dropping the whole conversation for the time being when Bakugou spoke up. “Round Face.”

“Uh...what?”

“Uraraka,” Bakugou said, leveling a look at Todoroki like everything should be made clearer.

“I’m sorry, I don’t follow—”

“I want another omega,” Bakugou spat, like it should be obvious. “Use your fucking brain for a change: you want another packmate, and I don’t want any alphas. It’s got to be another omega, right?”

“I...guess?” Todoroki blinked at Bakugou’s sudden conviction. “I mean, like I said, we don’t have to including anyone else right now, if you don’t want to—”

Bakugou huffed. “Listen for a goddamn second. Uraraka knows shit, right? She knows omega stuff. And I don’t. So she’ll be able to help.”

Todoroki slowly nodded. “That is true. But...are you sure? It’s not too sudden?”

“As long as it doesn’t have to get weird, then it’s fine,” Bakugou grunted. He shifted and looked away. “And it’d be nice to have someone to talk to about what to expect. Or whatever.”

With a warm hum, Todoroki responded, “That makes sense. We can talk to her later to ask if she would like to join.”

Bakugou nodded, appeased. He settled back again, closing his eyes and letting Todoroki continued to scent him until they both settled into a lazy haze of calm pheromones.

Chapter End Notes

Back into more of the fun stuff. This chapter was both planned out in advance yet a little hard to get right...hoping it’ll come across as intended :o
I think Uraraka joining the pack might seem surprising to some ppl giving the general shipping atmosphere in the fandom at large, but it's going to be a platonic addition (probably idk im p lax bout stuff tbh), and also one that's had its foundation laid for quite a few chapters...but if you're not down with it normally, just give it a shot for now. The pack's not done growing just yet
He said he wanted to do this, and that was the linchpin that kept him from fretting and wavering out loud, even though his body language gave it away to Todoroki.

“Are you really sure about this?” Todoroki asked for probably the fourth time. They were sitting at a table in the central courtyard, bundled lightly against the chill autumn air, and waiting for the third member of the rendezvous to arrive. Todoroki had texted Uraraka to meet them there after class, assuming that no one would notice them or bother venturing into the chill to accidentally intrude.

“I said I was, didn’t I?” Bakugou snapped back. His arms were crossed tight across his chest, and his leg was bouncing, tense and agitated. Truth be told, despite his conviction when the idea first struck him last night, he wasn’t at all sure. There was a lot on the line, and he couldn’t help his mind from kicking into overdrive, testing each scenario and every anxiety he had. His logical and emotional sides clashed continuously, swinging between conviction and doubt. One minute he would be absolutely convinced that this was the best possible step forward, a compromise between him and Todoroki, a way to give back after being nothing but a needy mess since the pack bond was formed, a standard for normalcy...and the next minute he would be paralyzed by the notion of telling someone, of what sort of terrible reactions she might have once she knew.

But he wasn’t about to back down or pussy out, even if he felt nauseous as they waited. He said he wanted to do this, and that was the linchpin that kept him from fretting and wavering out loud, even though his body language gave it away to Todoroki. Besides, his therapist told him to approach these subjects before, didn’t she? To try to open up rather than suppress? And he’d have to reveal to the class that he was an omega anyway. This was just a baby step, a trial run of sorts.

He physically jumped when Uraraka greeted them with a cheerful, “Hello, Todoroki! Bakugou!” She glanced at him curiously, and he just looked away with a disgruntled tch.

“Hello, Uraraka,” Todoroki responded with a small smile, ignoring Bakugou’s prickliness. He gestured across from them to indicate for her to sit. “Doing well?”

“Yes, thank you!” she replied, smile warm despite the increased pinkness in her cheeks from the cold. She took a seat, leaning forward out of curiosity. “You said you wanted to talk to me about something?”

“That’s right. Although, I suppose it’s a bit more of a proposal.” Todoroki glanced at Bakugou one more time as a last confirmation. Bakugou, in response, rolled his eyes with an exasperated sigh and jerked his head in a way that clearly said ‘get the fuck on with it.’ Todoroki looked him over before turning back to Uraraka. “We would like to invite you to our pack.”

Uraraka’s eyes got almost comically wide, and she looked between Todoroki and Bakugou for a second, sputtering. When she did respond, it was with a flustered “Me? Why? I mean, I would’ve thought...not Kirishima or Deku or...?”
“We want to avoid including an alpha packmate for now,” Todoroki responded easily, expecting something like that. He and Bakugou spent a little time discussing how they wanted the proposal to go, what sort of information they would be willing to reveal, and how to outline their intentions without giving sensitive details out too early (which mostly meant Todoroki offering ideas and Bakugou either grunting in affirmation or loudly refusing). “You seem reliable and knowledgeable about topics pertaining to second-gender in society, and we think that would be helpful.”

Uraraka’s shock was slowly being replaced with a sort of curious confusion, and she glanced between Todoroki and Bakugou. “I...guess that’s true? But I still don’t think I understand—not that I’m not flattered! I appreciate the invitation! But...” Her expression melted into one of consideration, brows furrowed.

“You’re not too stupid, and you’re sometimes not a pushover,” Bakugou grunted, tense and impatient. “What’s hard to understand?” Both Todoroki and Uraraka shot him unimpressed looks.

“A lot of things!” Uraraka huffed, attempting to glare at Bakugou. It only partially worked, given that the indignation made her cheeks puff out in a decidedly non-threatening way. “I mean, Todoroki and I are friends, but there’s a lot of people you get along with better in the class, Bakugou...”

Bakugou shrugged. “Doesn’t mean I want them rubbing their pheromones all over me. You can be annoying as fuck but you’re not worse than the rest of them, so it’s not like that matters.”

Somehow, that did not win Uraraka over, and her face scrunched further in irritation. “That doesn’t make sense! Why would you want me in the pack if you were just...tolerating me? And I don’t really see how...what was it? Being ‘knowledgeable about second-gender’ or something? I don’t see how that matters?”

Todoroki attempted to cut in to do some damage control, but he faltered a bit as he tried to find a way to explain the situation off-script without revealing too much. “That...does matter, but I think we need to discuss that later...it’s a bit of a complicated situation.” Bakugou tapped his fingers on the table.

Uraraka looked between the two of them, a shadow of suspicion crossing her features and a waft of warning bleeding into her scent. “...Why don’t you want an alpha?” She settled her gaze on Bakugou, side-eyeing him sharply.

“Ah, well, that’s another complicated thing...”

“If you just want an omega to round out your pack, then count me out,” Uraraka said tersely. “I’m not gonna just be some...accessory for Mr. Top Alpha, thank you. Ask Kaminari.”

“Ha?” Bakugou sat up straighter, sneering. “First off, fuck you! What makes you even think I’d give half a shit about that? Secondly, I’m not—I’m not fucking Mr. Top Alpha—“

“You posture more than anyone in the class!” Uraraka interrupted, heated. “You’re so obvious, Bakugou! You don’t even like me, why should I think this isn’t just another way to one-up Deku somehow?”

“Okay, you know what, fuck you, I don’t need this shit. Fuck joining, you can go rot,” Bakugou snapped, moving to stand.

Todoroki hastily reached out to place his hand on Bakugou’s shoulder with a hissed, “Wait—ah, sorry, but wait!” He stood as well, taking his hand off of Bakugou’s shoulder and holding it between them to placate after the sudden touch. Bakugou glared at him, rage keeping his shoulders set and
jaw jutted. “I know you’re tense, but just…try to calm down. This is a misunderstanding. We just haven’t given all of the details yet.” When Bakugou didn’t move to stomp away, Todoroki reached out his wrist. “May I?” Bakugou clenched and unclenched his fists before finally sighing explosively, crossing his arms, and sitting back down with his head tilted to the side.

“I’ll stay if you tell her to stop being a bitch,” Bakugou mumbled as Todoroki quietly scented him. Todoroki just shot him an annoyed look before turning back to Uraraka.

“This really is a misunderstanding. Don’t mind him,” Todoroki began, sighing. “But I do agree that that was a little out of line, Uraraka. Bakugou’s one thing—“

“Hey, fuck off—”

“--But I would like to believe that you would think more highly of me.” He leveled Uraraka with a neutral look, stern and a little cold. Uraraka had the good sense to look a little guilty, head tilting down under the reprimand.

“...Yeah, you’re right,” Uraraka sighed, rubbing the back of her neck. “I’m just so used to...well, there aren’t a lot of omegas in the hero courses, you know, so.” She laughed awkwardly. “You wouldn’t’ve been the first to ask because of that. Sorry if I jumped to conclusions.”

Todoroki hummed. “That’s…understandable. It’s not our intention, I promise.”

“I believe you, Todoroki,” Uraraka said, shooting him a reassuring smile. “I guess I’m a bit too wary. And still a little confused...”

“Do they—“ Bakugou started before clicking his mouth shut when both of them turned their attention to him. He faltered, glaring at Uraraka with more intensity but slightly less anger. After a second, he continued, “Do you get harassed a lot?”

“Oh, no, not too much!” Uraraka replied, waving her hands like it was no big deal. “There’s some attention, sure, and more confessions than I’d like from people I barely know, but it doesn’t matter too much because everyone in 1-A is respectful! Well, except for...Almost everyone is respectful.” She gave another slightly forced laugh.

“Is that why you care so much about omega rights shit?”

Uraraka paused, taken a bit off-guard. “Uh, well, I guess so? But not only that, of course! I have a lot of omegas in my family, and they’re strong, accomplished people, so it seems obvious to me! Plus, once you start learning about it, it just makes sense.”

“Yeah,” Bakugou grunted, leaning his chin on his hand as he regarded her. His anger was mostly dissipated, leaving behind an expression that would almost seem bored if it weren’t for the calculated intensity in his gaze.

Uraraka suddenly clapped her hands together. “That’s right! You’re pro-omega rights, right, Bakugou? I remember you saying so that one time in class. Is that what this is about? You want to know more about it?” Bakugou made a low, noncommittal sound of affirmation, and Uraraka practically glowed. “Wow, I misunderstood big time! That’s great! I mean, I still don’t know if we need a pack bond for that, but I’m always open to helping alphas learn more—”

“I’m not an alpha.”

“Huh?” Uraraka blinked, smile still in place as she processed.
“I’m not an alpha. I’m an omega.” Bakugou growled again, maintaining his neutral expression. Uraraka seemed to struggle with making sense of that, face dumbly blank. She looked over at Todoroki for either confirmation or clarification.

“An omega?” Uraraka asked, and Todoroki nodded. She turned back to Bakugou. “You?”

“For fuck’s sake, don’t make it weird, okay?” Bakugou finally snapped, irritation beginning to crack through his disinterested facade. “It was those extras that decided I was an alpha without even asking. I never said anything about my presentation.”

Uraraka appeared to be reeling. “For real…? I...wow. Okay. I guess...you never did say anything about it, huh?” She paused, incredulous and looking off into the distance while she picked her memory for details. After a few beats, she looked back at Bakugou. “Really?”

“Yes, fuck! Why the fuck would I lie about that?”

“I don’t know! It’s just...so...I never would’ve expected that!” Uraraka was leaning forward, eyes wide with a sort of wonder. “So, the suppressants are because you’re embarrassed?”

Bakugou’s expression began to darken, and Todoroki took that cue to jump in. “It’s a bit more complicated than that. Try not to assume too much.”

That seemed to break Uraraka a little out of the wide-eye awe she was in, and she quickly nodded. “Ah, right. I suppose that’s a bit personal...I just can’t believe you’re an omega, Bakugou!”

“Don’t go spreading it around, Round Face, or I will kill you,” Bakugou mumbled.

“I won’t! I promise!” Uraraka said with a giddy but sincere conviction. “But...an omega! Is that why you want me in your pack? Solidarity?”

“Something like that,” Todoroki responded. “Again...it’s more complicated than that. And it might be a lot to deal with. I won’t give any more details than that right now, but we do want you to spend a little time to think it over and make sure you’d be really willing to commit before joining.”

That sobered Uraraka up a little bit, and she gave a firm nod, even as she looked between the two of them curiously. “I...don’t know what’s going on with you two, and I’m still a little confused, but I’ll think about it. And don’t worry, I won’t tell anyone anything!”

“Thank you,” Todoroki replied with a soft smile.

Uraraka smiled back before wiggling in her seat. “This is a little exciting! It’ll be nice to have another omega to talk to. I mean, Kaminari is a nice guy and all, but he’s a little...”

“Stupid,” Bakugou supplied.

“No! Well, I wouldn’t put it like that. He’s...carefree,” Uraraka tried, grimacing when it sounded weak even to her. “You seem like you would keep up better.”

Bakugou grunted. “Maybe, but don’t expect giggles and flower crowns either, Round Face.”

“To be honest, I don’t think I ever want to hear you giggle. That sounds terrifying,” Uraraka mused seriously.

“Seconded,” Todoroki murmured.

“Good because it’s never going to happen.” Bakugou moved to stand. “Are we done here? I have
“shit to do.” The other two stood as well, giving parting pleasantries and agreeing to meet up again in a few days. Bakugou didn’t bother to wait for them.

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That night, Bakugou and Todoroki laid in the futon before sleep as had become habit, quiet in the soft golden glow of the floor lamp. Todoroki scrolled through his phone, but Bakugou stared at the ceiling, face set in thought. For a long while, it was silent.

Todoroki glanced at his pack mate, examining him for a second before setting his phone down. “How do you think today went?”

Bakugou hummed. “...Fine. Not bad.”

Todoroki turned on his side, pillowing his head in his elbow so he could watch Bakugou. “You think she’ll agree?”

“Maybe. She seemed excited,” Bakugou mumbled. He paused before sighing and shifting a bit. “She doesn’t know yet, though. Could change her mind.”

“Do you think she will?”

“Who knows.”

“Hey,” Todoroki murmured. Bakugou turned his head to look at him, and Todoroki moved his hand to brush over the omega’s cheek. “You can talk to me.”

Bakugou’s expression subtly shifted from pensive to disquieted, and he looked back at the ceiling, swallowing thickly. He seemed to struggle for a little bit, either with words or whether to talk at all. Just as Todoroki was about to assume the conversation wouldn’t happen, Bakugou spoke. “She’s nice.”

Todoroki hummed. “Yes.”

“She’s...fuck. She’s not, you know. Messed up.”

“I...guess not?”

Bakugou swallowed again, turning his head a bit further away. “She’d be a good packmate. Better...better than I am.”

“Better than you?” Todoroki repeated. “It’s not a competition.”

“I know, just—“ He made a frustrated noise, hunching and turning a bit further away. “You’re already friends with her.”

Todoroki scooted a bit closer, until he could feel the body heat roll off of his companion. “Are you...worried I’ll like her more?” he tried.

Bakugou remained silent for a long time before giving the smallest of nods. Todoroki had to strain to hear as Bakugou mumbled with his face still turned away. “It’s stupid. I was the one that asked for her to join. I shouldn’t...it’s dumb.”

“Look at me.” Todoroki requested, waiting until Bakugou did, his eyes vulnerable and mouth downturned. “I don’t think it’s stupid. Everything’s complicated. It’s okay to feel conflicted.” Bakugou’s eyes flicked away, but he didn’t turn his head. “And...she’s not going to replace you.
Frankly, I don’t know if anyone could. You’re a rather...unique individual.”

“Is that supposed to be a joke, Half N’ Half?”

“A little bit.”

“Nice try.”

Todoroki smiled minutely, leaning forward to rest his head against Bakugou’s arm. “You could call me Shouto. If you want.” Bakugou met his eyes again, searching. “And you don’t have to worry about other packmates. I like my friends, and I’m grateful for them, but they...are nice. It’s not the same.”

Bakugou examined his face for a couple long seconds before shifting, jostling Shouto’s head off of his shoulder so he could lay on his side as well. He leaned in until their foreheads were touching, letting his eyes flutter shut as he breathed in his packmate’s tranquil scent. “...You can call me Katsuki, too, if that’s your thing.”

Shouto smiled. “I’d like that.”

They laid like this for a while, close enough that their knees brushed and their body heat mingled between them. Shouto snuck his hand against his packmate’s, loosely twining their fingers together. After a couple of shared moments, Katsuki swallowed, fidgeted just slightly, and whispered, “Can I kiss you?”

Shouto felt a blush creep up his cheeks, and he took a deep breath before responding with an equally quiet, “Yeah.”

The kiss was soft, chaste, and careful, both of them too nervous to chase it much deeper in the quietude of the present moment, but somehow it made Katsuki’s heart beat faster than any he’d had before.

Chapter End Notes

Things that are v hard to pace: believable conversations and soft intimate moments
I'm not as good with the soft stuff so I hope it's still satisfying...

Also I asked this on tumblr, and I'll ask here too: because I'm gonna be attempting to write about like, a complex fictional legal situation, I'm trying to do some research to make it seem believable and rooted in real life (even tho there's gonna be differences in this universe obv). If you know shit about law, criminal court, or the process involved, particularly pertaining to assault, burglary, domestic abuse, etc. please unload ur knowledge on me! I would love resources, summaries, personal accounts, etc. if you are willing to share them <3
Chapter Summary

Uraraka hoped she would learn what exactly was happening with him this afternoon, but for now all she could assume was that it had to do with his secret medical issue.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“The task itself is simple.”

The beta woman stood with an air of crisp professionalism, holding a clipboard with perfectly manicured nails. Bakugou had to look up at her from where he was seated in a chair next to a simple desk in the courthouse, listening carefully but with thinly veiled impatience. On the desk was a form that declared that he understood the task and consented to participate, even though Bakugou didn’t feel like he was given much of a real choice. Still, he waited to sign his name next to the signature of his mom until after the administrator was finished with her explanation. “When you enter the room, there will be four boxes, each containing an item. You will not be able to see the item inside, but you can use your other senses—touch, smell, et cetera—to examine each item. After five minutes, you will be asked to choose which container appeals to you most. There is no correct answer, so please just go with what feels right to you personally. We will repeat this task five times, and you will return to this waiting room between each trial while we switch out the containers. Is that clear?”

“Yes,” Bakugou responded dryly, since pretty much only an idiot would be confused by something that simple.

The woman continued, “As we mentioned, you have the right to refuse to cooperate, and you may request to end the task prematurely if you feel upset or unwell. When you complete the task, you will be debriefed further about the details and your civil bond status.” Bakugou nodded, picking up the pen. He felt uneasy about it, but apparently his lawyers thought it would be best for him to cooperate, since refusing to do so wouldn’t actually help him.

The test was an optional part of the process for officially registering a mate bond with the government, and it was a way for him to challenge the claim made by his alpha—if he didn’t participate, they would assume that he didn’t oppose. Frustratingly, he couldn’t actually do anything to stop Touma from making the claim, since as an alpha, he (or, more accurately, his meathead big-shot lawyer) could simply file some paperwork that would be either verified or disputed by the omega. If Bakugou didn’t respond or if the task validated the bond, then the registration went through whether Bakugou liked it or not. At least by participating, there was a slim chance that the mate bond wouldn’t have to become official.

He wasn’t sure what would happen if the bond became official.

“And Mr. Bakugou,” the woman said, interrupting Bakugou’s thoughts and making his eye twitch at the formality. “Please be honest. We will be doing a brief post-interview, and falsifying your responses will nullify the results.” Bakugou swallowed and nodded again, hesitating for just a second longer before signing the form set in front of him.
The task itself was easy as shit. He walked into a room, examined a few boxes (although for what, he couldn’t tell), and decided on some sort of whim which was ‘most appealing.’ He wasn’t really sure if he was doing it right given that he felt, at most, only a slight pull towards one of the options, but he did what he was told. Then, he waited around for a bit while they switched out the boxes, and did it again, five times in total. The whole thing was over within half an hour, and he was ushered back into the waiting room. It felt like it took longer for them to return with his results than it took for the actual task.

About the time when Bakugou was nearing the limit of his patience with sitting alone in a room with no means to keep himself preoccupied, the beta woman returned with another woman. This additional person had a lie detector quirk, he was informed, and asked him a series of questions about his choices. None of them made any sense, and he didn’t really have any real answers—none of his choices were really based on the texture of the item or where they were in the room or anything like that. Most of his answers boiled down to, “I don’t know, I just felt like it.” Somehow, that seemed to appease both of them.

After that, the additional woman left, and his beta examiner marked a few more things down on a tablet before going to fetch some printed documents. When she returned, she handed Bakugou a copy of the documents she retrieved, but spoke before he had a chance to look them over. “I’ll give you a final debrief about the nature of the task, and then you are free to leave. The items in each of the containers were all various articles scented by alphas approximately a week ago, with one item per trial being an article scented by your own alpha. A bond should make you more sensitive and receptive to your alpha’s scent, even unconsciously, and as such, should make those items appeal to you more even when the scent is weak and difficult to identify.” She gestured towards the documents in Bakugou’s hand, and he looked down at them. “You correctly chose your alpha’s articles across all five trials, so we will continue forward with the registration of your mate bond. We will inform you when the registration is complete, most likely within a week. You may return to dispute the registration after half a year if you have taken steps to break the bond in the coming months.”

Bakugou looked over the documents in his hand, numbly nodding as she spoke. He knew this would probably happen. It’s not like it wasn’t already obvious that the bond was in place. Even so, he couldn’t quite help the nauseous sinking feeling settling in his gut when he looked at the official seal stamped over the top of it.

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Perhaps Uraraka spent more time than necessary watching the clock as the day wore on. She had made plans to meet Todoroki and Bakugou later to discuss their proposition for the pack bond, and she could admit to herself that she was a little excited. The classes for the day seemed to drag on, and as much as she was interested in the subject matter, the mystery waiting to be unfolded after class seemed much more tantalizing.

For some reason, Bakugou missed a couple of classes in the morning, but he skulked in before it was time for any practical exercises. He probably just slept in or something, but it seemed odd, especially for him. Even when it was clear he wasn’t getting enough sleep, which seemed more common in the past few months, he at least showed up. On top of that, Bakugou seemed a little off of his game, appearing lost in thought and not focused on the task at hand even during hero training. Uraraka hoped she would learn what exactly was happening with him this afternoon, but for now all she could assume was that it had to do with his secret medical issue.

Yaomomo thought it was a hormone imbalance of some sort. She talked about it hesitantly at the last girls’ night, delicately like she knew it was a sensitive topic that she would rather not discuss. However, Kirishima, who was one of a few boys allowed to girls’ night along with Aoyama (he had
the best hair and skin care tips), Kouda (invited because he was so sweet and shy, but never came),
and Satou (invited solely because of his baking ability and knew it, thus never stayed but always
delivered some sweets at the start), seemed adamant about discussing the issue, so Yaomomo ended
up talking at length and making some good points about his suppressants, disappearances after class,
and sudden mood shifts.

After learning that Bakugou was an omega, some of those things made even more sense to Uraraka,
although she was careful not to give anything away to anyone else. She knew from some of her
cousins that omega males and alpha females could have more complications with their presentation
than other genders because of the way it changed their bodies, even if those changes weren’t as
visible. Plus, if Bakugou was having some weird hormone issues, then perhaps that was why he was
keeping his second-gender quiet—he seemed like a pretty private guy in general underneath all the
shouting, so maybe he didn’t want people prying into his medical problems or making assumptions
about his fitness from them.

Uraraka didn’t want to lock into too many assumptions before their meeting, although it was hard not
to speculate. It was at least clear that something was going on, and whatever it was, she should
assume it was pretty serious. Todoroki made it clear at the last meeting that she shouldn’t consider
joining unless she was willing to commit to handling some heavier topics, and he accented that point
over text when they were making plans to meet again. He seemed insistent that she not agree unless
she was absolutely sure she could and would be willing to handle Bakugou and his secret, serious
issues, but he also seemed confident that she would be a good candidate to do so.

The more Uraraka learned and the more she thought, the more she felt confident in herself as well.
They said they wanted another omega in the pack, and someone who knew something about the
issues omegas deal with. If Bakugou was an omega with problems relating to that, she felt a growing
sense of duty, a desire to rise up and use what knowledge she had to support him in a way maybe
only she could. It might not be easy, but no one came to U.A. or aspired to become a hero because it
was easy—she had to at least try to rise to the challenge, even if Bakugou was a handful to deal with
normally, let alone with whatever else was going on.

When class was finally over, she quickly packed up and rushed out of the room, pausing just long
enough to wave at Deku and Iida with a promise to meet them later. It didn’t take her much time to
stash her stuff away in her room and grab a quick snack before heading to the designated meeting
place. She was the first one there this time, so she took a seat and waited for the boys to arrive.

It took a little longer than expected, and by the time they showed up, they were almost ten minutes
late. They were both a bit stiff, but Todoroki smiled and greeted her as they approached. Bakugou
offered a grunt in acknowledgment but otherwise didn’t say anything, looking pointedly away and
fidgeting. He seemed excessively tense somehow, even moreso than the previous time they met, and
she couldn’t help but glance at him curiously. Was he regretting the decision to invite her in...? Or
was he just nervous about talking?

Todoroki drew her attention back to him. “So...have you thought about it?”

“Yes!” she replied, face set with determination. “I know I don’t know everything that’s going on, but
if I can help, I want to try!”

Todoroki nodded, his own expression serious. “Do you know what goes into a pack bond? Or
should I explain?”

“Uuh...well, I know a little bit! But not much...so maybe explain, just in case.” Uraraka leaned
forward, listening intently.
“Basically, all we need to do is scent fairly frequently. I prefer to every day, if possible, but up to a week can pass before the bond can begin to weaken after it sets.” Todoroki looked at Bakugou.

“You and Bakugou won’t need to scent too often, if you don’t want to. It would help make the pack feel more cohesive, but it’ll work without it as long as I scent you, since I’m the founding beta. We can discuss that more later and figure out a system.”

Uraraka made soft noises at appropriate times to show she understood, glancing at Bakugou when the other was mentioned. He seemed to be listening, but he was glowering at the table, and an odd vibration to him hinted that he was bouncing his leg rather vigorously. She couldn’t read his reaction on how he would feel about scenting, or honestly anything else.

“Does that seem reasonable?” Todoroki asked, snapping her back to the conversation.

“Uh, yeah! I think so!” she replied. “I’m fine with that.”

“Okay. In that case, is there anything else you want to know about it?”

Uraraka blinked. “Uh, so, scenting is all there is to it? Is there any other like, obligations or rules?”

“Not necessarily, no. Obviously, a pack is meant as a commitment to each other, so it’s expected that we’ll be there for each other and help each other out...But what that means, precisely, is something we define according to our needs.”

Uraraka nodded along, brow furrowed. “Okay, so, we’ll just talk about it more later? If we need to?”

Todoroki shrugged. “ Basically, yeah.”

“Okay.” Uraraka paused, taking a deep breath and thinking everything over one last time before she squared her shoulders and looked Todoroki in the eye. “I’ve thought about it, and I want to join.” She glanced at Bakugou and swallowed. “If you still want me.”

Todoroki followed her gaze and then looked back at her. “We do. Don’t worry.” He gave Bakugou a slight nudge, which surprisingly made him jump, but he collected himself quickly and shot her a curt nod. His jaw was clenched almost hard enough to look painful, and Uraraka noticed that aside from having his arms tightly crossed, his hands were balled into fists. Todoroki continued, expression turning gravely serious, “But again...I want you to know for sure. We’re going to tell you all the details before we make the bond out of fairness, but I would greatly prefer if you didn’t back out after.”

Uraraka matched his expression, eyes sharp with determination. “I won’t back out. I can handle it.”

“Okay.” Todoroki drew a deep breath, steeling himself before glancing at Bakugou. “I guess...all that’s left is to tell her.” Bakugou swallowed and nodded again, but his movements seemed jerky, and he didn’t seem to really be focused on the conversation. Even despite being clenched so tightly, his hands were trembling.

Uraraka leaned forward slightly, softening her expression a bit. “I guess...it’s something hard to talk about, huh? Don’t worry, I promise I won’t judge or anything.”

Abruptly, Bakugou stood. “You tell her,” he grumbled to Todoroki, gripping the edge of the table. Todoroki frowned slightly. “Are you sure? I...would really appreciate it if you were here.”

“I know, okay, fuck—I just. I can’t, yet.” Bakugou took a shaky breath, releasing the table and shoving his hands into his pocket. “I can’t.”
Todoroki nodded. “Okay. That’s fine. I’ll meet you upstairs later and tell you how it goes. Do you need anything?”

“No. I’m leaving,” Bakugou snapped, turning and marching off with a stiff gait.

Uraraka watched the exchange in bewilderment. When Todoroki sighed and looked back at her, she asked, worried, “Did I upset him? Was it something I said?”

“No, not at all,” Todoroki assured. “He’s just...nervous. I don’t think he’s ever actually told anyone himself, aside from people meant to handle it.” He looked off for a few seconds, contemplative, before humming and looking back at her. “Don’t worry about it for now. We can talk to him later once I get you up to speed.”

“Okay,” Uraraka replied tentatively. “So...what’s going on?”

Todoroki looked away, drummed his fingers against the table, and shifted uncomfortably. He opened his mouth once before seeming to rethink, shutting it as he considered words. “Do you...are you familiar with the term ‘heat hunt?’”

Uraraka faltered, thinking for a second. “I’ve seen it a few times, but I think it’s mostly an internet thing, right? Some groups of alphas online who talk about how omegas should be, um, targeted during their heats or something. Really gross stuff.” A sense of foreboding began to grow in her gut as she considered the topic. “Is...Bakugou nervous about that? Has he been threatened or something?”

Todoroki grimaced. “He...” He paused, making a frustrated sound and looking off to the side as he considered, fingers rapidly tapping. After a beat, he drew a deep breath as if preparing to take a plunge and looked back at Uraraka. “He was targeted, like that. During his heat. The alpha is in custody now, but Bakugou...well, he’s been mated, so.” Todoroki shrugged, a little helplessly. “He’s never had a heat without an alpha, and we’re preparing to try to break the bond. We’re hoping you could...be there for him, to talk to, or give him insight, I suppose.”

Uraraka sat stunned, a cold wash of shock slowly overtaking her and chilling her to the bone as his words set in. Her mind seemed to stutter as she tried to process everything, a sense of denial that tried to sift through all of the details of the last few months and piece together how something like this could have happened without her knowing. It took her a while before she could speak. “Never...had...he presented more than three months ago...right, so—so that’s...three heats…” she mumbled weakly, feeling suddenly a little shaky. “Never without an alpha? He was—was—on his first heat?”

Todoroki nodded, solemnly, but he watched her reaction without interrupting.

“So...his last heat, when he was gone for so long...that wasn’t...it wasn’t a medical issue...?”

Todoroki shook his head. “No. I wasn’t allowed to say anything, but he was kidnapped by that asshole. It took us a few days to find and save him, and he took the rest of the week off to recover.”

Uraraka almost felt faint, and she swallowed before focusing on breathing properly. She sat in silence, and Todoroki waited patiently for a minute while she thought and processed. After a while, he finally spoke again. “Does this change your decision? I know it’s a lot to handle...but I need to know that you’ll be there for him.”

“I...” Uraraka drew a deep breath, looking back at him, determination shaken but still in place. “No. I’m still in.” Despite the horror that rocked her to the core, she also felt a sort of conviction growing with it. She wished it were just a medical issue, but she wouldn’t be much of a hero if she backed
down just because it was something worse.

Todoroki seemed to relax a little, exhaling in relief. “I can tell you all the details now, if you want, or we can do it later when it’s not as much of a shock.”

Uraraka straightened her spine and tried to pull herself together. “No...tell me now.”

Chapter End Notes

First off, I'm sorry I didn't get around to reply a lot of your comments last chapter @.@ right now there's a lot going on, and I'll be relocating yet again--it's been harder to find quiet times alone to write or focus on the fic, but I wanted to get this chapter finished before the next big move on Wednesday...hence, a bit of neglect to replies :x BUT I did read them all and still appreciate them as always <3 <3

Uraraka has joined the fight! And Todoroki is getting her up to speed so that poor Bakugou can rest after a long day.
A beacon for nosy gossips

Chapter Summary

Mina blinked, then her expression slowly grew sly between Bakugou’s fingers. When Bakugou’s face remained blank, she started to wag her eyebrows at him. Finally, Bakugou caught on, releasing her and huffing with a grimace.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

As much as Bakugou wanted to convince himself that he wasn’t avoiding Uraraka, he definitely was. It wasn’t blatant avoidance—he still interacted with her when he needed to and made her pack-breakfast the next morning without being weird about it, but there was an obvious tension and stiffness in the exchanges. Since yesterday, when Shouto and Uraraka sought him out after they were finished discussing his...problem, Bakugou couldn’t quite bring himself to look her in the eye.

It was awkward and annoying, but what the fuck was he supposed to say? There wasn’t any threat to prepare for like there was when Shouto found out. Touma was in prison, no longer a risk—the only thing left to talk about was Bakugou’s emotions, his feelings, his left-over baggage, and he was not keen on initiating that at all. Sure, it was his idea to include Uraraka, but all the steps between ‘acquaintance’ and ‘confidant’ were daunting and not really something he knew how to navigate. He wanted to dive straight into the comfortably-established-zone without all of the work and negotiation. Instead, it was just a looming topic, an elephant in the room, and any casual conversation felt strange and forced, but the task of breaking the tension and having that first real heart-to-heart made Bakugou want to jump out of a window and blast off to the next city.

It wasn’t help that she was so goddamn doe-eyed and emotive. Shouto was reserved, with a predictable emotional range, so talking to him was sometimes kind of like talking to a cat or something, which was honestly perfect. Uraraka, on the other hand...even just re-convening after their pack meeting, Uraraka’s eyes were glassy with feeling and sparked with determination, and it made Bakugou want to shove a bag over her head. Seeing her get emotional forced him to be more aware of his own emotions, and that was not something he wanted even on the best of days. Earlier, he just barely managed to leave the meeting before a panic attack could overtake him, and when they returned to him after, the raw empathy and pity in her eyes made both the anxiety crawl back up his esophagus and an angry indignation burn behind his lungs, and frankly he needed more time to squash that shit until he could control it.

He went through with scenting her, and then made an excuse to kick her out as soon as possible without room for discussion. Shouto didn’t comment, but Bakugou could sense his confusion and slight wariness. Bakugou ignored it for now—he would have the necessary tearful bleeding-heart conversation with them sometime. He just had to build up to it, to get used to the idea first.

Plus, he had other things to discuss with his beta. The events from the morning distracted him all day, and whenever he didn’t force himself back to reality, his mind ran through a buzzing internal dialogue of worries and scenarios. He knew some of what it meant to be legally bonded, but in his case, where his alpha was facing a criminal trial on multiple accounts and was bonded to a minor, he couldn’t begin to know what to expect. Everything about his legal situation was becoming
increasingly stressful, and every time he felt like maybe he was making some progress with the whole PTSD thing, updates about the case threw him off his game and back to square one. He filled Shouto in about the official bond, and the beta admitted he had no idea what to expect either...but at least Shouto had filed for legal recognition of their pack in the week after the kidnapping. The beta was having some bureaucratic issues with a number of details, including their age and guardianship, but he expressed his confidence that he could get the pack fully official soon.

It helped a little to talk about it, but Bakugou couldn’t say he was fully relieved.

The next morning wasn’t any less awkward with Uraraka, but at least Bakugou could keep himself preoccupied with cooking and cleaning up, flatly refusing any help from his packmates. Work was a distraction, and the two of them could just sit their asses down and let him feed them in peace. In some ways, he was glad their new packmate was friends with Shouto instead of himself because it meant he could keep busy while they chatted amongst themselves, and while he liked his friends, he didn’t know if he could handle someone trying to be intimately up in his business right after they learned about his issues. At least Uraraka was distant enough not to press him...yet.

Regardless, it was a relief to clean up the dishes and head to class. Lessons and classmates would be a distraction from the weird energy weaving between them...or, that was the hope. The error in that assumption became quickly apparent. A pro and con to packs was that everyone could tell almost immediately—even if no one else saw them scent each other that morning, the unmistakable mingle of Shouto’s and Uraraka’s scent across all three of them was like a beacon for nosy gossips, and they barely had time to settle into their desks before the questions and gawking started. Bakugou could even see Iida’s eyebrows shoot up from across the classroom as Uraraka sat down behind him. He ignored them and flopped into his own seat, but he could feel Deku’s wide eyes drilling into the back of his head.

The morning classes went by far too fast, the air tense with the energetic shuffling of people waiting to get a chance to interrogate. Bakugou could practically feel half the class glancing at him, biding their time until the lunch hour, and he did his best to ignore it, planning to escape from the room as soon as possible. Sure enough, almost immediately after Aizawa dismissed them and before Bakugou had a chance to bail, Mina slammed her hands down on his desk, leaning forward to sniff at him. She squawked and shouted, “I knew it! I knew I smelled something when Ochako walked by!”

Bakugou leaned as far away from her as possible, scowling deeply. “Yeah? What’s it to you?”

Mina pouted openly. “You’re so cold, Bakugou! You never invited us into your pack! What gives?”

“I don’t do the pack shit. Go bitch at Sh—Todoroki,” Bakugou replied, grabbing her face and pushing her back a reasonable distance. He glanced around for the beta, internally groaning when he noticed Shouto in conversation with Uraraka and Iida, probably also being questioned by the latter. “Besides, you’re too fucking noisy.”

Mina blinked, then her expression slowly grew sly between Bakugou’s fingers. When Bakugou’s face remained blank, she started to wag her eyebrows at him. Finally, Bakugou caught on, releasing her and huffing with a grimace.

“Whatever bullshit you’re thinking, don’t,” he growled, glowering at her.

The commotion was drawing the attention of the rest of the peanut gallery, and Kirishima and Kaminari were moving closer to better hear the conversation. “Or maybe,” Mina purred, drawing out the words, “None of us are cute little omegas. Hm?”
“Don’t even fucking start—”

“Hey! I’m an omega, and he didn’t invite me!” Kaminari cut in with half-mocking offense.

“You’re not cute,” Mina offered, and Jirou snickered. Mina high-fived her before sitting on the edge of her desk.

“Fuck off, it’s not like that, alright?” Bakugou cut in before Kaminari could start to complain.

“Maybe Todoroki’s taking a stab at match-making,” Sero mused, joining in on the teasing. “Or maybe he’s just trying to merge his friends in with your pack, Bakugou. He’ll be asking you next, Midoriya, better be prepared.”

“Hell no,” Bakugou snapped before Deku had time to respond. There was a weird undercurrent to Deku’s scent, and a glance in his direction made it clear that his usual sunny disposition was a little more forced than usual. Bakugou didn’t want to give him room to pull any heartstrings. “I’m not doing shit with Round Face, okay? She wouldn’t have agreed if it was just that. And this isn’t some goddamn country club where you just queue in, so don’t you get any fucking ideas, nerd.”

Deku lifted his hands complacently, even though he still looked a little put-out somehow. “It’s okay, Kacchan, I know you probably wouldn’t like that. You don’t have to add me to your pack.”

“Damn straight,” Bakugou mumbled.

“Yeah, I guess that’d be a disaster,” Sero said, shooting Deku a slightly sympathetic look. “Todoroki would probably spend all his time just mediating between you two.”

“Him and any other alpha, probably,” Jirou added. “Is that even something packs do? Have more than one alpha?”

“I don’t fucking know. Ask Half N’ Half, he’s the one that knows about pack shit,” Bakugou grumbled, trying to get them to shut up and drop the conversation. He honestly didn’t know, and it’s not like it would actually apply anyway. Having all of them in his space was making him tense, though, and the weird tinge to Deku’s scent was putting him on edge. He doubted that the nerd even noticed what his pheromones were doing, but there was something to it that almost matched the warning of territorial markings, with a strange hint of the bittersweet homesick he reeked of when he came home after visiting his mom. After thinking it over for a few seconds, he suddenly realized that Deku wasn’t the only one that had a weird twist to his scent, and a glance at Kirishima confirmed that his friend was being a bit more stiff and quiet than normal. Bakugou wanted to groan—Deku made sense to a degree, since two of his friends were in a pack he wasn’t invited in, but Bakugou didn’t even consider the possibility of his own friends having hurt feelings over not being asked to join.

“Wait, so...just because Bakugou and Uraraka are in a pack together, it doesn’t mean that they’re like...a thing now, right?” Kaminari asked, bringing Bakugou back into this conversation, which for some reason refused to die. “Does that work the same with alphas and omegas in pack bonds?”

“Fuck no,” Bakugou spat. “It’s not like that.”

“Yeah, um, it doesn’t work the same,” Deku said, tentatively. He still looked a little like a kicked puppy, but he was doing his best to mask it, trying to act normal. “Todoroki told me a little about it, and I guess there’s no real difference between the genders in a pack the way there is with a mate bond. So it doesn’t change the dynamics between people, and you can have multiple alphas if you wanted, Jirou.”
“So in that case, you have no excuse, Bakugou!” Mina declared, dramatically putting her hands on her hips. “You have to invite us!”

“Ha? I don’t gotta do shit, Raccoon Eyes!” Bakugou retorted.

“Wait, wait,” Kaminari interrupted, still looking at Deku. “So the difference between packs and mate bonds just that mate bonds are only alphas and omegas? Or is it because you can only have one mate bond but lots of people in a pack?”

“Well, no…you can have more than one mate bond, I think,” Deku responded.

“What, really?” Kirishima finally joined in, taken by surprise.

“Nah, that can’t be true. I’ve never heard of that before, and like…why wouldn’t people have more than one?” Kaminari leaned forward, eyes narrowed. “If the harem option was available, it’d be a lot more popular, right?”

Deku shrugged. “Uh, to be honest, I don’t really know all of the details. I guess it became less popular around the same time as pack bonds? Something about government incentives and propaganda to slow population growth by pushing smaller families.”

“So is it like...illegal?” Kaminari asked, looking even more perplexed.

“I don’t think so?”

“It’s not anymore!” Mineta cut in with a glint in his eyes. “It’s kind of a kink but you could have as many mate bonds as you want, theoretically!”

Jirou scoffed. “What are you getting excited for? You’re a beta.”

“I know,” Mineta whined, defensive. “But there’s some choice content out there, if you know what I mean.”

“There is?” Kaminari leaned in even further, almost conspiratorially.

“Oh yeah.” Mineta lowered his voice as if he wasn’t talking across the room. “You know an omega’s a freak if they have multiples.”

“Okay, that’s enough,” Jirou interjected. “We really don’t want to hear about your porn stash.”

“That’s the sort of stuff I’ve always heard about, though,” Sero weighed in tentatively. “I mean, I don’t know anything about population growth, but nowadays people don’t do it because it doesn’t exactly have the best reputation.”

Kaminari deflated a bit. “Man, why does all the fun stuff ruin your reputation?” Kirishima patted him on the shoulder.

“Well, what I’ve heard, and I don’t know if this is true,” Sero said, looking a little uncomfortable like he knew he was talking about a sensitive subject, “is that the only reason omegas get multiple bonds is to break one of them, aside from, you know, kink stuff. And if they broke a bond once, what’s to say they won’t do it again? So it’s stereotyped as being something only like, loose or unfaithful people do. Not that I’m saying I believe that!” He added the last part hastily, glancing at Kaminari and the unimpressed looks on Mina and Jirou’s faces.

“Yeah, and besides, if you want to get serious with someone, you don’t want to find out that you’re
getting sloppy seconds,” Mineta said, completely missing the hesitant tone Sero led with. “If it isn’t about the kink then it just seems like you’d be getting the raw end of the deal.”

“So, what, an omega with previous bonds is sloppy seconds, but no one’s going to say shit about alphas?” Bakugou snapped, tense and starting to boil over. He felt a hot coil of disgust in the pit of his stomach, and as much as he wanted to escape from this conversation as soon as possible, he felt a stronger urge to scream about how bullshit it was until the whole thing ceased to be a concept. For the sake of his sessions on anger management and not making his own issues glaringly obvious, he tried to dial it back to a simmering rage, but it was a challenge.

Mineta scoffed. “Alphas don’t even get bonded, remember? Or most don’t, anyway, so it doesn’t even apply. Besides, alphas are kind of wired to have more partners.”

“That is such fucking bullshit, if it takes two people to make a bond, why does only one of them get treated like trash if it doesn’t work out, huh? Where’s the goddamn logic in that?”

“Yeah, that doesn’t seem fair,” Deku cut in, casting a disapproving glance at Mineta.

“Hey, don’t kill the messenger. I’m a beta, it’s not like I’m making any of the rules.” Mineta leaned back with a shrug and crossed his arms defensively. “That’s just how it is. I mean, are you saying you really wouldn’t have any problem with forming a mate bond with someone who already had one?”

“That’s what I’m saying, yeah,” Bakugou sneered.

“I mean,” Deku started, brow furrowed as he considered. “I guess I might be a little self-conscious at first…but that’s no reason to hold it against someone! And if you like them, then it shouldn’t matter, right?”

Mineta stared at him. “You’re too pure, Midoriya.”

Before Deku had a chance to respond, Shouto, Uraraka, and Iida walked over. Uraraka waved at Deku with a bright smile. “Do you need to get lunch, Deku? We were about to go get some before break was over!” After getting a closer look at the tone of the conversation and catching the slightly tense pheromones in the air, however, the three of them stopped. “Oh, sorry, I hope we’re not interrupting.”

Deku glanced at the clock before moving to stand. “No, it’s okay, we were probably done. I’ll come with you.”

Uraraka blinked, watching him curiously. “What were you talking about?”

“Uh, well…” Deku faltered, and a few of the people in the area started to sheepishly scoot away.

“Just talking about bonds and stuff, nothing big,” Mineta interrupted, shooting Deku a pointed look while moving to stand and get out of line of fire.

“Oh, really? That’s funny because it sounded like you were talking about whether or not anyone would want to bond with omegas who were previously mated. What was the term you used? ‘Sloppy seconds?’” Jirou drawled, quirking an eyebrow at the smaller beta.

“Traitor!” Mineta hissed. Uraraka and Shouto, needless to say, did not look amused at all. Uraraka looked between Deku, Mineta, and finally Bakugou, her eyes lingering on her irate packmate as another realization clicked in her mind. She took a deep breath before turning a cold glare on Mineta.
“I just...cannot believe you sometimes,” she started, eyes burning and voice low. “Do you honestly think that—that someone could change the value of someone else just by sleeping with them? What sort of outdated—”

Iida, though obviously uncomfortable, caught on to the rant about to happen and hastily moved forward to put a hand on Uraraka’s shoulder. “Uraraka! While I agree with you, I must remind you that we don’t have much time until the end of the lunch hour! Perhaps this discussion could take place at a more expedient time after you’ve calmed down?” He shot the group a disapproving glare. “I’m sure everyone could use a proper debate on the matter.”

Uraraka looked down her nose at the beta for another beat before huffing and turning away, cheeks puffing into a pout that dampened her otherwise angry demeanor. “Fine. But don’t think you’re getting out of this!” She glared at the rest of the class gathered in the area. “And some heroes you are if you would talk about a group of people when you think they aren’t listening, but then won’t say it to their faces!”

Most of them had the good sense to look a bit guilty, nodding before slinking off to get their own lunches. Bakugou wanted to feel relieved that the conversation was over, but the hot pit of rage sitting in his stomach didn’t seem to want to disperse, and he felt a strange mix of emotion roiling with it that he couldn’t quite identify. He did know, at least, that he didn’t want any more questions or for the conversation about his pack bond (or implications about his other bond) to come up again. With his skin prickling and his movements jerky with agitation, Bakugou rose to slink off for his own lunch.

Shouto navigated around his friends, wordlessly indicating his intention to follow. Bakugou watched him before turning away, affirming his permission with his silence. Before they could leave, however, Shouto looked back at Uraraka, hesitating as if weighing how to handle this situation given the new pack obligations.

Uraraka blinked, looked between the two of them with her eyes lingering on Bakugou’s tense form before smiling and waving them off. “I’ll catch you two later! Enjoy your lunch!” She turned back to Deku and Iida, jostling them to leave. “Let’s go before line gets too long!”

Shouto shot her a small smile before turning back to Bakugou, letting the upset omega lead the way to someplace quiet away from the weighty gaze of others.

Chapter End Notes

So....it's been a while hahah
This past month has been a lot of moving around, meeting up with people, getting my life back together, etc...it's been a bit difficult to find time to write, esp because now I'm living with people and don't really have my own space to do any writing :x so I've been kind of having to just, fit it in when I'm home alone, which isn't very frequent....but it's still going, at least!
Plus, this chapter just did not want to get written...I'm still not super happy with it (esp the ending...), but while it's not like there's anything groundbreaking happening, there were a few tonal things I wanted to try to establish. I'm hoping it came through? The dialogue just fought me the whole time!! But at this point, it's gone on so long and is at least finished, so at some point you gotta just take the plunge and get on with it
Other news: I have a twitter now (tbh mostly to follow fanartists)! Check me out at @autochorystal if that's your choice network.

You'll also notice this is part of a series now! I wrote a offshoot fic based on a fic prompt on tumblr to help get back into the flow of writing, and there are other prompts and ideas I have which hopefully will get written someday. Ideally, some of them will be slice of life, some of them will supplement the story, and some might just be smut because hey, sometimes you gotta just indulge a little. Either way, if you're interested in more stories in this universe, keep an eye on that.
Nothing good to tell

Chapter Summary

“We still have a case,” Lawyer A assured, nodding at her. “We have plenty to work with. We just have to change our angle.”

Chapter Notes

CW: A lot of legal stuff and bullshit systemic issues, mentions of pornography of a minor and attack on character, dissociation

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“We’re going to have to change the charges.”

The lawyers on the other side of the table watched Bakugou and his mother with grim faces, heads bowed slightly as if in apology for the news they were about to break. They called this meeting the day after the registration for the bond was complete, and their demeanor promised that they had nothing good to tell.

“What the fuck is that supposed to mean,” Mitsuki shot back, eyes narrowed and alpha scent cutting the air like a knife.

The lawyers glanced at each other, silently deciding which would speak, before one of them sighed and leaned forward, fingers laced in front of him over the small pile of paperwork on the table. “We were hoping they wouldn’t pursue this route given the legal responsibility it would place on the defendant. Many criminals who engage in these sorts of behaviors want to stay off the books so that they can disengage from the relationship at their convenience or easily abandon their partners, but... well, that’s obviously not a concern for your assailant, and filing an official mate bond unfortunately makes things difficult on our end. As such, we have to change our angle.”

“To what? Why?”

The alpha man sighed again, running his hand through his salt-and-pepper hair. “...To put it simply, we have to re-frame this as a domestic abuse case. The law exonerates alphas from persecution on quite a few sex-based crimes if they go through with a bond with the omega, so—“

“What? ‘Exonerates?’” Mitsuki interrupted. “That man broke into my house and raped my son, and what, you’re just going to ignore that? The law is just going to ignore it? He’s—he’s a minor! That has to count for something!”

“It does,” the man replied hastily. Bakugou hadn’t bothered remembering his name, partially because there were simply too many new people involved in his case—lawyers, advocates, advisers—to keep them all in order. It also just didn’t seem to matter much because they usually ended up talking over his head to his parents anyway, so he had taken to mentally referring to them as Lawyer A and Lawyer B. “It does, just... not quite as directly.”
Lawyer B, a thoughtful-looking man with glasses and a scent masked by suppressants, spoke up quietly, “It’s an old law, and one that’s been attacked in the past, but it’s more complicated than it sounds. The basis is obviously a bit antiquated: an alpha who pursues an omega and successfully bonds with them is cleared of rape and assault precisely because a bond has been put into place...that is to say, the assumption is that the alpha intends on providing for their omega victim rather than just chasing them out of passion or momentary pleasure. But, in addition, defenders of the law claim that it has the well-being of the omega in mind, citing that jailing the alpha would ostracize the omega and force them to undergo their heat alone after a bond is in place, likely causing additional trauma. His minor status, in this matter, is irrelevant: all individuals that enter into a bond are automatically considered as adults in the eyes of the law.” He shrugged, shaking his head in a somewhat defeated way. “There are a lot of things wrong with it, but many people insist that it’s better than the social and physical strain of the alternative. This argument is often framed alongside certain types of cases, such as instances of statutory rape where the charges are being pushed by family and not the omega themselves.”

“We are not one of those cases,” Mitsuki snarled, clearly not interested in debating the minutia. “Are you seriously telling me that people actually believe that garbage?”

“More than you’d think, yes,” Lawyer B sighed. “And even if there wasn’t lingering support to that set of reasoning, it can be notoriously difficult to make a case around sexual assault after a bond is in place. The legality around consent during heat is...muddy, and public opinion isn’t much better. Proving non-consent for sexual acts during heat is sometimes made very difficult, and once a bond is in place, consent is considered assumed, again because the other option would be for the omega partner (or both partners in the case of a double-bond) to undergo an unpleasant cycle alone. As long as there isn’t any lasting damage and it remains private, almost everything that occurs between a bonded couple during heat is overlooked.”

Lawyer A, used to his associate’s more long-winded explanations, summarized, “In short, even if the law didn’t exonerate him, it might still be advantageous for us to pursue a different path now that the bond is official.”

There was a beat of silence as Mitsuki stared at the two men across the table, incredulous with fury. Bakugou felt a little like he was suffocating, and the conversation seemed to be filtered through a strange fuzz buzzing in his ears.

“We—we have evidence,” Mitsuki finally growled, eyes darting between the two. She looked half as if she was explaining something obvious to children, and half as if she was about to crack under the growing apprehension that her arguments actually would be meaningless in the face of a broken system. “We have—we have witnesses, and police reports, and the rape kit, and, and texts from the man himself! How much more shit do we possibly need to ‘prove’ non-consent?”

“We still have a case,” Lawyer A assured, nodding at her. “We have plenty to work with. We just have to change our angle. We may not be able to catch him for rape, but a confirmed bond doesn’t offer any immunity to domestic violence or kidnapping. If we play our cards right, we can still get him many years behind bars.”

“There’s also the matter of the other charges against him,” Lawyer B pointed out. “He’s been accused of multiple accounts of theft and burglary, to name a few, and if he’s found guilty, then he may get a hefty prison sentence regardless of our success. That investigation is led by a different team, so we don’t have direct access to details about their progress, but we’ll be notified if they come across anything that affects our case.”

Mitsuki didn’t look happy with this compromise, but she begrudgingly nodded. “Fine. Just...do
“We’ll do whatever we can,” Lawyer A replied resolutely. He paused, shuffling a few of the papers on the desk around. “As always, we’ll keep you updated on all you need to know. Which brings us to our next topic...” He sighed, tapping his fingers on the table before looking back at his clients. “Mr. Watanabe has...apparently informed the defense of the location of a number of images and videos from Mr. Bakugou’s time with him, which they intend to use as evidence of Mr. Bakugou’s consent.”

Another silence fell on the room, this one even more tense than the last. Bakugou sank deeper into his chair as Mitsuki shook her head. “Excuse me? What? How can they use that against us? For fuck’s sake, he’s a minor!”

“Yes,” Lawyer A responded slowly, looking at his partner. “But...”

Lawyer B picked up where he left off. “If it stays within the bonded pair, it’s in a legal gray-area. The law explicitly states that distribution of sexual images of minors is illegal in all cases and is specific about instances of possession, yet has left possession within a bonded couple open to interpretation. Generally in practice with many of these sorts of matters, bonded couples are given leniency because of the sexual nature of the relationship and the right of the alpha to their mate, as long as it stays strictly between the couple. If he had distributed any of the images, it would have been an easy case. Rest assured, however, we are planning on using his threats to send images via text against him, and I doubt they’ll manage to get far with that angle.”

Mitsuki frowned deeply, arms crossed. She seemed to think for a few beats before speaking. “Why...would they bother trying to use it then? It doesn’t make any goddamn sense if we can just throw it back into their faces, right? Convenient for us, but I feel like there’s something I’m missing.”

“It’s, well. It’s certainly not usual. It’s likely that they knew the blackmail and original set of photographs would be used against them regardless of how they handled the imagery, and thus are trying to use it for their own advantage instead.”

Lawyer A nodded in agreement. “A lot of the things they’re doing are bolder than we would expect, but the attorney on defense is known for being very aggressive. He’ll likely try to cast doubt on Mr. Bakugou’s claims by directly attacking his reputation and character, but we’ll prepare for that.”

“Attack his...okay.” Mitsuki inhaled, then exhaled, rubbing her eyes before looking back at the lawyers. “Alright, we’ll...worry about that later. Let us know what you want to do when you have a plan. Is that it? Are we done?”

Lawyer A bowed his head sympathetically. “We understand that this is a lot to take in. There’s still a long road ahead of us, so you should take some time to rest when you can. Before we adjourn, however, there’s one more matter to attend to.” He slid a few papers over the table. Mitsuki took them and quietly looked them over, eyebrows drawn. “As we mentioned before, once in a bond, an individual is treated as an adult in matters pertaining. A part of this is includes automatic emancipation of minors, so we’ll need him to sign a few things so that you and Masaru can continue managing his affairs.”

Mitsuki’s expression remained severe, and she paused her reading to glance up at him. “Emancipation? What does that entail?”

“Well, essentially more or less the same as it would if he were to turn eighteen. I’ve printed off some information for you, but what you need to be aware of for now is that you no longer have the legal right to make decisions about his care for him. We can work around that, but we will need his to sign...
off on it.”

“This is bullshit,” Mitsuki muttered. She looked over the documents with her lips drawn thin and jaw clenched, passing the papers over to Bakugou as she finished with them. Bakugou, in turn, looked at them without really reading them, the lines of text blurring together into a confusing jumble. He numbly signed the lines his mother pointed to, for once putting faith in her judgment without question, and briefly noted that he might have to try to remember his lawyers’ names after all.

Lawyer B sighed and folded his hands on the table. “Your irritation is understandable, but in this case, it’s actually a good thing. Otherwise, guardianship might have been transferred to Mr. Watanabe, or Mr. Bakugou’s choices regarding breaking the bond or having control over his own civil and legal affairs would have been too limited for him to function outside of the relationship. It’s an extra step, but it’s better than the alternative.”

For a while after, the room was quiet save for the shuffle of papers, scratch of a pen, and murmured instructions from Mitsuki. When they were nearly done, Mitsuki turned back to the lawyers, looking worn and somber. “Is there...is there any way we could change some of this shit—these bullshit laws? Challenge some of it in the process?” she asked, though her voice betrayed an expectation for disappointment. “It’s not right. This doesn’t feel like justice.”

The lawyers exchange a look, and Lawyer B sighed through his nose before speaking carefully. “It’s hard to say right now. I think we would both like to do that, but first, we have to ensure the best outcome for your son. I won’t say it’s not something we would be willing to try given the option, but we can’t make any promises.”

“To put it simply,” Lawyer A added, “our opponent is formidable. And, if you’ll excuse my vulgarity for a second, he is known to be a bit of an asshole. Some people admire that. Personally, I would be thrilled if we could throw his rhetoric in his face.”

“I’d like to throw more than rhetoric in his face,” Mitsuki mumbled, but she managed a small smile at the hope, however tentative it was. “But I guess I could settle with that. Make it happen.”

“A recent trend in gender-based attacks has caught the attention of experts and activists alike.”

The radio in the car droned on as Bakugou stared out the rain-streaked window, watching streetlamps pass as his mother drove him back to U.A. They didn’t speak much on the route, and by the way Mitsuki vacantly watched the road, Bakugou could assume she was also sobered by the meeting, caught in her own thoughts. For that, Bakugou was grateful—he didn’t think he could handle an attempt at small talk right now.

The world felt distant and hollow, and his own thoughts were muted, jumbles of sluggish fragments that didn’t seem to start or complete. An awful, dull static seemed to replace the feeling in his limbs, settling through his gut, and nothing felt quite as substantial as it should. He tried not to fixate on it, which wasn’t too hard as his attention drifted to the paths of raindrops as they descended down the glass.

“—on the internet, where certain ideologies seem to be gaining traction. Some accuse these sites of encouraging violence, while others claim this backlash to be overreaction or attempts at defamation. As part of an ongoing investigative series, we will be examining—”

“We’re here, brat.” Mitsuki’s voice was gentle, softly pulling Bakugou out of his trance. The gates of U.A. looked gloomy under the darkening gray sky, and Bakugou sighed as he pulled himself up
from leaning on the window. He sat for a long moment, and Mitsuki reached out to ruffle his hair.
“This weekend, let’s go grab some dinner together, yeah? You, me, and your father. You can choose where.”

“Okay,” Bakugou responded, voice flat. He unbuckled his seatbelt, grabbed his copy of the paperwork, and opened his door. “See you.”

“Yeah, see you later, kiddo.” She waved and watched him until he was out of sight, trying not to let her expression crumble even though she gripped the steering wheel a little too tight.

Bakugou found himself in Shouto’s room, not quite able to recall the walk from the gate. The beta was not there, probably spending some time with his other friends, and the room was dim, silent save for the patter of raindrops. As Bakugou stood, the light in the room faded further.

He knew he should probably think about some of the things that came up during the meeting. There would undoubtedly be a number of things he had to take care of, or more permissions to sign off on now that his parents couldn’t just...be his parents the way they were supposed to anymore. He knew there was probably a lot of things he needed to read up on and details he needed to better understand. He frankly knew very little about the legal process, and he couldn’t even gauge how much of a bad thing that was.

They said the process would take a long time, possibly even months. Even in just the short time since Touma was caught, things seemed to come in bursts, nothing and then a lot all at once. Bakugou wondered if it would be like this the entire time, or if it was just because everything is still at the start that it felt so overwhelming. He had expected it to get better before, for a sense of closure to come.

He was still standing in Shouto’s room, his limbs heavy and his mind touching on all the things he should be doing without successfully grasping any of them. It was oppressively quiet, and he didn’t want to stay here alone, either to wait until his thoughts started to churn again or to absently watch the walls until the light finally left entirely. He also didn’t want to seek out his packmates, to speak or think or feel or be.

After an unknown amount of time passed, he finally moved, changing into joggers and running shoes in a daze before heading back the way he came.

Chapter End Notes

OKAY it's up \o/ This is probably about as legal as this fic is going to get because I'm not confident in this arena, so bear with me haha
For those who have given me advice and tips on the legal stuff, thank you so much, you guys were a lot of help in piecing this together <3 <3

That being said, this is obviously fictionalized, and I'm sure there are some things that people might notice are quite different than irl...most of it is based on real-world laws or practices, but it's a bit patchwork, with some things from the past (tho not as "past" as it should be) and some things from various parts of the world (tho not as far as you might think), e.g. marry-your-rapist laws, child marriage laws, etc. Some stuff, like the porn possession stuff, is p much entirely fictional, but is kept as a plot point because I have a soapbox and want to touch on some b.s. regarding character attacks. Part of what took me so long to write this chapter was planning the balance between how literal vs how fictionalized I wanted to get...
The other part was just...legalese?? (pls let me know if something is obviously wrong or poorly worded...)
I doubt I'll be piling so much more direct legal stuff into a chapter again, but this sets the stage at least
Also, I'm sorry

And finally, I know this is getting a bit real and I don't want to pressure anyone, esp if you read fanfic as an escape or have personal reasons for not partaking, but I can't research all this stuff and be content to stay quiet...so just this once, allow me this platform to encourage you to vote if you're in the US and are able to
That's all I say on that, thank you for understanding <3
What if

Chapter Summary

Silence followed once again, either from hesitation or something else. Shouto didn’t push, rubbing Bakugou’s back in small, slow circles above his waist, and waited.

Chapter Notes

CW for this chapter: dissociation, panic attack, general Big Emotions

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“-kugou! Bakugou!”

The rain had slowed to a misty drizzle, punctuated by a few fat drops every now and then, and it blended into the backdrop of white noise that the world had become. It didn’t feel distinct from the rhythmic thudding of his feet hitting the ground or the pounding of his heart, the steady puffs of breath that curled into wisps of steam, quickly left behind as he moved forward. The gray of the afternoon sky had melted into an inky black, a curtain of cloudy night that was broken intermittently by the artificial glow of streetlamps. Everything save for the predictable sounds of the clockwork of his body was quiet and unobtrusive.

That is, until the voice finally registered, and Bakugou slowed to a stop, looking around.

“There you are!” Uraraka jogged toward him, gait awkward as she held an umbrella in one hand and a flashlight in the other. She sounded a bit winded. “I’m so glad I found you! Were you just...running?”

Bakugou watched her approach and shrugged in response.

“In the rain?...Without a jacket?” Uraraka looked him over, worry and confusion etched in her feature as she caught her breath. “Ah, wait, let me text Todoroki, he’s been worried sick! He was about to call Aizawa, you know, except Shoji said he saw you go outside—he still might’ve called Aizawa, you really should keep your phone on you if you do stuff like this!” she reprimanded as she fumbled to text while cradling the flashlight in the crook of her elbow.

Bakugou watched her before shrugging again.

“Todoroki contacted your mom when it started getting late, and she said she dropped you off four hours ago! You’d think you could at least send us a message or something!” Uraraka continued to chastise, looking up at her packmate after she stashed her phone away again. Upon seeing his blank face, however, she paused, her expression changing with her growing concern. “Bakugou?...are you okay?”

Bakugou opened his mouth to reply before closing it again, not quite sure how to answer. His normal response would be to shout, deflect, minimize, but somehow none of the energy he should have was
surfacing...but he did know how his therapist would want him to respond, how Aizawa would advised him to, so after a pause, he croaked honestly, "I don’t know."

Uraraka’s brows knit further, the oddity of his demeanor and candid answer settling over her. She moved to wrap her hand around his elbow, holding the umbrella over him as if he weren’t already soaked through from the rain. “Come on, let’s get you back inside—wow, you’re so cold, that’s probably not good—“

Bakugou let her guide him back towards the dorm, time still fading indistinctly so that the trip seemed to pass quickly despite his conscious realization that they were somehow quite far away. There were a few greetings from classmates in the common room as they passed by, and Uraraka waved and smiled and said a few pleasantries while Bakugou passively allowed himself to be led back to Shouto’s room. As soon as the door closed, Uraraka released him, her face falling back into one of contained panic.

“Okay, uh—let’s...let me just get you a towel really quick! Gosh, okay, you’re shivering pretty bad, um—” She went into Shouto’s bathroom and shuffled around to find a spare towel, emerging and draping it around Bakugou’s shoulders.

She fretted over him, toweling him off in a way that was only partially effective as he sluggishly tried to assist. He didn’t notice until she had pointed it out, but he was shivering, and his limbs were uncoordinated with the heaviness of cold. The longer he was inside in the warmth, the more the chill seemed to seep into him, settling into his core, into his bones. His clothes were heavy, and rivulets of icy water cut paths down his skin underneath them, sabotaging Uraraka’s attempts to get him dry.

“This isn’t working,” Uraraka mumbled, wrapping the towel tightly around his shoulders. Her cheeks tinted pink as she started looking around the room. “Do you—do you have any clothes in here? We should get you out of these...”

At that moment, the door swung open, and a soaked Shouto entered the room, snapping the door shut behind him. He looked not unlike an angry cat, pushing the drenched hair out of his eyes as he glowered at Bakugou. “You could have said something—”

Uraraka, visibly relieved, interrupted, “Wait on that, Todoroki. Does he have clothes here?”

Shouto looked vexed at being cut off, but he gestured towards one of drawers. “Bottom drawer. And get me a towel.”

Uraraka moved to comply, pointedly looking away as Shouto began to peel his socks off. “I will, but help Bakugou change, okay? He’s...he needs help right now.”

Shouto paused at Uraraka’s tone of voice, dropping his second sock on the ground with a wet plop before turning to his packmate. It was only after he moved closer and around to Bakugou’s front that he noticed the subtle tremor in his packmate’s limbs and the lack of eye contact. Immediately disquieted, he paused before reaching out and taking the towel, spurred on by the cold rolling off of Bakugou’s skin. Grabbing the hem of Bakugou’s shirt and waiting for the omega to raise his arms, he asked with a tight voice, “What happened?”

Bakugou numbly did what was expected, maneuvering himself so Shouto could pull his sodden shirt off. “Went jogging.”

“In the rain?” Shouto dropped down, helping Bakugou stay steady as he peeled the other’s socks off, glancing up when he could.
“Yeah.”

“...Why?” Shouto watched Bakugou’s face, still kneeling. Bakugou only shrugged, hugging himself in an attempt to calm the shivers that were beginning to grow more violent as he remained shirtless and wet. Shouto glanced at Uraraka for some hope of clarification, but she met his look with unease, dropping a dry set of clothing nearby before moving past them into the bathroom to grab Shouto another towel.

“I’m going to go change, too,” she said as she passed off the towel, diverting her eyes to give them some privacy even though they weren’t yet undressed. “My skirt and socks got a little wet even with the umbrella, but I shouldn’t be gone long!”

Shouto nodded, recognizing her attempt to let them change alone. He draped the towel back around Bakugou’s shoulders to help him stay warm, and once the door clicked shut behind her, he mumbled, “I’m going to help you with your pants, okay?”

It was awkward and uncoordinated as Bakugou shivered and struggled with his motor skills, but after a few minutes and efficient help from Shouto, his bottom half was dressed in dry, soft lounge clothes. Shouto let Bakugou take care of his own shirt so that he could change himself, working quickly and not bothering to be thorough. As soon as he was dressed, Shouto returned to his packmate, leading him to sit on the futon and wrapping him in a thick blanket, leaving the pile of drenched clothes near the door to be handled later. Settled and able to be mindful of the fabric around him, he carefully generated heat with his left side, sitting close to Bakugou in an attempt to stave off the chill.

“That...was stupid,” Shouto huffed, worry etched into his features as he waited for Bakugou to stop trembling. “Don’t do that again.”

Bakugou simply nodded, drawing the blanket tighter around himself and over his head.

Shouto waited a bit to press further, focusing just on heating up the room. He wasn’t even sure what to say about this bizarre situation, but it was obvious that something was off, and he couldn’t tell how serious it was. He’d never seen his packmate like this, and he didn’t have the knowledge or experience to understand it. After pondering and considering his words, he tentatively asked, “Was the meeting bad?”

Bakugou didn’t move or make any indication that he even heard the question for a few long minutes. Shouto had given up on a response, assuming that his packmate needed more time, when Bakugou said in a soft voice, “Yeah.”

Shouto nodded even though Bakugou couldn’t see it with his eyes hidden under the blanket. He shifted, unsure of what to do but wanting to offer comfort. “Is it okay if I touch you?” Bakugou gave a small affirmative grunt, and Shouto moved a little closer, wrapping an arm around Bakugou’s back. He was relieved to find that his packmate wasn’t noticeably shivering anymore. “Do you want to talk about it?”

Silence followed once again, either from hesitation or something else. Shouto didn’t push, rubbing Bakugou’s back in small, slow circles above his waist, and waited. After about a minute, the quiet was interrupted by the sound of the door opening, and Uraraka slipped back into the room with a few extra towels. She wavered for a second when she saw the two of them before carefully stepping around the puddle of wet clothes to set the towels down someplace dry.

“Is he okay?” she whispered to Shouto, sitting nearby and tugging nervously at the hem of her shirt.
Shouto met her eyes with an uneasy look of his own. “The meeting apparently didn’t go so well. I think he just needs some time. It sounds like he doesn’t want to talk about it—“

“They can’t get him for rape.”

Both of their attention immediately shot to Bakugou, motionless under the makeshift hood of his blanket. After a beat of processing, Shouto finally spoke up. “What?”

Bakugou shifted, drew in on himself, and repeated with a flat voice, “They can’t get him for rape.” He sighed shakily before continuing. “Because...because of the bond, he’s—I don’t remember the word. Exo-something. It doesn’t count.”

A disbelieving tension fell over the room as Shouto and Uraraka stared. “What?” Shouto said again, back straight with apprehension. “What does that mean? They’re not—they can’t just let him go.”

“No, he...” Bakugou shifted again, picking out the right words. “They can get him for domestic abuse. Or something. But it can’t be rape if it’s during my heat and we’re bonded. He’s just, allowed to do whatever.”

Stunned, Shouto sputtered for a second before growling, “That’s bullshit. They can’t just ignore what he did to you.”

“They can,” Bakugou responded, barking a humorless laugh. His voice began to take on more inflection as he talked, wavering and raw. “They even—they’re even going to use the videos he took. Against me, as, as proof of consent or something, because he’s the alpha and he gets to just do whatever the fuck he wants.”

“But you’re—are you too young?” Uraraka squeaked, leaning in and twisting her shirt anxiously between her hands.

“Not anymore, I guess, because only adults get bonded, so I’m an adult now, legally, or something, and I have all this, all this fucking paperwork to fill out—I don’t even know what that shit means, but, but if—my parents—I have to sign off on shit to let them do stuff, I don’t know—“

Sensing that Bakugou was beginning to work himself up, Shouto tried to gently interrupt, rubbing his back and subconsciously releasing soothing pheromones. “It’s—it’ll be okay, we can help with that—“

“It’s not! It’s not going to be okay, Shouto, they’re going to try to convince people that I—that I wanted it, that—the lawyers said they were going to try to ‘attack my character’ or something, and do you know what that means? Do you know—people already think I’m some sort of, of, villain waiting to happen, what if—fuck, stop touching me—!”

Shouto immediately backed off, looking to Uraraka for some misplaced hope of guidance. Uraraka just met his look with equal alarm and distress, nibbling on her lower lip and leaning forward as if unsure if she should try to help or let it run its course. Bakugou seemed not to notice, shifting under his blanket in agitation as words continued to bubble up with increasing frenzy.

“So—even though he’s the one that fucked me over, I’m the one that gets fucking smeared, and—what if this shit gets out? If they use it, people have to see that shit, right, so, so—fucking shit, get this fucking blanket off of me!” Bakugou struggled to untangle himself from the blanket before wrenching it off of him with an erratic explosion, using the momentum to vault into a standing position and start to pace. “What if—what if this affects my hero career? What if I—what if this gets mixed in with that other bullshit, and pros hear it, and, and they—what if they won’t take me because
—goddamn it, why did this happen to me? This isn’t fucking fair! It isn’t fair!"

“Katsuki—“ Shouto raised a hand to Bakugou, cautiously preparing to stand.

Bakugou ignored him, pacing and pulling at the collar of his shirt with trembling hands as he shouted, voice cracking with emotion. “He—he’s not even here anymore and he’s still fucking ruining my life! I hope he fucking dies—I’m serious, I want, I want him to die, I—I hate him, I fucking hate him! Why—why did he do this to me?” The tremors in his hand began to move through the rest of his body as his breath grew shallower.

“Katsuki!” Shouto tried again, firmer and louder to try to grab his packmate’s attention. “Breathe!”

Bakugou started and looked at him as if he forgot the other two were even there, eyes wild and chest rising too rapidly. He swallowed, gaze darting around the room, and he looked lost as the thought process he was shouting about dissolved into disorganized anxiety.

Shouto spoke more gently, trying to ignore his own churning unease. “You have to breathe, okay? Stay in the present. Focus on me. Breathe with me.” He trained his own breathing, purposely making it audible. Bakugou still looked too jittery, and it took him a while to get the rhythm, looking around and cursing quietly when he faltered. Eventually, however, he managed to unsteadily breathe along, eyes closed and hands still curled in the fabric of his shirt.

When Bakugou finally was able to maintain a slow breathing pace, Shouto murmured to him, “Keep going like that for a while, okay? We’re here for you. You can get through this.” At the last statement, Bakugou’s expression faltered, jaw clenching and lips drawing down as his breathing became shaky. Shouto didn’t miss it, quietly reminding him, “Keep breathing, Katsuki.”

Bakugou continued to train his breathing into the slow pattern even as it stuttered and hitched, and he pressed his palms to his eyes in an attempt to keep the tears from coming. It didn’t really work, and he sniffled as he scrubbed at his cheeks and tried to keep himself calm, the fervor from minutes ago draining out of him after the long day. Uraraka quietly got up and slipped into Shouto’s bathroom, emerging a few seconds later with a handful of tissue paper to offer to him. After he took them and pressed them to his face with a wet, “Thanks,” she hesitated before sitting back down, giving him his space during his moment of vulnerability.

It was a sensitive situation, and Shouto wasn’t sure if there was more that he should be doing, or whether it would be best to wait. It didn’t seem quite right to leave Bakugou standing there, though, so once it seemed that he was somewhat calmer, Shouto asked tentatively, “Would you like to sit? I can make some tea, too, if you think that would help...”

“I don’t want any fucking tea,” Bakugou grumbled, voice thick behind his curtain of tissue. Despite that, he walked over and eased himself down next to his packmates, pulling the discarded blanket back around his shoulders and sniffing.

He looked exhausted, and Uraraka glanced helplessly over him at Shouto before scooting closer to his side. Following advice Shouto had given her, she quietly cleared her throat before asking, “Is it okay if I touch you?” Bakugou remained silent for a long beat, a brief flash of annoyance passing over his features before melting back into fatigued despondence. With a huff, he nodded, and she gently reached out to slide her hand over his upper back.

They still weren’t quite used to the pack bond, and it was awkward at first, but they had been scenting for long enough that after a couple of minutes, the tension began to bleed away. The omega pheromones were different from the beta’s—where beta pheromones calmed and disarmed, omega pheromones felt more like falling in-tune. It was less soothing but somehow more homely, like cocoa
next to a hearth or visiting a sibling, not necessarily intimate or sincere, but at-ease and effortless. Even outside of the pack, Bakugou found himself more comfortable with other omegas in his space than any other gender (which probably was a good thing given how touchy Kaminari could get). He was grateful for that now, as Uraraka slowly came to lean against him, a weight and warmth at his side that acted like an anchor.

Shouto readjusted himself as well, shifting forward slight and turning so he could face Bakugou better. He didn’t crowd the omega, but hesitantly reached for Bakugou’s hand, giving his packmate plenty of time to pull away if he wanted to. Another flash of annoyance, and Bakugou huffed and thrust his hand forward, impatient with the delicate treatment even if it was obviously warranted. Shouto couldn’t help a small smile, and he gently held Bakugou’s hand palm-up in his own, running his the wrist of his other hand over Bakugou’s in a soft circular pattern.

The three of them sat like this for a few minutes, Uraraka quietly threading her fingers through Bakugou’s hair and Shouto reaffirming their bond, comfortable and familiar scents mingling together and permeating the air. Bakugou reluctantly relaxed into it, eyes puffy and red, and while he still looked miserable, he at least didn’t seem blank or panicky.

Shouto churned a few thoughts in his mind, doubting whether or not he should say them, but the line of reasoning Bakugou was entertaining disturbed him. For better or worse, he didn’t want to leave his packmate with those thoughts, so hoping it wouldn’t make things worse, he murmured, “This won’t affect your hero career. It won’t...it shouldn’t get out at all, outside of the case, but even if it did, the pros know you were taken against your will.” Bakugou didn’t give any indication if that assurance was helpful, and Shouto wasn’t sure if reminding him that his situation was well-known among the school staff and the pros who searched for him would do more harm than good. But it was out in the open now, and he swallowed before continuing. “Even if everyone knew, the pros won’t hold it against you, and you’re still one of the best in our class. So...who cares what everyone else thinks? You’re not a villain, and you’re not...you didn’t get a choice. You know that, we know that, everyone who matters knows that. Don’t let them make you feel like they can decide your future.” He sought Bakugou’s eyes, clenching the omega’s hand in his own with both hands. “They can’t. You’re stronger than they are. He’s still in prison, and you still have the upper hand.”

Bakugou held his eye contact for a second before dropping it, a host of emotions warring across his features. He exhaled, looking away and drawing a bit closer in on himself. “What if...” he started, faltering briefly to compose his thoughts. “What if...we can’t get him for anything? If what he did is just, waved off like that...what if the rest of the stuff will be too? If he gets out, and we’re still bonded...”

“He won’t. He won’t get out,” Shouto said with conviction. “There’s still a lot against him. There’s the burglary, and...and once the paperwork goes through, there’s our pack bond. He won’t be able to come after you anymore.”

“And—“ Uraraka added, voice coming in an unsure squeak. She cleared her throat and tried again, “And, if the trial takes as long as you said it might, he won’t even have a bond to control you with. We’ll break that stupid bond! No matter what it takes!” She nodded with refreshed determination. “I’ll do some research and talk to my cousins, and we’ll help you through it the best we can! You’ll de-register before he ever gets the chance to see the light of day.”

Shouto smiled at her and gestured for Bakugou to give him his other hand. Bakugou complied, and Shouto returned to scenting him with gentle caresses of his wrist. “It’ll be okay. It may not feel like it, and it’ll be hard, but it will. You’ll get through this, and we’ll be here for you.”

Bakugou took a shaky inhale, opening his mouth as if to say something before closing it and
dropping his gaze to his lap, eyes watery. He nodded, subconsciously leaning into the safe and comforting touches, and minutes passed before he croaked a nearly imperceptible, “Thanks.”

The pack let an intimate silence fall over them, and before long, the day’s events and emotional toll sunk in, and Uraraka took her leave when Bakugou began to sway with the onset of exhaustion. Shouto turned off the overhead light and encouraged Bakugou to crawl under the covers for the night, and Bakugou curled up close to the warmth of his packmate, too tired to be embarrassed about how clingy he could get. He fell asleep holding onto the beta’s hand, nestled in the protection of the trusted scented.

Chapter End Notes

So...I initially planned a second part to this chapter, but it turns out what you can plan in one sentence sometimes turns into three pages of writing, so it ended up being just a Big Ol Emotion Fest
Which frankly, was in the stars anyway...Bakugou had a lot to get off of his chest. At least the steps between "acquaintance" and "confidant" were breached and that "first real heart-to-heart" came up, albeit probably not in the way Bakugou would have preferred, but that's the way things happen sometimes

Also, I touched on this a little in Scoreboard with Kaminari, but I like to imagine that omegas feel usually comfortable around each other in general, even if it's not in an emotionally-close way. Like...the way cats sometimes just pile on top of each other to fit in a light beam. Like betas will calm you down and zen you out some, but in a pack omega to omega is kind of ride-or-die--if you're calm then they're calm, but if you're pissed they're probably right there with you. Beta pheromones are like "okay calm down," but omega pheromones are like "dw I'll help you hide the body" which is companionable but often times not helpful haha
An underlying sense of still waters

Chapter Summary

When he thought of anxiety, he thought of people like Deku, of wringing hands and fretting and trembling voices. It wasn’t a word meant for people like him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Bakugou couldn’t say that he was anything close to well-rested, but he felt just a little lighter when he woke up the next day. His body was heavy and sore from his impromptu (hours-long?) run in the rain, and his face felt stuffy from crying...but the alienating pressure of dread and powerlessness accumulating inside of him was a little less loud. He hated being that vulnerable in front of people, losing that much control, but he couldn’t deny that his stupid outbursts sometimes helped his emotions fall into a place where he could better reflect and understand them.

That being said, he still felt like shit.

More pressingly, he didn’t really understand what happened. The disconnect he experienced was more severe than it had ever been, and it was awful in a completely different way than his usual emotional blow-ups. It was...unsettling. Being frustrated with himself was familiar, but being unable to trust himself and his perceptions was something he never felt before to that degree, and frankly, it freaked him out a little. He definitely didn’t want something like that to happen again when his coursework might be on the line.

Yet another bullshit mystery for his therapist to unravel.

He had never wanted to skip class so bad, but somehow, he managed to pull through despite being more spaced-out than usual, locking himself in Shouto’s room as soon as classes ended. The day after went without a hitch as well, and part of him wondered if his classmates had finally started to pick up on his more serious, “Don’t fucking talk to me,” moods. Either that, or he looked as shitty as he felt, given that Iida had been brave enough to offer him a well-meaning get-well-soon speech at the end of the day. Regardless, it was rare that he could slip away from post-class conversation or someone begging to be tutored without at least some growling and expletives, but even Kirishima seemed to let him go without a struggle.

Clarification came that evening, heralded in the form of Uraraka pushing Shouto’s door open with her hip, arms full with her laptop and a number of books. She gave a bright smile to her packmates as she carefully set her burden down, chirping, “Hello! I hope I’m not intruding!”

“No at all,” Shouto responded, looking up briefly from a homework assignment he waited too long to begin. She beamed at him in acknowledgment and settled in next to them, legs folded underneath her.

“So!” she began, clapping her hands on to the top of her thighs and training her face into one of determination. “I’ve been doing research! Oh, and I told Mina that you were under the weather, Bakugou, so hopefully everyone will give you some space for a few days.”
Admittedly, Bakugou wasn’t sure how to respond to that, even though Uraraka seemed to be waiting for a reaction. While there was a voice telling him that he should be irritated at her for going behind his back, most of him was begrudgingly relieved to not have to deal with the extra pressure. He settled with a grumbled, “I was wondering why everyone was being so fucking cagey.”

“I hope you don’t mind,” Uraraka said, back-peddling slightly on her previous gusto as a lingering sliver of indecision snuck its way forward. “I didn’t want to bother you, but I didn’t want everyone else crowding you too much either...you seemed really upset! You came up when I was talking to Mina, and I knew if I said something to her, she’d spread the word because, well, it’s her, so it was sort of a spur-of-the-moment thing—”

Bakugou cut her off with an impatient, “Who gives a fuck?” Although he wasn’t sure if he actually minded or not, the rambling and coddling was more than annoying enough to determine his reaction. “I don’t care what you do. Just don’t go getting into the habit of telling everyone shit about me without asking first, got it?”

Uraraka quickly nodded. “I won’t! I promise!”

“Good. Drop it.”

“Right.” Uraraka took a deep breath, fidgeting for a beat and anxiously glancing over him as if trying to read his body language. “Are you sure it’s okay because—“

“Yes!” Bakugou snapped, rolling his eyes. He took a brief inhale to bring down his temper, trying to keep the growling to a minimum. “It’s fine, I don’t care. And if it’s not I’ll—I’ll say something about it or whatever. Just quit with the fucking rambling.”

“Oh okay,” Uraraka responded. She still looked a little uncertain, but there was also something like relief on her face at his grumpy demeanor. After a second to re-center herself, she grabbed the books she set down and drew them towards her. “Like I said, I did some research, and I talked to some people yesterday. I still have some more work to do, but I think I found some tips to help you through your next heats!”

Bakugou’s stomach dropped a little at the subject, but he waited for her to continue, eyeing the titles of the books she retrieved. They were mostly self-help books, with a thick biology text thrown in for good measure, and little slips of paper with color-coded scrawl marked certain pages. On the top of the stack was a notebook, opened to a page filled with messy scribbles. He wondered how she didn’t do better on her midterms if apparently she had the capacity to study with this level of organization, until a closer look showed that her notes had no real useful information and were indented seemingly at random. Apparently, Deku was too nice to beat any real note-taking skills into her. Bakugou made a mental note to pick up the nerd’s slack before the next exam so the airhead might actually learn something before she graduates.

She glowed as Bakugou took inventory of her work, interpreting his fixation as approval. “A lot of it didn’t go into much detail, but I found some sections specifically about handling break-ups in these—” She pointed at a few of the self-helps near the top of the stack. “And there are a few websites I found too that had a lot of useful information!”

Bakugou nodded. “And?”

“Well...it’s a lot of stuff, where should I start...” Uraraka picked up one of the books and flipped through it, glancing at her notes. “Um, what do you know already, I guess?”

With a hum, Bakugou set his chin in his hand, impassively watching her rummage around. “Not
much. I asked to Recovery Girl, but she was useless.”

Uraraka furrowed her brow, skeptical. “Really?”

Bakugou huffed, elaborating, “She said a bunch of shit about the difference between a normal heat and a...’full’ one, I think she called it, with nesting and the whole feeling like crap thing. She didn’t know how badly I would be affected, though, since this whole situation is fucking bullshit. Apparently I’m going to want to ‘seek him out’ or something, which I fucking doubt, and it’s going to last longer.”

Uraraka nodded along with his summary, face still scrunched in contemplation. Once he finished, she began to flip back through her resources. “Okay, that’s actually a decent foundation...I think...let me see...” She found a page she was looking for, setting the book down and grabbing another. “So, the biggest thing with full, bonded heats is that they can be painful, and on top of that, your hormones are probably going to be out of whack, so you’re going to feel more emotional, from the sounds of it.”


“I’m not done! Gosh, you’re difficult sometimes.”

“You’re not telling me anything I don’t already know.”

“I’m not done.” She huffed, setting down a few more books to the correct pages and opening her laptop. “So all of that is basically just to get you to seek out your mate, or to get your mate to pay attention to you if they aren’t. Most advice for avoiding a bad heat has to do with keeping stuff scented by your alpha nearby, but obviously we aren’t going to do that because that would just make the bond last longer. So the other options would be to try some tips and hope it won’t be too bad, or to get you another alpha.”

“No alphas,” Bakugou immediately responded, expression darkening.

“Don’t worry, I kind of figured you’d say that. Plus, that’d be...awkward to work out.”

“Yeah, no shit,” Bakugou scoffed. “That fucker was so fucking cocky about it too, saying that I’d be, what was it, ‘bouncing between dick’ after him, and I don’t want to give him the satisfaction. We’re doing this cold turkey, no matter what.”

Uraraka gasped, shocked and outraged. “He said that?” Shouto had looked up from his assignment for the first time as well, lips pressed into a thin line. Bakugou suddenly felt a little uncomfortable, not quite expecting such a strong reaction.

“Well, yeah, he was a piece of shit, obviously.”

“Yeah, but—ugh, what a—a jerk!” Uraraka growled, pounding her fists down against her thighs and nearly toppling her laptop. “Even if you did want to take another alpha, that’s none of his business!”

Bakugou barked a humorless laugh. “Yeah, right. Didn’t you hear? Apparently it’s everyone’s fucking business. But I don’t want to add any ‘sloppy seconds’ rumors on top of my already garbage reputation or deal with any stupid, awkward-ass arranged relationships, so it doesn’t fucking matter either way.”

Uraraka fumed, obviously struggling to decide whether to let it go or try to dispute the matter further. She finally huffed and aggressively grabbed her notes. “Well, what he or anyone else says doesn’t
matter anyway! We were going to break the bond without any alphas already, so don’t think about that, their stupid opinions don’t matter.”

After swallowing a retort that obviously, if it were that easy to just ‘not think about it,’ he would’ve done that already, Bakugou nodded and rested his chin back on his hand. It wasn’t worth dragging it out, and unpleasant echoes of memories he didn’t want to recall were trying to dig their way forward the longer they stayed on the topic. “Whatever. What are the tips? If you say yoga, I’m blowing up your laptop.”

The comment broke some of Uraraka’s seriousness, and she giggled as she sifted through notes in a more directed way. “Actually, I think there was one like that, but I didn’t put it on my list.”

“...I’ll spare it this time.”

“Oh my, so generous, thank you!” Uraraka typed for a second before looking back at her packmate. “So most of the tips I’ve found are basically about making it more comfortable, which usually are just like, normal self-care things. Heat compresses, aromatherapy, some balms and oils...we can look at some reviews and compare some brands later. Um, do you usually eat much during your heat?”

Bakugou shook his head. “Stomach gets upset.”

“Okay, well, because it’ll last longer for the next few cycles, we’ll want to be careful to make sure you do eat something during the latter half even if you don’t feel like it, or else you might feel even worse. There are some supplements you can add to your water, although I kind of wonder how well those actually work...”

“We’ll look at reviews for those too, then,” Bakugou mumbled gruffly, turning her notebook so he could follow along...once he could find the list she was reading from. Her color-coding seemed almost completely arbitrary. He was definitely going to force her to adopt some better habits.

“Yeah!” She smiled at him, preening over his rare lack of complaint or combativeness towards her suggestions. “There’s a bunch of stuff out there like this—we should be able to find a lot to make it less terrible, hopefully!” She punctuated the point by turning her laptop and scrolling through a number of products on an online store, specifically marketed towards heat relief for distant partnerships or people with difficult cycles.

Bakugou nodded, jaw jutted out as he considered the options. “So that’s it? All I’ve got to do is rub herbs all over myself?”

“Well, there are other things, too,” Uraraka said, turning her laptop back towards her. “A lot of what I found that’s specifically about bond-breaking without an alpha was about...um, how to word this...I guess tricking your body by, well, mimicking it?”

“Mimicking what?” Bakugou raised an eyebrow as she tripped over her words, not missing a slight dusting of pink rising higher on her cheeks.

“You know...your alpha. I mean, you know how heats are...you’re going to get, uh...horny, and a lot of other symptoms that are related to being bonded to your mate, like wanting him around and all that. Usually alpha-scented things help, but if you can’t have that, there are other things that aren’t as powerful but might still help out some.”

“...Like?”

“Well, um...” She clicked around on her computer for a second, pulling up a resource that could help her explain. “Like pacing things the way your alpha did? Or, uh, getting a heat aid that’s a similar
size as his...as him.”

“Oh,” Bakugou replied dumbly, some of Uraraka’s bashfulness beginning to rub off on him. “...That works?”

Uraraka cleared her throat, trying to maintain a professional demeanor despite having grown quite red. “It’s not like, a miracle cure or anything, but some people say it does help...though I guess some other people say it didn’t help them much, and it’s not nearly as good as scenting...but better than nothing, I guess!”

Bakugou sighed heavily, already not a fan of that plan. The idea of pacing his heat the way Touma did sounded exhausting, especially if he had to do it by himself. He wasn’t even sure he’d be able to, given how often the asshole woke him up or worked him over when he was barely even conscious for it. After a second of thinking about it, he groaned and scrubbed his hair, grumbling, “Fuck, okay, we’re not talking about that right now. Let’s just...go back to reading reviews for supplements or some shit.”

Uraraka nodded vigorously, on-board with changing the subject for the time being. She clicked back a few pages on her browser until the previous online shop page came up, tilting the computer and scooting closer to her packmate so they could both see. The rest of the evening was spent comparing items and calculating the amount necessary for the duration of his heat, and by the time Uraraka left a few hours later, Bakugou had a list saved with an estimated cost he could text his parents about in the morning.

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The next few days passed relatively easily, free of new legal concerns and complaints from his friends about his reclusive tendencies. It was a breather he needed, and while all of his problems didn’t magically disappear, it was nice to get some time to piece himself back together. Planning with Uraraka gave some order to the disjointed jumbles of concerns in his mind, and he spent a little extra time planning and organizing his schedule for the sole purpose of retaining a feeling of control. He went out to dinner with his parents at a quiet restaurant during off-hours, and it almost felt normal, with conversations that stayed on the topics of hero training or big projects at work.

As smoothly as the days passed, however, there was an underlying sense of still waters before a storm, and Bakugou knew that underneath it all, there was a fragile balance that he was afraid of upsetting. He both dreaded and anticipated his next therapy session, and he kept having to brush off the nagging voice in his head that berated him for not getting better quickly enough, for still relying so heavily on those two appointments a week. When the appointment finally came, it passed again too quickly, leaving him with a few helpful insights and many things yet to be resolved, simultaneously contributing to his peace of mind and seemingly constantly disrupting it. His churning thoughts were less chaotic, but no less a set of future hurdles in his path.

Lying on the futon in Shouto’s room the evening after, Bakugou stared at the ceiling, brow furrowed as he picked through his thoughts. When he heard the door open, he sighed and mumbled into the air, “The therapist is going to refer me for meds.”

Shouto hummed in response, indicating that he was listening. He had returned from filling up a few cups with water, and he was in the process of retrieving two teabags from one of his drawers. Once he was satisfied with his selection, he put his left side to work heating the water, going about the task leisurely, attentive but without crowding Bakugou with too much attention.

It pained Bakugou to admit he just how grateful he was for that quiet stability.
His therapist and the inward reflection that followed reminded him that he had to talk about it. His recent breakdown reiterated that much—he couldn’t just bottle everything up, and even though he’d gotten better at expressing himself, it was still a tedious weak point. As much as he hated it, hated how he struggled to find the words to make sense of his turbulent emotions and disorganized fears, hated how stupid and small and weak it made him feel, he had to do it...because if he didn’t, he might go off at the wrong time, or he might freak out again, or he might lose himself completely. If he didn’t, it might affect his hero courses or his ability to keep up in class, and that’s the one thing he had that couldn’t be taken away from him.

That fucker could try to ruin everything, destroy everything he touched, but not this. He wasn’t going to keep Bakugou from becoming a hero.

...So, Bakugou had to talk.

“She said that they were going to try to keep it minimal, but because of all the legal bullshit and how long it might go on, it might help managing the...the anxiety. Or something.” Bakugou swallowed, not looking up when Shouto set down a mug next to him. Saying that out loud—“anxiety”—still bothered him in some unshakable way. When he thought of anxiety, he thought of people like Deku, of wringing hands and fretting and trembling voices. It wasn’t a word meant for people like him.

“I thought she didn’t want you on medication,” Shouto commented, almost as if he were talking about the weather. He settled down near Bakugou’s shoulder, languidly running his hand through Bakugou’s hair, a careful reassurance that was light enough not to be a disturbance.

“She didn’t,” Bakugou grumbled, exhaling softly as fingers parted his locks and caressed his scalp. He let his eyes slip shut for a second, allowing himself to be pacified by the gentle beta scent and tender touches. It felt less like weakness and more like openness like this, intimacy without losing himself in the emotions of another. “But shit keeps happening, and it’s going to keep happening, and the therapy might not be enough while it does. I have to be able to function still. She said the meds won’t be a fix-all so much as an aid to the process, basically.”

Shouto hummed, watching Bakugou’s face and brushing the hair away from his forehead. “What do you think about it?”

Bakugou sighed, blinking his eyes open and considering. After a few seconds had passed, he begrudgingly hauled himself up to a sitting position, picking up the mug of tea Shouto had prepared for him. “If it’ll help, then it doesn’t matter,” he murmured, resolute. “I...the other day, I apparently dissociated pretty bad, and she’s worried that might happen during class or even out in the field later. She says this might help. They don’t know for sure, and hopefully it’s not going to be some sort of big fucking problem either way, but it could be dangerous if I did end up zoning out at the wrong time.” He stared at the liquid in the cup, brow furrowed as he recalled the conversation. “And she’s right. I can’t let that happen again.”

Behind him, Shouto shifted, re-positioning himself to face Bakugou’s back as he listened. Tentatively, he smoothed his hands over Bakugou’s shoulders, receptive to any signs that the touch was unwelcome, and he began to firmly rub his thumbs in a circular pattern along either side of Bakugou’s spine. He made another thoughtful sound, considering his words. “It would be bad if that happened at the wrong time, so it’s good to be careful. But if it does happen again, it’s not your fault. Don’t hold it against yourself.”

Bakugou huffed in irritation, taking a grumpy sip of his tea. He wanted to argue, not fully agreeing with the sentiment even though it sounded similar to what his therapist told him earlier. At the end of the day, he couldn’t afford it, and the notion that he couldn’t control himself enough to stop it from happening again was unacceptable (terrifying, aggravating, awful—). Medication would help, and he
was still going to therapy, so there was no reason it should be a problem in the future.

“It might make it worse if you beat yourself up about it,” Shouto murmured, voice even and touch steady. “It’s okay to be frustrated. But it’s not your fault.” His fingers rhythmically passed over Bakugou’s muscles, moving up his tense shoulders and neck. Bakugou didn’t answer, but as the minutes passed, he relaxed bit by bit, leaning more heavily into the massage.

After maybe about ten minutes, Shouto gradually stopped, his fingers beginning to get tired. Instead, he rubbed along Bakugou’s back, smoothing the fabric of his shirt under his hands before wrapping his arms loosely around Bakugou’s waist and setting his chin on his packmate’s shoulder. He gave a small, content sigh, nuzzling against Bakugou’s neck and comfortably settling against him.

“I’ll be coming off my suppressants next week,” Bakugou said, leaning back against Shouto’s chest and tilting his head slightly to accommodate his packmate’s affections. “So I’ll be starting the new meds after that. They don’t want to mix.”

“I see.” Shouto tried not to sound too excited, but he couldn’t deny that finally getting to mingle Bakugou’s scent in with the rest of the pack was appealing. He pressed his face closer against the omega’s neck with the extra room he was given, and after a brief second of hesitation, he gave in to the urge to press a soft kiss against the skin. A small, almost imperceptible shiver passed through his packmate, and Shouto paused. “Is that okay?”

“Yeah,” Bakugou breathed, but the question seemed to pop the bubble of the moment, and he reluctantly tilted his head back to glance at his beta. Shouto met his gaze with a cheek resting against his shoulder. “...What?”

“Nothing,” Shouto replied with a small smile, sliding his arms a little tighter around Bakugou’s waist. “I get to have your scent with me, too, soon.” His smile reached his eyes, and he maneuvered his head to peck an awkward kiss against Bakugou’s lips.

Bakugou blushed slightly, pointedly glancing away and mumbling, “Drink your goddamn tea.” Shouto laughed quietly before disentangling himself just enough to grab his mug before it got cold.

Chapter End Notes

Somehow these chapters keep ending up longer than I expect. Sorry for the delay in this one, too--I was finishing up EVP Sessions and the start of the holidays keep finding ways to disrupt my process @__@ But! I hope you'll enjoy some bonding time and good ol' fashioned social support :>
Defying expectations

Chapter Summary

The locker room was beginning to empty out—about half of the others were gone already, and Shouto gave a nod to Deku and Bakugou as he went on ahead, falling in step with Tokoyami to join the betas. The only wrench in his plan to avoid any attention was the current conversation and the idiots engaged in it rather than getting dressed.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“We will be reconvening in TDL to begin lessons on how to handle situations regarding second genders,” Aizawa announced after lunch, his demeanor oozing his lack of excitement about the whole ordeal. He looked about as exhausted as Bakugou felt, although that was a fairly normal occurrence. Today, though, his lips were a little more tightly pinched, like he was internally pouting about doing something didn’t want to do but knew he had to. With a deep sigh, he scanned the students’ faces before continuing. “There won’t be physical exercises today, but there will be in the future. We’ll be breaking into groups based on second genders, so alphas report to Present Mic, betas to Midnight, and omegas to me.” Without any pause for questions, their professor turned away and walked out the door, assuming the students would handle themselves or else be left behind.

A murmur of discussion passed over the room as the occupants rose to their feet and began shuffling towards the locker rooms to get changed. Bakugou squashed the icy tendrils of dread in his stomach and followed suit. He knew this was coming, after all, and had for a while, and as much as he’d prefer not doing it, he was prepared...or as prepared as he was ever going to be. He could do without the nausea churning his stomach or the prickling sense of anticipation crawling over his skin, but he walked with his shoulders a little further back and his chin boldly tilted up in an effort to convince himself that he was fine. It was going to be unavoidably obnoxious, but the sooner he got it over with, the sooner it would pass and be one less thorn in his side.

Conversation drifted through the students. Bakugou didn’t bother listening in at first, knowing that it would probably not make him feel any better about the situation, but in the close quarters of the locker room, it became increasingly difficult not to accidentally eavesdrop. At first, it was just slivers of thoughts that were easy to tune out, but the oddity of conducting these particular lessons didn’t escape everyone.

“Well, is leading the omegas?”

Sero was standing not too far from Bakugou, unbuttoning his shirt and musing to no one in particular. The boys changed in the front wing of the locker room, and conversation easily passed through the group uninhibited. In addition to this area, the locker room had separate, optional sections for alphas and omegas to offer privacy for those who might wish it, but those sections tended to be rarely used with their class. Most students hadn’t presented yet when they first joined 1-A, and as such, had grown accustomed to each others’ presences—it felt a little odd to break off after that, especially considering the alphas were the majority and the only (out) omega in the group, Kaminari, was oblivious to anything that might count as shame. “I mean, Mic is an alpha and Midnight is a beta, so wouldn’t they have an omega teacher for the omega group?”
Kirishima had paused in the removal of his shirt, blinking like thought was a new discovery for him. “Well, we don’t have any omega teachers, right?”

“Not that we know of,” Sero responded, holding up a finger. “But we don’t actually know what Mr. Aizawa is.”

“Woah, so you think Aizawa is an omega?” Kirishima gasped, Sero’s line of reasoning clicking into place. A little ways off, Kaminari squawked with an expression like someone just gave him proof that Santa was real.

The conversation had caught the attention of a few other boys. Always looking for opportunities to be nosy, Deku hummed thoughtfully and cut in, “His secrecy about it could also just be because he’s an underground hero.” He looked between Sero and Kirishima, musing with his gym shirt half-on. “The less info people have on him, the better, so we can’t just assume...”

Sero hummed, tapping his chin in a way that was half-thoughtful and half-just-for-the-theatrics. “That could be...hey Kaminari, you think you could try to get some hints out of him?”

“Way ahead of you!” Kaminari wrestled into his gym pants hastily and with a complete lack of grace, gleefully eager to uncover a new mystery. As soon as he was dressed, he nearly bolted out of the locker room, only slowing after Iida told him off for running on the potentially dangerous tile.

“I don’t know if he should do that,” Deku murmured uneasily, glancing after Kaminari. He was almost done changing himself, and Iida waited nearby to leave together, having already dressed as efficiently as possible. “It might be a private thing, after all...”

Sero responded with a slight shrug. “You know Mr. Aizawa—if he doesn’t want us to know, we won’t. I don’t actually think he’ll tell Kaminari anything.”

“But what if Mr. Aizawa really is an omega? I never would’ve guessed,” Kirishima said, eyes twinkling with a mix between awe and admiration. The new possibility of someone defying expectations while being, in his mind, a badass was making him light up with excitement, which would be almost endearing if it didn’t distract him from changing.

“That’s because you and everyone else assumes shit without asking,” Bakugou grumbled, trying to drag out the process of putting on his own shirt with the hopes that the rest of the class would leave before him and already be off in their groups. The locker room was beginning to empty out—about half of the others were gone already, and Shouto gave a nod to Deku and Bakugou as he went on ahead, falling in step with Tokoyami to join the betas. The only wrench in his plan to avoid any attention was the current conversation and the idiots engaged in it rather than getting dressed.

Kirishima smiled sheepishly, shimmying out of his pants. “Yeah, maybe. But come on, he’s so grouchy all of the time! He comes off way more like an alpha, doesn’t he?”

“No,” Bakugou answered curtly at the same time Sero nodded.

“I always figured we didn’t have any omega teachers, but maybe we have more than we think,” Kirishima continued, reflexively ignoring Bakugou’s bad attitude and directing his discussion to Sero instead. “We don’t know Ectoplasm’s gender either, do we? Or Thirteen’s...or Power Loader’s—man, I never even considered this before!”

“A lot of pros choose to keep their genders private, no matter what they are, so that’s not actually that unusual!” Deku quipped with that obnoxious glint in his eyes he got when nerding out. “Especially after the first omega heroes were allowed to join, a lot of pros decided to keep their genders private in
solidarity against all of the backlash. No one even knew All Might was a beta until his Silver Age days. It’s less popular now, but it’s still not uncommon for betas and alphas to keep it quiet, too.” He paused, brow furrowing a little in a way that meant he was thinking too hard about something stupid. “What I find strange is that they’re doing this now. Aren’t second gender lessons usually just for third years?”

“Yes, I believe so,” Iida responded, his own expression becoming reflective. “It seems odd to conduct them at this level.”

“Maybe it’s because we’re doing our internships early, too?” Deku was already done changing, yet he and Glasses just stood there, chatting up a storm. “Mr. Aizawa did say there would be physical exercises later, so maybe we’ll be learning things important for hero work.”

“You think so?” Kirishima said, blinking at Deku. He and Sero were fully dressed as well at this point, but they made no move to leave. “I figured it’d just be sex ed stuff like in middle school.”

Bakugou could only change so slowly. If he went any slower, it would be obvious that he was doing it on purpose, and while part of him honestly considered it anyway because he didn’t fucking care what they thought, enough of him realized that it was a futile delay of the inevitable. It was clear that they would all just stand here chatting until everyone was ready to leave, invested enough in the conversation not to kill it until they needed to, and somehow Bakugou got roped into that just by existing nearby and saying two sentences. He heaved a sigh as he resigned himself to putting his shoes.

As soon as he was done, he started marching towards the exit, not waiting for the others to keep up. Kirishima automatically turned to fall into step at his side, and the others followed to continue the conversation, talking around Bakugou as they made their way into the training ground. The alpha group was easy to spot as soon as they entered the building, a small crowd made up of most of the class, and the beta group was further off, already starting with all of their members. It took a second of glancing around to see the omega group, much smaller than the others with just Aizawa, Uraraka, and Kaminari, congregated off to the side. Aizawa watched them enter, disinterested but still thinly patient as he waited for the last student to join him.

Unfortunately, the omega group was on the other side of Kirishima, so Bakugou paused, waiting for the others to move on past him towards the alpha group ahead so he could pass behind. When Bakugou stopped, however, Kirishima stopped too. That, in turn, made the others pause as well, and Bakugou groaned internally as they all looked at him, faces cheerful and quizzical.

“What’s up, bro, did you forget something in the locker room?” Kirishima asked, all smiles and sunshine. “We’re already late, so maybe it could wait ‘til after class, yeah?”

“No. Go on ahead,” Bakugou responded gruffly. By the grace of some diety, Deku and Iida seemed to listen, turning back and continuing to walk to their group, but that still left Kirishima and Sero watching him.

Kirishima looked a little confused, but that wasn’t too unusual and didn’t break his encouraging smile. “You sure? You wouldn’t want to miss anything, dude, especially if Midoriya’s right about this involving hero work. No offense, but you could stand to learn how to tone down the alpha a bit when dealing with civilians.” His tone was full of mirth and good-natured poking fun, and Sero snickered in unspoken agreement.

This time, Bakugou couldn’t hold the groan in, running his hand over his face to try to keep from running out of patience. He didn’t want to have to say it. All he wanted was to quietly slink off to his own group and let the others flip out about it as far away from him as possible, but of course, it
wasn’t going to be that easy. With a huff, he chose a middle ground. “...What did I say earlier, asshole?”

“Uh...”

“You and everyone else assumes shit without asking. That’s your first lesson for today.” He crossed his arms and glared at the two of them.

“Wha—“

“If you’re done, I’d like to remind you that this is a class and not social time,” Aizawa called, voice dry as his patience for waiting ran out. “Kirishima, Sero, go join Present Mic.”

Bakugou stepped back, crossing behind Kirishima and shoving his hands in his pockets as he stomped towards Aizawa. He could feel the stunned stares from the two behind him, and as he moved closer, realization dawnd on Kaminari, whose jaw dropped as he gaped at the approaching form of his irate classmate. Uraraka beamed and waved, not fazed in the slightest.

All things considered, it didn’t go as bad as he expected. In fact, rather than feel ashamed, Bakugou felt an oddly vicious sense of satisfaction bubble in his chest at the speechless shock left in his wake.

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Try as he might, Specs couldn’t think of one singular moment where his life went wrong. It all seemed like a bunch of little things, inconsequential decisions that ballooned over time and lead him to the hellish dilemma he was currently facing. Maybe the turning point was the first time he helped Watanabe lie low after one of his plans went wrong, or maybe it was the first time he actively assisted in one of the alpha’s schemes, knowing that Watanabe would likely get caught otherwise. Maybe it happened a lot earlier than that, with some seed in his childhood that made him shy away from people until no one but a pigheaded criminal could force their way in.

He found himself thinking about it a lot more often lately. As he stared at the files he was supposed to upload to the heat hunt site, he couldn’t keep those thoughts from worming into him, amping up the already constant hum of anxiety into a paralyzing buzz. All the time, people were moving across his mind, splitting his attention and distracting him from ever focusing...when was the last time he was able to devote himself to one task, one thought?

He took off his vest, separating the DNA of his marks from his body, and immediately his mind quieted. With a sigh, he dropped the vest on the ground next to him, running his hands over his face...but the silence and void the pressed in, expanding and quickly filling the space in his head with the static anxiousness. It was quieter, but he couldn’t stop picking at the loss of awareness like a scab, his mind constantly searching for his packmate’s position and potential dangers out of habit and long-entrenched fear. Within fifteen minutes, he gave in and put the vest back on.

If he had discouraged Watanabe more strongly from the risky “hobbies” he had, would this ever had happened? Would Watanabe have listened if he just tried harder?

Probably not, the stubborn asshole.

He should have uploaded the chosen photos and videos days ago, and yet he hadn’t gotten any further than navigating to the site page. It wasn’t like he had anything better to do—now that Watanabe was out of the picture, his livelihood was shot, at least until he found someone else to work with. A few times, he almost convinced himself that this was his chance to get back on the right side of the law, before reality caught up with him again. It wouldn’t be so easy to hide his
history and what he’d done, and he wouldn’t know where to begin fitting back into society. Plus, thinking about the next steps only worked until his chest ached with the thought of change, of being alone again, of not having the fiery presence of his partner nearby.

The shrill chime of his phone split the silence, making him jerk violently and curse as he fumbled with the device. He answered with a clipped, “What?”

“I thought we agreed that you would have uploaded those videos by now.” Kaetsu’s voice was icy on the other end of the line.

“I—Yeah, I know what we talked about,” he responded, exhausted already. It had been a while since he’d heard from Kaetsu, but he figured it was only a matter of time until the other got on his case. “I’m just...checking the footage.”

“I hope you’re not getting cold feet, Mr. Specs,” Kaetsu sneered, disdain dripping from every word. “As you know, I am a busy man, and I have a timetable.”

“I know, I’m just—“

“And if you want any chance of your packmate getting less than a decade in prison, I suggest you take this seriously. You do want that, right?”

Specs swallowed, rubbing his eyes and nodding to no one. “Yes, I—yes.”

“Good. I need you to understand that this must be made into something bigger. Law and society go hand-in-hand, and where society goes, the law will follow. Your friend fucked up, and in order to help him, I need you to do what I tell you, when I tell you.” Kaetsu paused, waiting for a reply, and when none came, he sighed and snapped, “Upload those damn videos,” and hung up.

Specs held the phone to his ear for just a little too long before setting it down again. The lawyer was doing a lot for them, and Specs was somehow managing to ruin the one task assigned to him. He had a feeling that if Kaestu had to call again, it wouldn’t be so civil.

The heat hunt site danced across his screen, obscene and proud and ready to consume anything given to it.

He didn’t have a lot of videos to upload—just a few of the more tame ones that made the situation seem normal. He didn’t even have to do anything after they were uploaded, since the site’s users would take care of the rest. All he needed to do was what he was told, and the world would take care of everything from there.

His fingers were numb as he dragged the mouse over and mindlessly clicked through the directions presented to him to begin the upload. It wasn’t his choice—it wasn’t something he wanted to do. It wasn’t something he was responsible for. It was just what had to happen. That’s all.

Chapter End Notes

What’s this?? An update in less than a month??
Tbh I’ve been waiting for this chapter haha (and we’re back to slightly shorter chapters, but hey quality over quantity right?)
Particular trouble with misinformation

Chapter Summary

Despite their obvious concern about the issues in the course, Aizawa felt confident in them.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After Bakugou joined, Aizawa started off in the opposite direction of the rest of the class. A mere minute after Kirishima and Sero staggered over to the alpha group, there was a raucous uproar of surprise, and Bakugou was internally very relieved that Aizawa decided to steer them further away. While the reveal went probably as well as it could have, he still didn’t want to see or overhear anyone trying to wrap their head around his gender. It was awkward enough with just Kaminari, who was looking almost frantically between Bakugou, Aizawa, and Uraraka like he was the only one seeing a ghost and couldn’t understand why everyone else was so calm.

Aizawa, as always, had no patience for overreaction. He didn’t bother waiting for Kaminari to ask questions or offer explanations before turning and leading the group away, and by the time they arrived to their final location, Kaminari had calmed into a wide-eyed, confused awe. Bakugou pointedly did not look at him despite how hard he was staring.

“As I said, we’re not doing practical exercises today, so take a seat for now. These meetings will have a practical component later, so don’t get used to it.” Without waiting for his students, Aizawa retrieved a yellow bundle leaning against the nearest wall and unfolded it to reveal his sleeping bag. He casually slipped into it while continuing to talk. “We will be discussing the role of second-genders and how that might affect your work as heroes, both in collaboration with others and during potential conflicts.”

The three students hesitated before lowering themselves to the ground, sitting cross-legged in front of their now-zipped-up teacher. In a normal class situation, there would be a fair amount of space between everyone, but with just the three of them, it played out a little differently. Uraraka settled in fairly close to Bakugou’s left, the comfort of the pack bond drawing her near enough to touch knees. Kaminari, never having got the memo about personal space, plopped down not much further away on Bakugou’s right, his disarming omega scent being the only thing that afforded him that small luxury. It should have felt weird and unnatural to be crowded like that, but aside from Kaminari’s fidgeting and completely obvious “discreet” glances, it was surprisingly nonthreatening.

Aizawa stayed sitting upright, watching them all get comfortable with something resembling boredom. When they were all finally seated and attentive, he looked between them, speaking frankly. “As you might be aware already, there are some...commonly held beliefs about hero ability based on second-gender. As omega heroes, you may have particular trouble with misinformation or stereotypes. This portion of the course is meant to dispel those and give you the opportunity to ask any questions you might have.” Kaminari’s hand immediately shot up, and Aizawa exhaled through his nose. “Yes?”

“Are you an omega?” Kaminari blurted with nothing resembling subtlety. Bakugou almost snorted.
Aizawa stared at him for a few long seconds before responding. “Yes. Wait until after I finish to ask questions.”

Kaminari looked star-struck, glancing over at Bakugou and Uraraka for some sort of solidarity in wonderment. Uraraka glanced back, eyes equally wide with surprise. Bakugou ignored them both.

“The biggest misconception about hero work is that it is an alpha-oriented profession,” Aizawa continued once it was clear he wouldn’t be interrupted again. “This is largely due to the legacy of the past, when omegas were barred from equal opportunities, as well as trends such as the rate of enrollment in hero programs such as this. It doesn’t take a genius to tell that there is a higher rate of acceptance for alpha students, even before presenting.” Aizawa waved towards the much larger alpha group off in the distance. “These statistics, however, are slightly misleading.

“In reality, high-ranking heroes are nearly equally spread across all three genders. Despite the fact that gender is correlated with an increased likelihood to be accepted into a hero program, it has no bearing on how well a pro-hero performs in the field. Any of you care to guess why?” Aizawa looked between the three of them, eyes sharp despite the bags underneath them.

The three of them stayed awkwardly silent. Bakugou had a few ideas of why that might be the case, but he wasn’t feeling chatty and wasn’t interested in spearheading a discussion. Kaminari just shifted and glanced at the other two, not exactly the poster child for critical thinking even on a good day. It remained quiet until finally Uraraka tentatively raised her hand.

“There’s only three of you, just speak out,” Aizawa deadpanned.

“Oh, um,” Uraraka responded intelligently, dropping her hand. She cleared her throat and spoke with uncertainty. “Is it because...there’s a lot of things pro-heroes could be good at? Aside from just...fighting?”

Aizawa gave an affirmative grunt. “In part. Omega heroes can excel in combat-heavy arenas as well, as Ryukyu demonstrates, but that’s essentially the idea.” He paused for a second to look over the three of them, adding weight to his point. “The biggest thing to remember is that the current system was developed with alpha heroes in mind. Hero programs skew alpha because the standards for acceptance rely heavily on physical prowess and combat-based tests. Pre-presented alphas tend to develop faster physically in musculature and physical awareness, and thus tend to outshine youths of other genders. This is, however, a temporary condition, as both omegas and betas tend to catch up to some degree within two or three years. In short, their—your—maturation rate is just on a different timeline.”

Kaminari’s hand went up again, albeit slightly more sheepishly. Aizawa stared at him and waited for him to continue. “So...I thought alphas were stronger? Normally. I heard that, anyway. Is that just like, only at first?”

Aizawa considered the question before answering. “It’s not a direct equivalence. The distribution of muscle is different, and alphas tend to gain muscle at a faster rate. That doesn’t necessarily mean that an omega can’t apply themselves and be equally as strong as an alpha peer, especially when they consider individual differences like body type. It’s more complex than what is generally conveyed through common stereotypes.”

Kaminari snuck a pointed glance at Bakugou as if punctuating that last point, and Bakugou tried hard not to react in annoyance. Aizawa seemed to notice as well, his eyes twitching as if he was tempted to roll them. “There are instances where this trend doesn’t hold, as you’ve obviously noticed with Bakugou. His quirk relies heavily on upper-body strength, which he’s put considerable effort into developing. This detail is likely why your class has collectively decided to adopt him as an alpha.”
“Yeah, that and he’s kind of, uh...mean? Not in a bad way, like—oh, angry! That’s it. You know, grumpy.”

The professor responded dryly, “Yes, despite popular opinion, people are still capable of having personalities despite their gender.”

Bakugou was so thankful Aizawa was their homeroom teacher.

Kaminari sputtered, clearly trying to backtrack, but Aizawa cut him off to continue the lesson. “All this aside, while you have just as much potential to be great heroes, there are still a number of prejudices and dangers we must address.” He exhaled again, catching Bakugou’s eyes for a brief second. “This course on second-genders is usually taught during your third year. However, with your earlier internships and a...targeted upswing in gender-based attacks, we felt it necessary to push these lessons forward.”

Bakugou felt Uraraka lean in a little closer, sliding her hand over to touch their pinkies in some sort of reassurance. He didn’t acknowledge it, but it reminded him to release some of the tension building in his shoulders, to exhale.

Kaminari, on the other hand, leaned forward, eyes widening. “Like that series going on right now?” The other three looked at him. “You know, the special investigation on the news? They watch it sometimes in the common room. Apparently there have even been attacks against some people our age.”

“They’re actively covering—” Aizawa cut himself off before finishing the idea, huffing and running his hand over his face. “Never mind, I’ll look into later. Essentially, yes. However, we’re not here just to make you paranoid.” His expression became more serious but less grave, leaning in a bit. “Awareness and practice will shield you in the future as well as arm you to help others. The goal of these lessons is to provide you with knowledge and context, not just warnings.”

“Um,” Uraraka cut in. At this point, she was nearly leaning fully against Bakugou, and she slid her arm around Bakugou’s elbow as she gathered her thoughts. “Is it...a common thing for omega heroes to face? Attacks and things?”

Aizawa looked briefly between the two of them, catching the nervous undercurrent in her question. “Not as common as you might think. There are risks, but in actuality, the ones with the highest rate of gender-based targeting are alphas. The nature of the attacks tend to be different, but alphas are the most likely to be open about their gender and are often less guarded about it, so they are actually more likely to be victims of manipulation.

“That being said, the attacks against omegas tend to be more severe, so it is something we will be taking very seriously. For all genders, we will be building your tolerance to pheromones and increasing your ability to control your own defensively and offensively. This will be done through training exercises, partially in conjunction with class 1-b. As omegas, we’ll be discussing tools and weapons that may be used against you specifically. Illegal items such as heat triggers can be very dangerous, and they can leave you incapacitated or vulnerable to coercion, or at worst, be potentially life-threatening.”

“Life-threatening?” Kaminari squawked. “From...I thought heat triggers just start your heat?”

“Technically, yes,” Aizawa responded. “But it forces the heat at an unnaturally accelerated pace. In some cases, such as if there are certain pre-existing medical issues or more severe heats, the rapid onset could cause heart complications or other side effects. It’s rare, but it is not something that should be taken lightly.”
There was a tense silence as the students absorbed this information, rigid with growing apprehension at the implications. Aizawa sighed and rubbed his eyes. “Again, this isn’t to scare you. Awareness of these dangers will give you the tools to protect yourself—and those you might be saving. In a few years, most of these will be minor concerns, and this course will expedite that process further.”

Aizawa took a second to look over his students. Bakugou, in the center, watched him with something like resigned distaste, the bags under his eyes that had made themselves home in the last few months seeming deeper under the weight of the new tasks set before him, but his gaze was sharp and unwavering. Up for the challenge, no matter how daunting it might be, but more subdued than before. Uraraka leaned against him, almost unconsciously tracing her thumb in small circles against the skin near his wrist, her own expression nervous but determined. On his opposite side, Kaminari stared wide-eyed and uneasy, his arm resting companionably on Bakugou’s shoulder. It was almost laughable how easily the three of them cuddled together into a small omega pile without even really thinking about it, but that boded well for their future sessions—their comfort with each other should help dispel some of the stress of the topic and exercises.

Despite their obvious concern about the issues in the course, Aizawa felt confident in them. He nodded and closed off the meeting with a gruff, “Just think of this as any other step towards becoming a hero. It’s nothing you can’t handle.”

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“I just...I just can’t believe it,” Kirishima murmured weakly, watching the omega group. They were all snug together, with Aizawa bundled up close by—from a distance, it almost looked like a sleepover or something. And right in the middle was the most alpha-like guy Kirishima knew.

The alpha group finished up their introductory meeting fairly quickly. For the most part, there were a few tips and misconceptions that Present Mic discussed about being an alpha hero, including some interesting points about how omega pheromones and bites could actually also be used against other genders despite the stereotypes. It apparently wasn’t as in-depth as the omega discussion, though, because they were still huddled on the other side of the training ground.

“It has to be a joke or something, right?” Sero said, staring in the same direction, along with about half of the class. Nearby, Midoriya mumbled to himself with his thumb against his lip, and Iida watched him with something like concern, only stopping to wave Todoroki over after the beta group broke apart.

“Why didn’t he tell us?” Mina whined, sulking slightly. “Did he think we would judge him or something?”

“No, of course not,” Kirishima growled, brow furrowed. After a pause, he glanced at her, doubt crossing his features. “Right? He knows we wouldn’t.”

“I don’t know, man,” Sero sighed. “You know him. He’s proud. Who knows what he’s thinking.”

Kirishima crossed his arms over the top of his knees and dropped his chin onto them, brooding. His scent darkened with his mood, and Mina gently reached out to pat his back. “I’m sure it’s not like, a personal thing,” she tried with an attempt at a comforting smile.

Midoriya hummed, his murmur becoming loud enough to hear as he latched on to that train of thought. “Kacchan wouldn’t worry about what other people thought, but he is proud...maybe he didn’t like admitting it to himself. But then, if it was just about his pride, would Auntie have agreed to put him on suppressants? I don’t think she would have, but maybe there’s more at play that we don’t know yet...but even so, Kacchan never actually said he was an alpha, did he? Even if he didn’t
like it, he wouldn’t just outright lie...but a lie by omission, that’s something he would do, huh...maybe it is something like a health complication, if there was more to it...personal or private...”

His murmuring slowly became more unintelligible, brow furrowing further, and everyone else just watched him with slight confusion until it was clear he wasn’t fully conversing.

“Ah, Todoroki! How was your session?” Iida’s voice broke through, greeting the beta as he joined the group.

“Good,” Todoroki replied mildly. He paused when every pair of eyes snapped from Midoriya to him, staring at him intently. “Uh. Yes?”

“You’re his packmate, right? You knew?” Mina immediately leaned forward, eyes narrowing. Todoroki leaned back slightly, blinking against the intensity of everyone’s gazes and the anxious twist to their scents.

“...Who?”

“Bakugou!” Mina barked, pointing dramatically towards the omega group. “He’s an omega!”

“Oh. Yes.”

“Why didn’t he tell us?”

Todoroki paused, expression becoming slightly more contemplative as he considered the ways he could answer that question. “Hm.”

The group stared at him for a few seconds before Mina tired of waiting, fidgeting at his silence. “He didn’t think we would like...judge him for it, right?”


Kirishima groaned, dropping his head against his arms. “He’s been avoiding us, too...I can’t believe I’ve been calling him top alpha all this time! I bet it made him embarrassed about it...so stupid! I should’ve asked...”

“Don’t beat yourself up over it, you weren’t the only one,” Sero said, joining Mina with patting him gently.

“It’s not like that,” Todoroki assured. He frowned slightly in contemplation for a few more seconds before continuing. “I won’t betray his privacy, but it has nothing to do with you. It’s more just...he needed time, and he’s had other things on his mind.”

“But he won’t talk about those things with us, either,” Mina pouted.

“Right,” Todoroki replied.

Mina sighed explosively, dropping her own chin on her arms to sulk about the current developments. Sero used his free hand to pat her shoulder as well. She grumbled into her arm, “...Maybe he’s like Kaminari and just doesn’t like being around alphas when he’s mad? And since he’s always mad, that’s why he doesn’t like us anymore.”

“No, he still likes you,” Todoroki said hastily, looking a little lost about how to remedy the cloud of moping alpha pheromones.
“Kacchan keeps to himself more than you’d think, despite all of the shouting,” Midoriya quietly cut in. “I...don’t know what’s going on with him, but it really is probably nothing against all of you. He might just need time.” He offered a small smile to reassure the best he could.

Todoroki gave a relieved smile as well, nodding. “Yes. It’s nothing you’ve done. Give him time.”

There was quiet as the words sunk in and some of the distress slowly bled out of Bakugou’s friends. While they weren’t completely at ease, it was at least a consolation for the time being. The silence persisted for a few minutes as they waited for the omega group to finish up.

“It’s kind of badass,” Kirishima murmured. “How manly would it be if both Bakugou and Mr. Aizawa were omegas?”

“You think Aizawa is an omega?” Mina gasped, turning to Kirishima with wide eyes, and just like that, the conversation lit up again with previous and new speculations and revelations until the omegas dispersed and class was dismissed to the next lesson.

Chapter End Notes

Hello the holidays were great but also kicked my ass
BUT! It's a new year! Happy 2019 everyone, let's make it a good one!

Also if it wasn't totally clear, I really love omega cuddle piles as a general concept. There needs to be more cute things and platonic closeness in the world
Out of character

Chapter Summary

His hand itched towards the back button, but a faint voice in his head that sounded suspiciously like Midoriya was screaming some nonsense about heroism at him.

Chapter Notes

CW: discovery of revenge/underage pornography--if this topic upsets you, you can skip to the end notes after the ----- for a brief summary

The last thing Bakugou wanted to do after the omega group disbanded was interact with any of his classmates, but unfortunately he wasn’t left with much choice unless he wanted to wear his gym clothes for the rest of the day. He expected to be bombarded with questions and whining the moment he was close enough—Kaminari certainly wasted no time immediately diving into an interrogation (“This whole time? You’ve been an omega?”, “What’s with the suppressants?”, “So when do I get to join the pack? Ow, I’m joking, don’t kill me—”), with a few accusations added in for good measure (“You could’ve told me at least! What about solidarity, dude?”), all of which Bakugou mostly ignored or which Uraraka spoke up for him, being much more polite.

When they merged in with the rest of the class moving towards the locker room, however, there were no questions to be had. In fact, everyone else seemed to be putting an effort into acting totally normal, as if they all agreed beforehand to purposely not bring it up. The conversation was cheerful but stiff, people chatting about mundane details of their sessions. Even when Kaminari confirmed that Aizawa was an omega, the initial enthusiasm was quickly peppered with statements about how obviously it wasn’t surprising that omegas could be so tough and clearly it didn’t change anything.

Somehow, it was real fucking annoying, but Bakugou wasn’t about to breach the topic, so he settled with seething quietly.

He could tell people were shooting him glances, trying to discretely catch the hints they’d missed all these months or check to see how he was reacting to their obvious attempts at giving him space. He guessed that Todoroki or maybe one of their other sensitive, bleeding-heart classmates suggested playing normal, and he knew he should be relieved, but somehow it ignited an indignant rage that he couldn’t quite explain. Sure, he didn’t want to open up about his omega status, but that didn’t mean he was oblivious or fragile or weak. He didn’t need them dancing around him to protect his feelings.

He got dressed faster than anyone, done with social interaction for the day. While overall the reveal could be counted as a success considering the worst-case scenarios, he didn’t have the patience to draw it out. Not right now. He’d go back to dealing with that bullshit in a couple of days when his suppressants ran out.

As one small upside, at least if everyone kept pretending that his status wasn’t a big deal, maybe they’d get used to it, or even forget about it altogether.
Mineta knew he wasn’t the smartest in the class, but he understood the material well enough to get work done early and leave his evenings free. Frankly, that was all that mattered—he had *very* important business to attend to once the sun went down. In the privacy of his room, behind his locked door, he sat down to peruse the new uploads on his favorite sites, basking in the fresh batches of sweet cries and sins of the flesh.

Of course, there was never enough time to watch *all* of the videos, but Mineta had honed a keen eye, able to discern quickly from the tags and the thumbnail previews which videos would be worth a click. It was a skill that no one else properly appreciated, but Mineta took pride in his connoisseurship of erotica nonetheless. Between the wealth of videos of needy omegas, beefed-up alphas, and innocent betas, he was able to find which ones stood apart, which ones were unique and satisfying.

Tonight, however, the pickings seemed rather slim. While Mineta could appreciate a thick-thighed omega beauty as much as any alpha, the current lineup seemed rather rote, generic to the point of redundancy. He clicked through a few of the new uploads, all fairly average videos and only a few worth watching to the end, but after about an hour, he found himself scrolling more than watching. The thumbnails blurred together into a parade of tropes, nothing standing out in particular...maybe after so long, he was finally starting to get bored of this…?

Mineta scoffed at himself. Yeah, right.

He could look up something a little more hardcore...it had been a while since he watched any BDSM. Or maybe he should check out some gender taboo videos, see if some omega-on-omega action might rev the engine…Something a bit different.

Before he moved on to start his search, however, a video preview caught his eye. He paused in his scrolling, a smile immediately curling on his lip. The category was a good one—bonded heat mating, always hot—but what actually caught his attention was that the omega in the preview looked almost comically like Bakugou, strong shoulders and dandelion-fluff hair. Normally, Mineta wasn’t into athletic omegas, preferring softness and ample assets, but after learning Bakugou actually *was* an omega (twist of the century, given how incredibly off-putting he was), he couldn’t help but feel an amusing sense of irony from it. With a shrug, he click through the link, figuring he’d only watch long enough to get a laugh and then move on to more exhilarating subjects.

The video was obviously amateur. It almost looked like it was shot on a phone, and the alpha shooting it had his arm in the frame from starting the capture. After checking that the video was rolling, the alpha, a dark-haired man with sharp features and an average-but-fit build, moved towards a figure on a bed behind him. The omega was turned away from the camera, curled in sleep among the generous blankets of his nest, but he began to rouse as his alpha slid a hand over his side. The alpha eased the omega onto his back, and it was obvious that the omega was deep in heat—he seemed dazed, eyelids fluttering without fully opening, and he followed his alpha’s lead with no resistance or self-consciousness. The alpha huffed, a fond smile curling on his lips, and he settled between his partner’s legs, shifting them both until their hips were nearly flush before leaning down and nuzzling against the omega’s neck. The omega tilted to allow access, his face turning towards the camera, and the alpha shifted a little more, fumbling to line himself up before gripping the omega’s hips as he pushed his way inside. The omega’s brows furrowed, blinking his eyes open and squirming with a soft gasp, before he groaned and drew up his knees a little higher—

Mineta slammed the pause button, staring at the screen in disbelief. There was no way, right…? It’s not *that* unusual to have red eyes...at least two people in class did. And sure, it kind of sounded like
him, but then again, who knew what Bakugou would sound like during sex? Probably way gruffer, grating, without any of the pitched-up sweetness this omega had...right?

Mineta swallowed and unpaused the video, leaning a little closer to gather more evidence.

The omega was still blinking the haze out of his eyes, unfocused and uninhibited with heat, and he allowed himself to be rocked with his alpha’s thrusts, hands sliding up to grip at the pillow under his head. A flush was overtaking his features, and his breathing grew shallower, little moans starting to catch on his exhales. His alpha moved down to nibble at his shoulder, avoiding some earlier bruises marring the skin, and the omega’s brow knitted further, his teeth worrying at his bottom lip even as needy hums caught in his throat.

Mineta sat in stunned silence as he watched. The way that omega’s brow furrowed...it was different, but close enough to the expression he saw in class every day. But...there could be no way, right? Bakugou was a delinquent in attitude, but he took becoming a pro more seriously than anyone—he’d never make a porno, right…?

Now, Mineta knew he wasn’t the smartest, but he wasn’t dumb, either. After the initial surprise wore off, he leaned back in his chair and brought his hand to his chin in thought, not fazed in the slightest by the sounds of sex still coming from his computer. The resemblance was too uncanny, but there was still a chance it was just a guy that looked almost exactly like Bakugou...maybe.

There was plausible deniability—he could easily just click out of this video and forget the whole thing happened.

...Which was an impulse that made Mineta admit with a groan that there was some sort of moral choice to be made here. He didn’t want to get involved, but a small (and very annoying) part of him reasoned that Bakugou would know it would be stupid to make a porno, or at least to put it somewhere that someone he knew could see it. If this omega really was Bakugou, then he was making some questionable choices regarding his sex life and public image. Maybe he thought that no one would see it, since it was tucked into a vast ocean of other videos and daily uploads? It seemed out of character, but given how cocky the guy was, maybe it wasn’t so far-fetched after all.

The more he thought about it, the more the other weird events surrounding Bakugou added up—the disappearances and casiness, the suppressants his mom supposedly put him on, the sudden pack bond when Bakugou seemed like the type to flatly refuse ever being chaperoned by a beta...the guy might actually be mated, just months after he presented. He’d been off fraternizing with some alpha the whole time! Hiding a secret relationship! And it wasn’t like Bakugou ever cared what people thought about him, although public porn uploads still seemed like a stretch.

The more he thought, the more Mineta was tempted to just click out of the video and pretend he never saw it.

Besides, there was a high probability that if he mentioned anything about this to Bakugou, he would be dead within minutes. Bakugou would straight-up murder him. Therefore, avoiding the whole thing would be self-defense, right? His hand itched towards the back button, but a faint voice in his head that sounded suspiciously like Midoriya was screaming some nonsense about heroism at him.

He grunted in frustration and sat back again, hunched deeper into brainstorming. There were a few things that just...didn’t sit right. Bakugou did take becoming a pro seriously, maybe more seriously than anything, and this video...would have to be illegal, right? Bakugou was underage, even though there weren’t any indicators of that in the video or description. Mineta could appreciate the desire to jump into eroticism—hell, he’d be all over that if he could—but Bakugou was fairly recognizable after all the media attention he’d already had, so he was playing a dangerous game. Even Mineta, an
appreciator of the art of pornography, could recognize that this was stupid. Did he even realize he was risking getting his mate tossed in jail?

And did his mate know? He had to, he was the one who shot the video...

Mineta paused, swallowing. Maybe it was true that Bakugou wouldn’t be the type to upload porn. He was clearly stupid in heat when this video was made—it was possible he didn’t even realize his boyfriend was making it. It could be that his mate was the one who uploaded, and Bakugou didn’t even know. That would be a worst-case scenario, but it made more sense than Bakugou having a hand in it, especially if the guy was so cagey about keeping the relationship hidden in the first place. In any other circumstance, Mineta would have assumed that Bakugou wouldn’t be charmed by an asshole like that, but clearly something here showed bad judgment, so obviously Mineta didn’t know Bakugou as well as he thought.

So the best-case was Bakugou being stupid, and the worst-case was a conniving boyfriend risking Bakugou’s reputation. Neither of those were great, and Mineta wanted to scream as he realized he probably should at least say something. But Mineta also didn’t want to die...so maybe he could slip a note under Bakugou’s door or something, gently advising him to maybe keep his videos off the internet for a few more years? Or at least edit his face out?

Mineta stared at the screen as he thought, barely even registering the passionate movements still playing across it.

Or...he could get someone else to take the fall for him. That was what packs were for, right? To keep mated packmates in the safe, sane, and consensual zone, among other things? Todoroki might be scary, but he was way less likely to commit murder when approached cautiously (in theory). And given the timing, he had to be privy that Bakugou was seeing someone, and he was the only one who knew anything about Bakugou’s “health complications” (what a load of bullshit—everyone was worried, and the guy was just off having passionate heat sex! Lucky bastard).

Uraraka was also an option, but somehow, the idea of her knowing that Mineta was watching porn and stumbled across her packmate was very repelling. She didn’t need to know Mineta’s habits, and Todoroki seemed way less likely to lecture him or spread gossip to all the other girls. So even though Mineta was sure Todoroki could snap him like a twig without any effort, he seemed like the best option at the moment. They could have a solid, level-headed, beta-to-beta exchange, and Mineta could move on with his life.

A little relieved to find a solution that wouldn’t leave him feeling guilty or dead, Mineta quickly shot off a succinct text to Todoroki and clicked back out of the video. Whatever happened after this point was his problem anymore—if Bakugou wanted to get into the adult film industry or if he needed to beat up his boyfriend, that was his problem.

Or, that was the idea, until he got a text back fifteen minutes later:

Me:
Hey, not to butt in or anything but you might want to talk to Bakugou or his boyfriend about not filming his heats...the internet’s big, but it’s not that big

Todoroki:
What?

Mineta grimaced. The poor guy didn’t know after all...he really got in over his head when he agreed
to become packmates with Bakugou.

Me:
I might be wrong, it might just be a guy that looks a lot like him...but if Bakugou’s mated, then it’s ending up online
Sorry
I mean I can see why he’d want to flaunt it but even I know that’s kind of dumb right now

Todoroki:
Where.

Me:
Uporn
Page 6

There was no answer after that, so Mineta assumed that Todoroki was looking it up and would take the reigns from there. What he was not expecting was a firm pounding on his door barely a minute later, making him jump and scramble to close his tabs as he shouted, “What? Do you know what time it is?”

“Open the door.”

Mineta paled. That was Todoroki’s voice, low and terrifying and oh god, Mineta calculated the likelihood of death wrong. There was frost forming around the doorknob, spreading out and slowly overtaking the rest of the door in haunting fractals, and Mineta wondered briefly if maybe he’d be able to survive if he just threw himself out of the window.

“Mineta.”

“Right, uh, coming!” he squeaked, jumping down from his chair and stumbling over to the door, struggling for a second to unlock it while it was covered in frost. As soon as the door was open, Todoroki pushed his way in, face deadly and set like stone. He immediately closed and locked the door behind him, growling, “Show me,” before marching over to the computer like he owned the place. Mineta would feel offended if it weren’t for the relief that he hadn’t suffered bodily harm yet.

“Uh, okay, one sec,” Mineta mumbled as he climbed into his chair, feeling the icy air billowing off of Todoroki behind him. He shakily navigated to his history and found the video again, pulling it up. It started immediately with the alpha in the frame, and Todoroki swore, pulling out his phone and typing furiously.

“When was this uploaded.”

“Earlier today sometime, I think,” Mineta replied, double-checking the timestamp.

“This is the only one?”

“Uh, I don’t know...”

“Can you check?” Todoroki snapped, patience wearing thin. Mineta squeaked and clicked through to the uploader’s profile, which consisted of just a handful of videos, all uploaded recently. On closer inspection, they appeared to all be of the same subject.
Mineta jumped when Todoroki’s phone rang. Todoroki answered and listened to the voice on the other end, giving curt replies when necessary—“Yes. Four more on the account. No. All today. Okay. Anything else?...Okay. Let me know.” Mineta remained silent through the exchange, eyes wide as saucers and a growing apprehension beginning to rise in his gut.

As soon as Todoroki hung up, Mineta grasped his sleeve. “H-hey, this isn’t...I know I’m not supposed to be, y’know...you’re not going to tell Aizawa about this, are you?”

“That was Aizawa,” Todoroki grunted, not acknowledging the sweaty boy as he carefully typed out the page’s URL into his chat conversation.

“What?” Mineta squawked, panic gripping him. “You told him that I—he’s gonna expel me!” He shook Todoroki’s sleeve, tears springing to his eyes. “Todoroki, please, you gotta cover for me—I-I was just, you know, trying to relax, I didn’t know—oh god, what if they arrest me for watching underage porn, I can’t go to jail—“

“I doubt you’ll get in trouble,” Todoroki responded coolly, batting the other beta off his arm. He was still staring at his phone, but he was starting to become calmer. Still deadly, but calmer. “It’s good you caught that early. He might reprimand you, but I don’t think he’ll expel you.”

Mineta was still shaking, but he tried to calm down as well...although the lack of certainty in Todoroki’s reassurance didn’t help. He clutched his face and waited for Todoroki to finish up whatever he was doing with his phone. The whole situation perplexed him, but he wasn’t even sure what sort of questions he should be asking to get clarification.

After looking up from his messages, however, Todoroki didn’t wait for questions to arise. In a tone that gave no room for argument, he commanded, “Don’t speak of this to anyone. Anyone. And if Aizawa or the police talk to you, don’t lie.” He looked down at Mineta in a sort of disdain, as if he naturally expected the other beta to be dishonest when under fire.

“Okay,” Mineta squeaked, shrinking under the intense gaze. “I won’t breathe a word, promise.”

Todoroki looked doubtful, but he turned his attention dismissively back to his phone. “Aizawa wants to talk to you tomorrow. Meet him a half hour before class.”

“What?”

“Don’t lie,” Todoroki growled, shooting him one last harsh stare. “They should start tracking the origin of the videos tonight. Don’t screw it up by leading them down the wrong path, or I will personally make your life hell.”

“I...okay,” Mineta replied weakly, feeling a weight of doom descend on him.

Todoroki gave a curt nod, appeased, before taking his leave without a word, the door snapping shut behind him.

Chapter End Notes

Summary: Mineta stumbles across a video upload of Bakugou, has a moral dilemma about advising Bakugou not to upload shit like that, and decides Todoroki would be much less likely to murder him in the process. Unfortunately, Todoroki might still
murder him, but at least Todoroki was able to inform Aizawa about the existence and location of the videos for further investigation.

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I had initially planned to get this chapter and another one-shot done at the beginning of February, but unfortunately life has been insistent on derailing me lately. For those who don't follow me on twitter/tumblr (more twitter these days tho), the short version is that my appendix exploded quite dramatically, and I spent literally the entirety of February on IV antibiotics and other medical implements. There's still some recovery left to do, but I'm doing much better now! So hopefully we'll return back to our regularly scheduled non-schedule haha

Hopefully the longer-than-expected delay doesn't screw up the continuity :x In any case, thank you for being patient!
An obnoxious display of teenage drama

Chapter Summary

His classmates could easily pick out these frequent sour turns and often assumed they resulted from anger or annoyance, especially given the way the young man tended to express himself...however, teens often misattribute.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“As heroes, omegas and alphas have to take particular care regarding gender-based weaknesses. Today, we’ll be going over some of those hurdles.”

Aizawa watched his group of eager omegas, eyes sharp under his usual bored facade. The group was larger today—class 1-B had joined them, and would for most second-gender lessons after this point. Aside from being a time-saver, this would assure that any practical exercises included somewhat unfamiliar scents, rather than just the scents of the same classmates they got exposed to every day. It wouldn’t be the same as confronting complete strangers, but it was better than nothing.

The alpha group ended up quite large, but it wouldn’t be a problem with Vlad King assisting Present Mic. Secretly, Aizawa was a little glad for his omega status in situations like this, as his group was easily the most manageable. Aside from his own three students, he collected four more omegas from 1-B, making a comfortable group of seven, all attentively listening to him without any effort on his part.

“The good news is that they will not all be long-term hurdles. As you get older and your senses acclimate, things like pheromones will have less of an impact. We will accelerate this acclimation process with training and response techniques, which is the main purpose for the practical component of this course. Consider today a debriefing on that.”

None of this information seemed especially concerning to most of the students, with the except of the two sitting near the back. In the last few days, Bakugou’s prescription of scent suppressants ran out, and his own scent began to join everyone else’s, much to the curiosity and delight of all of his classmates. Aizawa wasn’t surprised—the boy’s suppressed scent was a topic of teasing and gossip since the day he presented, and since the reveal of his secretly-unknown status, the situation became even more of an exciting mystery for some of them. When his pheromones finally became detectable, the class had erupted in playful chaos, which Aizawa reluctantly observed. Normally, he’d retreat to his sleeping bag at such an obnoxious display of teenage drama, but he’d grown accustomed to being prepared to step in during situations regarding Bakugou.

Thankfully, while his classmates were as nosy as any other group of recently-presented teens, they were usually respectful...as well as characteristically ignorant. Even Mina, who had a knack for reading scents, was still new and unpracticed, so even she joined the rest of the class in the tendency to misread the subtleties of pheromones. Bakugou had a fairly strong scent, which (surprisingly) wasn’t unpleasant, but like most recently-presented people, it often betrayed his stronger emotional states. His classmates could easily pick out these frequent sour turns and often assumed they resulted from anger or annoyance, especially given the way the young man tended to express himself...however, teens often misattribute. Bakugou’s emotional states weren’t entirely anger.
With his extra years of experience, Aizawa could detect the nuanced, acidic twist of anxiety as the root emotion even from his post at the front of the class.

The video issue didn’t help. It was probably a good thing that Bakugou was on his last few days of suppressants when the videos were found by Mineta—Aizawa imagined that his scent would’ve been unbearable in the days after. Thankfully, they caught the videos very early, and after a few hours of tense calls, he was able to get in contact with an agency that had a branch for handling internet crimes like trafficking and child pornography. They assured him that they could get the videos taken down, as well as use algorithms to identify copies of the videos that might be uploaded elsewhere. It was a massive relief, but Aizawa couldn’t help but wonder if there were other people, other victims who had this happen to them, and whether they could combat it without a lifetime of hero contacts at their disposal. If Bakugou had attended any other high school, could he have done anything about it?

Aizawa didn’t get much sleep that night. Even after years of hero work, he still felt that sometimes, it wasn’t enough. He sometimes wasn’t sure it ever could be.

But for now, the issue was being handled. There were views on the videos (no way there wouldn’t be), but relatively few. The worst case was avoided, and the situation was contained. Aizawa didn’t even have it in him to be upset with Mineta despite the blatant misuse of the school network, although he still gave the boy a firm talking-to the next morning, specifically accenting that this was part of a criminal investigation and must, under no circumstances, be spoken of.

Bakugou remained out-of-sorts for a few days after, as one might expect. Aizawa noticed that Mineta rarely got involved in conversations featuring second-genders anymore, and the two students avoided each other like the plague. Aizawa also suspected that the omega might’ve cornered the skittish beta with a few “take this to your grave” death threats outside of class, but he couldn’t confirm that, and he didn’t really bother to try. Despite all this, Bakugou was nothing if not resilient, and although anxiety sifted frequently into his scent, he doggedly pressed forward in his coursework. He lifted his chin and looked down his nose like always, as if it didn’t affect him at all.

Even now, he sat with a bored expression next to Uraraka, and although Aizawa could tell this topic was making him nervous, a less experienced person could just as easily mistake his attitude as impatience or irritability. It was obvious that Bakugou wouldn’t like it if his classmates caught on to his frequent unease, but in some ways, his sour scent turned out to be a blessing for the teachers—it was much more obvious when his nerves started to tip towards true panic. Aizawa still couldn’t quite trust Bakugou to communicate that himself, yet.

“We will be also training you on weaponizing your own pheromones. Contrary to popular belief, omega pheromones can also have powerful effects, such as shocking alpha opponents into a brief lull in aggression or drawing attention to yourself and away from those you may wish to protect. Be noted, however, that you are not permitted to use this training against your peers, and if you are found to be intentionally weaponizing your pheromones against others in the hero courses or outside of class, you will be punished accordingly. Understood?”

There was a murmur of agreement and a couple nods, which was enough for Aizawa. He continued on. “For now, we will be focusing on resisting the effects of alpha pheromones and discussing threats and tells of subjugation techniques like bites. Beta pheromones will come later, as they generally pose less of an immediate problem.” Aizawa paused, briefly considering his usual methods of teaching this section given his student’s history and the risk of putting him on the spot. He decided to take a gamble and push forward. “Is anyone familiar with how alpha pheromones may be used against omega heroes?”
In the back, Bakugou’s eyes narrowed and his lips pressed into a thinner line, but luckily, Aizawa’s other students weren’t reluctant to contribute. Kuroiro Shihai, one of the four from 1-B, confidently raised a jet-black hand and answered with an over-dramatic gravity, “With their pheromones, an alpha can cause disorientation, and even...the temporary cessation of one’s quirk.”

Aizawa resisted the urge to roll his eyes at the theatrics and grunted in affirmation. “The greatest disadvantage with alpha pheromones is quirk interruption. This can be accompanied by increased disorientation and, at times, impressionability. In the worst case scenario, it could leave you open to additional attacks.” Near Kuroiro, the other 1-B omegas watched him with various levels of understanding. Awase Yosetsu’s eyebrows were furrowed under his headband with something like determination, and Yanagi Reiko looked somewhere between vacant and pensive, wrists bent oddly as usual. Tsunotori Poni’s face was scrunched in concentration, although it occurred to Aizawa that this might be due to the language barrier. He cleared his throat and reminded himself to enunciate clearly.

“There will be some individual differences in how your quirks are affected,” Aizawa continued. “Quirks that require willful activation are most likely to be disrupted, followed by quirks that require some level of concentration to use. In contrast, passive or automatic quirks may not be affected at all.” He began to gesture to each of the students in turn. “For us, that means that Bakugou and Kaminari may have the most difficulty with these exercises, whereas Kuroiro may experience next to no trouble. The rest of you will likely fall somewhere in the middle. Are there any questions?”

Kaminari’s hand found its way into the air. Aizawa wearily indicated for him to speak. “So, I thought we had pheromones all the time?”

Aizawa sighed audibly, but nodded. “Yes, Kaminari, you have pheromones all of the time.” The student only looked more confused with this, so Aizawa elaborated. “This is referring to a specific type. This pheromone, like all others, can occur naturally and spontaneously, usually in periods of high stress or threatening situations as a sort of aggressive fight-or-flight response. You likely haven’t experienced it in action from anyone you have good relations with, and it’s likely those you meet who can do it on command will have ill intent, with the exception of other heroes. Any more questions?”

This time, Uraraka tentatively raised her hand, and she spoke when prompted. “So...are these exercises going to be like, us versus the alphas? Are we going to have some time to practice first?”

Aizawa shook his head slightly. “You won’t be pit against other students until late in the course. There will be individual practice and structured exercises with teachers before you will be facing any of your peers.”

Some of the students looked relieved at this information. Aizawa remembered being similarly relieved when he took this course in his third year, although perhaps for a different reason—unlike his students, he had to live through two years of clueless emotional alpha stink before facing the daunting task of having it purposefully directed at him. He distinctly remembered anticipating that it would be like someone bottling locker room smell and spritzing it in his face.

He kept that memory to himself.

“The practical component will be almost entirely based on pheromone exercises. Other threats, such as bites to the nape or scent glands and heat triggers, are obviously not things we are going to practice, but we will go over those in detail during the lecture component. You still need to be able to identify them.”

Aizawa looked over his students, pausing in case any more questions arose. He was greeted with
silence. It wasn’t the most exciting nor the most pleasant of subjects, but as heroes, it would be important for them to know the telltale signs of someone attempting an attack, as well as how to identify and protect victims. He just hoped it wouldn’t disturb them too much. For now, he could focus on explaining how to start recognizing and actively using their own pheromones. That was simple, less daunting.

With another deep breath, he pressed on through the rest of the lesson.

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Bakugou hated how the alphas collected in the middle of the room, like just because they were the biggest group, they could take up all the space they wanted right where it was the most inconvenient. Even after adjourning, about half of them were loitering around, chatting and catching up before hitting the lockers. The beta group had finished much earlier since they didn’t have as much to worry about regarding gender-based weaknesses, and all of them were already long since gone to get changed. Like last time, the omega group was the last to wrap up, which might have been a blessing if it didn’t mean having to walk past the alphas to get to the locker room.

Normally, Bakugou didn’t mind that. He didn’t give a shit during normal training at all. But something about this course, about the way they were separated, about the presence of 1-B glancing curiously at him as if to confirm some outrageous rumor, made him hate it.

But, like ripping off a band-aid, it was better to just get it over with quickly. As soon as the omega group was released, he shoved his hands in his pockets and marched his way forward in a straight line, cutting through the crowd without hesitation or meekness. Most people had the sense not to bother him, especially now that his scent gave clear warning when he wasn’t in the mood.

Most people.

“So it really is true, then? The infamous 1-A’s ‘top alpha’ is actually an omega!”

Bakugou grit his teeth. He didn’t even have to turn his head to know who spoke.

“There’s nothing wrong with being an omega, Monoma,” Kendo reprimanded, swatting at her classmate.

Monoma spluttered, throwing her an indignant look. “That—that’s not what I was implying!” He quickly recovered, straightening his spine almost to the point of leaning back. “I’m just saying, isn’t it strange that none of the omegas in our class hid their status?”

Bakugou’s eye twitched, but he kept walking, intending to pass this clown up and get changed before the entire class invaded the locker room. Responding would only make it worse, and he didn’t have time for loudmouth extras.

“Of course, all of our omegas passed the license exam,” Monoma teased, still baiting for a reaction. “So maybe they just feel like they don’t have anything to be ashamed of.”

All things considered, Bakugou wasn’t known for his restraint. Blood boiling, he turned towards Monoma with a snarl. “I’m not fucking ashamed—“

“I thought you liked the spotlight! Wouldn’t an omega as the top hero-in-training make you groundbreaking, and yet, you kept it under wraps! What else would it be?” Monoma made a grand gesture with his arms, relishing in the attention he caught and the frustration he inspired, as if that alone gave his class an upper hand.
“It’s none of your fucking business, is what it is,” Bakugou growled, scent souring as he stomped closer to the nosy alpha, prepared to get in his face. “You got a problem?”

“No problem at all,” Monoma replied, though his smug expression didn’t waver. “It just raises questions when members of the prestigious 1-A are caught in such a petty little lie, don’t you think?”

“I didn’t lie,” Bakugou sneered, fingers twitching and anger bubbling like tar in his chest. “I just didn’t say shit because, again, it’s none of your, or anyone else’s, fucking business.”

At this point, they were definitely attracting attention. In his periphery, Bakugou could see the teachers eyeing them warily, could see Aizawa heaving a sigh and starting to unzip his sleeping bag to walk over. His own classmates were rolling their eyes and muttering, used to both of their antics, giving token “Don’t bother with that—”s and “It’s not worth it, just ignore him—”s.

In the rational part of his brain, Bakugou knew these were just another set of jabs, just some routine barbs from a noisy extra. He knew it didn’t really matter. He tried to hold that knowledge in the forefront of his mind as he exhaled, turning to walk away and not let any of it get to him. He was on edge recently, but he didn’t have to let those emotions control him. He practiced not letting those emotions control him. He could ignore the itch under his skin and roar of blood rushing in his ears.

“O-ho! Are you really so afraid what people might think? Or—“ Monoma dramatically raised his hand to his chin in a mockery of contemplation. “Are you afraid of yourself? Of finding out you’ve actually got a soft side! Afraid that someday, you’ll find an alpha who’ll make you want to submit—"

In the blink of an eye, Bakugou’s hand shot up to the front of Monoma’s uniform, balling the fabric of the alpha’s collar in his fist. His other hand was held back, explosions more intense than he intended popping off between his curled fingers in a clear threat. His words were forced through grit teeth, eyes wild with a near-uncontrollable rage. “Shut the fuck up.”

Monoma stumbled when he was grabbed, eyes widening as the flashes from the explosions lit up his alarmed face. Suddenly, Bakugou was hit with a strong scent, acrid and thick—it made his head spin with a sudden dizziness, and the explosions in his hand sputtered, grew weak and erratic, before they were cut off like a switch had been flipped. For a horrible moment, the world seemed to slow to a stop, and Bakugou felt like all the air was trapped in his lungs.

Then, his vision went red, and he was barely aware when he cracked his fist hard against Monoma’s face.

Chapter End Notes

This year is turning out to be a bit of a mess haha BUT don’t worry this fic is def not abandoned! And I’m sorry for dropping the ball on replying to comments, I’ll try to get better about that ;;

Tbh tho this chapter was also just fighting me every step of the way, I rewrote a couple of times and even changed the perspective orz it just wasn’t quite matching the tone I wanted to convey, but hopefully this’ll do! I kept getting derailed by ideas for future chapters too haha which hopefully will work in our favor later

I think this chapter puts Monoma in a terrible light but like...he’s used to teasing, but isn’t quite used to blindly stepping on an emotional minefield. He didn't really know that the
buttons he was pushing were for detonation, all things considered
Chapter Summary

He wiped some of the sweat from his face, sniffed again, and considered the daunting task of getting back to his feet.

Chapter Notes

CW: panic attack/flashback

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Get off, get off, get off—“

Bakugou couldn’t see straight. Everything was a blur, details smearing together with sounds, half-formed memories, and emotions so loud they blocked out everything else. He was vaguely aware that he launched himself at that asshole from 1-B, thought maybe he might have gotten a few hits off on the smug motherfucker, but the details were hazy in his blind rage, he could barely remember it...and then he couldn’t move anymore. He couldn’t move and what little sense he could make of the world was completely lost, he was pinned, he couldn’t use his quirk and he was trapped, and he just knew that guy was here, had to be, he was in that godawful tiny room and drowning in thick smells and held down and he couldn’t move, he couldn’t breathe—

“—kugou. Bakugou, focus on me.”

“Let go, let go, get the fuck off of me—“

Some of the movement came back to his limbs, and he thrashed, heart pounding wildly in his chest as he twisted to wrench himself free of whatever was binding him. He needed to get out of here, he needed—


He became aware of how shallow his breathing was, of the frantic shaking of his limbs, and he gasped for air, senses still blanketed in a thick shroud of panic. He didn’t know where he was, but after his struggling was unsuccessful, he stilled, too overcome with trying not to suffocate to do anything else.


He kept breathing. It slowly got easier, but he felt jerky, keyed up, like he was trapped in a corner and just waiting for something to descend on him. His vision began to clear, and his eyes darted around, trying to make sense of the disorienting puzzle pieces around him.

As the darkness dissipated until it was just clouding his periphery, things began to fall into place. He couldn’t concentrate on any detail for long, but he recognized the room—it was the locker room, as
promised. He was backed against a wall, sitting on the floor, curled, and loosely draped around him was some long strips of white fabric.

“Can you describe where you are to me?”

Bakugou’s breathing still felt wrong, and a clammy feebleness was settling over him, but he tried to focus. His gaze still wanted to jump erratically, but he could hone in on some details—the texture of the tile, dents in the metal of the lockers. He grunted out, “Locker room,” as an answer, even though he was already told that much.

“Good. Keep going.”

“Uh. I’m on the floor.” He didn’t know what else to say, so he kept looking around. It occurred to him that this wasn’t the main area of the locker room, and he vaguely came to the realization that it was the omega wing. “The omega side. Against the far wall.”

“Good. Okay. Keep breathing.”

Bakugou’s eyes finally landed on the owner of the voice for long enough to register. Aizawa was crouched a couple of feet away, expression severe with concern. His capture weapon was hanging limply from his hand, pooling on the floor between where it connected the two of them. Bakugou’s eyes darted from the teacher, to the fabric in his hand, and finally to the binds surrounding him, and the situation began to piece itself together in his mind.

He groaned, letting his head fall back against the wall. “I’m going to kill that stupid alpha piece of shit.”

Aizawa snorted humorlessly, but some of the apprehension slid from his shoulders. He recalled the capture weapon, untangling it from around his student once he was sure there was true recognition. “I would advise against that.”

“He deserves it,” Bakugou snapped in response. He felt gross, sweaty and shaky, and he felt drained in a way he hated, and all of that served to agitate him. He didn’t have the patience to try to be reasonable, and a part of him wanted to be allowed to lash out, almost felt like he was owed it.

Aizawa glanced over his student, idly responding as he tried to assess his status. “I understand you’re upset, and obviously you have good reason for it, but I can’t exactly overlook this level of hostility between students.”

“Then tell him to leave me the fuck alone,” Bakugou snarled, shifting to hunch against the wall more defensibly.

That earned him a soft hum, and Aizawa stayed quiet for a long moment, considering his student. He nodded slowly before straightening his legs to stand. “This is a discussion we should have later. You should get some rest. Do you need to see Recovery Girl?”

For some reason, that ignited an almost desperate anger in Bakugou, like he was being dismissed and Aizawa just didn’t get it. “What the fuck is there to discuss, huh? You saw what happened!”

“Bakugou,” Aizawa eyed his student warily, weighing his words. “This is a complicated situation. I don’t think this is the right time to talk about it.”

“What’s complicated? He started it, he was—did you even hear what he said? And he used his stupid alpha pheromones! You said we weren’t allowed to do that!” Bakugou struggled to his feet, too agitated to keep sitting.
Aizawa let out an exhale from his nose, like it took so much patience to deal with this, and it made Bakugou almost irate enough to want to punch his teacher, too. “Again, it’s more complicated than that. He didn’t mean to—”

“What do you mean he didn’t mean to? You saw—he was trying to provoke me! He was trying to show me up, dominate me just because he’s an alpha, obviously he meant to—”

“Bakugou, calm down—”

“Don’t fucking tell me to calm down! I—he—it’s his fucking fault!”

“Bakugou, listen to me.”

“It is! It—he did that stupid pheromone thing on purpose, he completely killed my quirk—”

“I did that, Bakugou,” Aizawa finally snapped. “He affected it a little bit, yes, but I was the one that erased your quirk. Believe it or not, you’re still not allowed to threaten other students, even when you’re upset. Even if he’s trying to provoke you! You are not permitted to use your quirk on or outright assault other students, no matter what they say to you!”

Bakugou was heaving, face ruddy and covered in a sheen of sweat. He stared at his teacher, expression pulled into a tight grimace as he warred between the desire to argue and the knowledge that he was right. The internal battle didn’t tip in the favor of either side, and he felt his eyes begin to burn with frustrated tears as he struggled not to lose even more of his composure.

“Bakugou.” Aizawa took a deep breath, hands held up in placation as he carefully picked through his words. “I’m not...entirely disagreeing with you. I know what you’ve been through, and I can’t fully fault you. But the reason we’re holding classes on how to control your pheromones is because most of you can’t yet, including him. You’re not wrong to be upset, but he really didn’t mean to. He likely felt threatened and did it on impulse.”

Bakugou barked a dry laugh, but he stayed quiet, silently giving in to his teacher’s logic. The aftermath of his panic attack caught up to him, making him feel incredibly tired, hallow and flimsy, and he leaned against the wall before sliding back down again. When he spoke, it was more out of stubborn grumpiness than anything.

“How the fuck am I supposed to learn anything if the alphas get to just—” Bakugou growled, waving his hand when he couldn’t find an eloquent description. “You said they wouldn’t be able to.”

“I didn’t say—”

Bakugou cut him off with an impatient groan. “You did! Back when we first talked about this shit. You said no one my age would be able to.”

“I said they wouldn’t be able to control it,” Aizawa responded gruffly, running a hand through his hair. After a beat, he sat down on one of the benches, accepting that this conversation was going to happen now whether it was a good idea or not. “And they wouldn’t do it on purpose, both of which remain true. In regular sparring and exercises, it still won’t be an issue.” He paused, looking to the side with his lips pursed as he weighed his thoughts. “...But we will take this into consideration. This...particular instance is likely due to your rocky relationship with others, specifically those who are intimidated by you. At this point, that’s not a problem in your own class, but I didn’t consider how it might play out with 1-B. It was admittedly an oversight on my part.”

Bakugou grunted in acknowledgment, begrudgingly appreciative that his teacher was taking some fault. It still felt unfair, but it helped.
Aizawa sighed, shoulder slumped and still looking away. “You have to remember that they don’t know, Bakugou. We do, but they don’t. They don’t realize how badly things might affect you.”

“So, what,” Bakugou mumbled, voice rough. “They just get to do whatever? Push the envelope to see how much they can get away with before someone will slap them across the wrist? You just said we’d be punished for weaponizing our pheromones.”

“Weaponizing is intentional. I can’t punish him harshly for doing something subconsciously, especially when he doesn’t fully understand why it caused such a strong reaction,” Aizawa grumbled, running a hand over his face before rubbing his eyes. “But he’s not just going to ‘get away with it,’ either. He did provoke you.” He leaned forward with his elbows on his knees and finally looked back at Bakugou, eyes tired but resigned. “But...I also can’t let you off the hook entirely. Not when you sent another student to the infirmary over a few taunts. I understand what you’re going through, and honestly, you’ve far exceeded my expectations with the progress you’ve made. I’m proud of you, and after everything, I don’t fault you for what happened...but I can’t ignore it, either.”

Bakugou stared at the ground, feeling a mix of emotions and the tell-tale pressure behind his eyes of tears wanting to spring forth, but he held them back. Despite all of the work he did, all of the progress, there were still so many cracks needed to be filled—the pride from being praised was dampened by shame and frustration and hopelessness, and he was pissed off at himself, at Monoma, at Aizawa, at his therapist...but even that felt plastic, like he knew he was just trying to find something to blame for falling apart. Under it all, he knew Aizawa was right, so he held his tongue, sniffed, and nodded.

Aizawa watched him for a second before nodding as well. He looked a little defeated, a little guilty for putting more emotional burden on his student when he knew it would have been wiser to wait. “Don’t worry too much. It won’t be bad. I’ll discuss with Vlad King, but I imagine he won’t want to go hard on you, either. It may even be a blessing in disguise...we were considering ways we could work with you more one-on-one without raising suspicions, given...well, we thought something like this might be a possibility. We’ll be considering ways to make this as constructive as possible. It may be less of a punishment and more of a path to personalized attention without alienating you from your peers.” A pause, and a thoughtful hum. “In addition to a day or two of community service.”

Bakugou groaned quietly at the last point, but he nodded again, resigned. He wiped some of the sweat from his face, sniffed again, and considered the daunting task of getting back to his feet. Aizawa observed him for a few moments before standing and walking over to reach a hand out, which Bakugou hesitantly took and allowed himself to be hauled up. He wobbled, exhausted and unsteady and feeling like a husk more than a human, but he followed his teacher out of the omega wing.

“Aizawa waited patiently until Bakugou nodded. Appeased, Aizawa let him slip into the main locker room to change.

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All of U.A.’s uniforms had fairly high collars. The gym uniform was no different, featuring a gap in the front to aid mobility and fabric high enough to cover the scent glands and nape, offering just the barest protection and dampening of scent. It probably wasn’t even intended entirely for that, but it
made a small difference nonetheless.

It should be enough.

After all, even though Bakugou was agitated and shaky for hours after the end of class, he knew Aizawa was probably right. The loudmouth from 1-B probably hadn’t intended on pumping out alpha pheromones the way he did—that would be giving him way too much credit. The dumbass probably didn’t even realize what had happened and would complain that Bakugou attacked him for no reason, which didn’t bother Bakugou in the slightest. In a weird way, Bakugou kind of preferred that narrative, almost hoping that the 1-B extra took that line of reasoning. He was fine with people seeing him as aggressive, and he sure as hell didn’t need more people clued in on his weaknesses.

Still, even if he realized logically that it was unintentional, he couldn’t quiet the alarm blaring through his lizard-brain. He knew there would be exercises, opportunities for alphas to render him vulnerable again, and no matter how many times he told himself they would be safe and controlled and monitored, he felt like throwing up. He knew his classmates and professors were entirely different, but he was on edge, his mind losing its ability to distinguish teaching from threat.

That was what led him to the support department, just before everyone else got out of class. He couldn’t quiet his thoughts, so he caved and sought a solution, even if he knew it was just something of a security blanket. If he got it done now, he could be back in the dorms before his packmates returned from class and inevitably fretted over him.

Aizawa had mentioned bites during his lecture—it was a small thing, barely a nod to the topic, but Bakugou’s thoughts circled around it. By now, the dizzying loss of control from pheromones had inevitably cemented itself in his brain with being bitten, being pinned, being rendered totally and completely helpless. When he tried to visualize the coming practical exercises with the techniques his therapist taught him, his mind’s eye kept running forward with images, uncontrolled, spiraling into memories that merged with wild hypothetical situations, until his hands were shaking and sweat beaded across his forehead.

He knew no one was going to bite him. He knew it wasn’t the point to subjugate. But trying to use logic to bully his brain into cooperating wasn’t doing much to help him.

The support department was always busier than he liked, even outside of class. Sometimes it was just Hatsume Mei, but her presence alone felt about about as crowded as three or four people. Fortunately for Bakugou, there were several other students requesting costume alterations, and she was kept busy with their errands. Unfortunately for him, that made for a busy room, and he tried not to draw attention to himself as he slipped by.

Power Loader was tinkering with something idly near the edge of the room, only half of his attention focused on observing the class. Even so, as Bakugou drew near, he glanced over to acknowledge the student, his expression obscured by his oversize helmet and his scent muted with suppressants. Despite that, Bakugou could almost feel the sudden concern as he approached, although maybe that was just self-consciousness—he knew all the teachers knew about his situation, and he still wasn’t used to the idea of people catching his scent, especially with how easily the teachers seemed to notice when he was particularly upset.

Either way, when Bakugou asked to speak with the excavation hero in a more private setting, the teacher agreed without hesitation, leading Bakugou to a small office offset from the studio. Bakugou felt a little stupid for all the fanfare since he wasn’t going to ask for anything remotely difficult, but he also really didn’t want anyone to overhear.

The actual consultation took less than ten minutes. Although safety chokers were not uncommon
accessories for omegas, Bakugou wanted something hero-grade, with durable fabric and a quality metal band to cover his nape and scent glands. Moreover, he wanted it to be discrete, with a transparent front that would make it difficult to spot under his gym uniform and subtle in his hero costume. He knew it would be impossible to hide it altogether, but he preferred to avoid drawing attention to his omega status and the anxieties he felt about it. Plus, chokers were often stereotyped as being delicate or demure, demonstrating a commitment to the purity of the wearer, and Bakugou did not want to deal with that...although that perception was slowly changing. Even Kaminari added a choker to his hero outfit, but he wore it stylishly, without the weight of its past implications dominating the impression. Bakugou wasn’t sure he could pull that off, though, and he wasn’t keen on trying.

Given the teacher’s somewhat no-nonsense demeanor, Bakugou half-expected Power Loader to tell him to just get one of the standard ones (or at least ask if he looked into them at all), but the teacher agreed to the request with no questions asked. Instead, he simply assured the student that he would have a pair of chokers ready by the following day, and promised unprompted that he would keep it quiet. Bakugou left the studio feeling a bit conflicted, both a little perplexed at how simple that was and a little disgruntled at how much of an open book he could be.

But mostly, could admit he felt a little relieved.

Chapter End Notes

The fun and exciting adventure in discovering triggers
I took a couple of risks with this chapter, so I'm hoping it's clear what happened :x but at least this gives the teachers a good screen for not to "letting" Bakugou practice with the other students, so they can work with him around the possibility of more flashbacks/panic attacks
A good reason for it

Chapter Summary

“Yeah, but...” Mina’s voice drifted, and for a second, she chewed her bottom lip. “I was thinking about all this—“

“That’s a change,” Kaminari quipped, snickering when Mina kicked him in retaliation.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Shouto got back from class, Bakugou was laying on his stomach on the futon, attempting to read ahead in one of the classes he missed. The beta quietly closed the door behind him and paused, watching his packmate as if assessing him.

Bakugou didn’t acknowledge him.

He hoped Shouto would just tactfully avoid bringing the Monoma incident up. After a few hours, Bakugou still didn’t feel great, and he had the additional burden of embarrassment at how he reacted —how dramatic, how fragile...how public. He wanted to hope that the event wasn’t be the major talk of the afternoon, but since he didn’t even go back to class, he knew there was no chance of that.

“How are you?” Shouto asked, tentatively and diplomatically. He finally moved into the room and started setting his stuff down, and he probably hoped Bakugou would talk about it on his own (which was probably what should happen).

“’M fine,” Bakugou grunted.

Shouto stayed quiet for a bit longer before speaking again, blunt and to the point. “They said you attacked Monoma and were so angry that Aizawa had to use his capture weapon to drag you away screaming.” Another pause, and then when Bakugou didn’t respond, he probed, “Is that what actually happened?”

Bakugou sighed, dropping his forehead to the futon and letting the book fall out of his hands, resigned. He knew he was supposed to talk about his experiences and fears and feelings, but he was so sick of it. It felt like an ever-present grind—at least with other goals, like training or studying, there was a start and finish, a time and place for self-improvement. With his thoughts and mental habits, however, there was no escape and no breaks, and it felt like the times when it was most important to open up were always the times he least wanted to do it.

He was tired. He felt stupid. He didn’t want to talk about it.

“No,” he grunted.

Shouto hummed. There was another stretch of quiet, then Shouto padded over and flopped down on the futon next to him. Bakugou felt a whisper of nerves at the sudden movement of the bedding, but it passed quickly as Shouto settled in. Bakugou didn’t protest when the beta slid an arm over his back and snuggled in close. After finally stilling and breathing in deep, face pressed comfortably against Bakugou’s shoulder, Shouto murmured candidly, “I was worried.”
Bakugou snorted and responded with a curt, “Don’t be,” but he couldn’t stop the small pang of guilt that shot through him. He quieted that feeling by shifting a little closer to Shouto in silent apology, tilting his head just a little to allow for his scent to be easier to catch. Shouto didn’t try to continue the conversation, apparently giving up on trying to force Bakugou to speak, but Bakugou could still feel the weight of the topic in the air.

They often found themselves entangled on the futon like this lately, and Bakugou had only recently admitted to himself that he really enjoyed it, even if he still hadn’t allowed himself to mentally refer to it as “cuddling.” The only good thing about his scent suppressors running out was that Shouto seemed to love basking in his scent, almost as much as Bakugou liked his. Even though it should be weird, Bakugou found himself appreciating how Shouto sometimes just wanted to lay nearby and breathe, no expectations between them except for keeping each other company. While sometimes they talked or shared kisses (even went so far as to make out a couple times), for the most part there was no feeling of pressure or anticipation.

Even now, it didn’t feel like Shouto was pressuring him, but the events of the day still loomed. The more he thought about it, about the rumors that were likely flying around, the more his feelings of avoidance began to be outweighed by his desire to justify. After a few minutes of lazing wordlessly on the futon, feeling the steady warmth of the beta next to him, Bakugou caved. He heaved a sigh, mumbling into the pillow, “That loudmouth extra from 1-B doesn’t have anything better to do than try to piss people off. He’s been asking for it for a while.”

Shouto gave a soft noise of acknowledgment, not quite in agreement but definitely not reprimanding. Otherwise, he stayed quiet, shifting to watch Bakugou’s face expectantly. Bakugou picked at a loose thread, staring at it rather than his packmate. “I was going to just ignore him—fucker isn’t worth the time—and I know I’m not supposed to, you know...blow up all the time and shit anymore. My therapist is probably going to be pissed, but...” He huffed, brow furrowing. “I knew I was going to get shit for the omega thing. I knew someone was going to try to be all fucking clever about it. I was going to just ignore him and go on with my life and be better than that, but no, no one can fucking mind their own business, everyone has to butt in and test my goddamn patience and just...why do alphas got to be like that, you know?"

“Like what?” Shouto asked, propping his head on his free elbow to engage more readily.

“You know! Just...all smug and shit.”

“A lot of alphas aren’t.”

“That’s not the fucking point,” Bakugou snapped before gruffly pressing his face further in the pillow. His voice was muffled as he continued. “He was talking so much shit, saying I was lying, that I was ashamed—I’m not...I—“ He growled in frustration. He couldn’t really say he wasn’t ashamed, and he wasn’t sure whether or not he would be normally, had the events of the past few months not happened. “Why is it even any of his business?”

“It’s not,” Shouto affirmed, running his hand soothingly up and down Bakugou’s back.

“He said that I was afraid an alpha would make me submit. That I would want an alpha to—how fucked up is that? That’s what really pissed me off.” Even now, the thought still made him burn with rage like acid in his blood, indignant and disgusted.

Shouto’s hand paused in its pacifying motion, brow furrowing and lips pressing into a line. “So that’s why you hit him?” He continued rubbing. “Good. I would have, too.”

“Yeah,” Bakugou mumbled. It was quiet for a second before he sighed, heavy and tired. “I...fucked
“No, he deserved to be punched.”

Bakugou shook his head. “I was just going to threaten him, make him piss himself a little, but I guess...it actually scared him or some shit, and he released his pheromones, and I…” He swallowed, turned his head away. “I lost it. Don’t really remember much. Not ‘til I was with Aizawa in the locker room.”

There was a long silence as that admission hung between them, and Bakugou couldn’t bring himself to look at Shouto. The beta was still rubbing circles against his back, and Bakugou could guess the heavily contemplative look on Shouto’s face, but he knew the vulnerability of looking would fracture the shaky stability he’d managed to piece together.

“Did Aizawa...know that? Are you in trouble?” Shouto settled on asking after considering the many possible questions.

Bakugou shook his head. “No. Well, kind of. A little bit.” He sighed. “Aizawa knew I was having a panic attack, or flashback or whatever, but he said he couldn’t let me get away with beating the shit out of a classmate.”


Bakugou snorted and finally glanced back at his packmate. “Right? Serves him right. Maybe he’ll learn to never fucking talk to me again.”

“If he does, let me punch him next time.” Shouto moved a little closer, sliding higher up on the futon so he could place his head next to Bakugou’s, close enough to press their foreheads together if they wanted.

“Go nuts.” Bakugou shifted to get comfortable with Shouto’s change in position, snuggling into place and letting the tension breathe out of him with a long sigh. He didn’t want to talk about it anymore...but at least he felt lighter than he did before. He still had some work to catch up on, but maybe after a few more minutes of lazing, that might not be so bad.

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“I don’t think we’ve seen him that mad since the Sports Festival.”

Kirishima leaned against the arm rest of the couch in the common area, watching as Sero flipped through the channels of the television without really paying it any attention. On the other couch, Kaminari was draped over the back, still upside-down from where he flopped himself over the top rather than walking around like a normal person. He was occupied with some game on his handheld, but he occasionally looked up when conversation got interesting. Near Kaminari, Mina sprawled over the other half of the couch, head resting on the arm rest and foot within kicking distance of him. A few other people loitered around the tables of the common room, studying or chatting, but none sat close enough to be disrupted by the sounds of the television or the gossip of the rowdy group.

Sero snorted, still flicking through the channels. “Oh yeah. He’s mellowed out so much that sometimes it’s easy to forget about that.”

“Well, even mellowed out, he’s still the moodiest person in the class,” Mina remarked. “I’m not really surprised he went apeshit on Monoma.”

“Who is?” Sero finally gave up, dropping the remote and settling for the channel with all the hero
updates and juicy investigative news. “I’m surprised it didn’t happen sooner.”

“That’s what you get if you poke a bear!” Mina stretched, nudging Kaminari with her foot just for her own amusement. “I wonder how much trouble they actually got into. No one’s seen Bakugou yet to ask, right?”

“No one but Todoroki, probably, and he’s not gonna tell anyone else,” Kirishima mused. “Tetsutetsu said Monoma has to do community service and write an essay about omega heroes, though.”

“Good, maybe he’ll learn to think before he talks.” Mina continued to press her toes into Kaminari’s side until the omega swatted at her feet with a whine, finally sliding fully onto the couch to better defend himself.

“Doubt it. Sounds like he’s already complaining that he shouldn’t get in trouble since he was the one beaten up.”

Kaminari shifted to lean against the open arm rest. “But he used his pheromones, right? His alpha ones. So he can’t really expect to get off scot-free after that.”

Three pair of eyebrows shot up, joined by a series of exclaimed, “Wait, really?” and “He did?”

Kaminari blinked, looking between his friends, handheld briefly forgotten. “I guess? That’s what Uraraka said happened. It smelled really weird, though, and I wasn’t even that close, so I can believe it. You guys didn’t notice?”

The other three shook their heads. Mina tilted her head, thinking back. “I mostly just smelled Bakugou. Monoma had kind of a weird scent, but it didn’t seem super special or anything.”

“Yeah, Bakugou was rabid,” Sero agreed, grimacing slightly. “It was pretty rank. Kind of overpowered everything.”

“Huh,” Kaminari responded.

“Although...” Mina tapped her chin, brow furrowed. “That makes sense, I think. I mean, did you guys notice that Bakugou smelled kind of weird, too? Like he seemed really angry but his scent was...I don’t know, but it didn’t come across as angry to me. Not like usual, anyway.”

“Really?” Kirishima replied, leaning forward to better see the two on the other couch. “I just figured it was because he was more pissed off than normal.”

“Yeah, it seemed pretty angry to me, but then again, it’s not like we have a lot to compare to,” Sero added, shrugging. “He’s always angry.”

“Yeah, but it didn’t feel angry, you know?” Mina said, drawing her fists in towards her chest to emphasize ‘feel.’

“No.”

“Yeah, nope.”

“Ugh, whatever.” Mina gave in, crossing her arms behind her head. “Either way, the pheromone thing makes sense. I’d kick Monoma’s ass if he did that, too.”

“Did he mean to, do you think?” Sero mused. “I kind of can’t see him being that good at the alpha thing, to be honest.”
“Nah, I don’t think so,” Kirishima said. “He looked kind of scared, and Present Mic said most people our age barely even know that those pheromones exist. The exercises are supposed to be for third-years, after all.”

“And I mean, Bakugou can be kind of rough around the edges, so I guess accidents like that could happen,” Mina sighed. “And like, with how often the teachers put him with omegas and betas for hand-to-hand, I guess they might have expected something like that, too. It checks out, but it still isn’t cool.”

Kirishima blinked. “What do you mean? They don’t pair him with omegas and betas more often than any others.”

Mina shot him a pointed look. “Come on, you haven’t noticed? Only with like, no-quirk sparring and grappling and stuff. It’s normal with everything else, but he gets paired off with betas way more often these days. When was the last time you wrestled with him in class?”

Kirishima and Sero paused to think, coming up short of examples that didn’t involve long-range or quirk-based combat. Kaminari, on the other hand, nodded and sighed, long-suffering. “You know, I was kind of wondering about that, because I feel like I get beat up by Bakugou a lot more often than you guys on grappling days. You alphas can take him back, if that’s the case. He’s mean.”

“I guess the teachers would’ve known he’s an omega even if we didn’t,” Kirishima murmured. “But do they do that with all the omegas? Or just Bakugou?”

“Just Bakugou, I think,” Mina replied with a shrug, and Kaminari confirmed with a nod. “Maybe to avoid stuff like what went down with Monoma. I mean, the rest of the omegas can hold their own, but they’re not like...scary.”

Kirishima scoffed. “Bakugou isn’t scary.”

“Not to us! But, maybe to others.”

“Yeah, he can be,” Sero agreed. “It’s just hard to take him seriously once you know him. Although, I got to be honest, I still have trouble even thinking of him as an omega, given all the growling and stuff.”

“Yeah.” Kirishima sighed, setting his chin in his hand. “I still kind of wish he told us from the beginning.”

“It’s his business, he didn’t have to,” Mina replied, tone slightly dismissive.

“Yeah, I know,” Kirishima grumbled, bristling a bit. “It doesn’t even really matter, it’s just that...I guess I don’t know where we stand with him? Or not even that, more like I can’t tell what’s personal or not, like I don’t know what’s going to upset him or set him off. Like if he just told us what’s going on or what bothers him, we could work with that.” Kirishima sighed deeply, deflating. “I don’t want to hurt him or say something stupid, you know? But I have no clue what he’s thinking anymore.”

There was a few beats of gloomy silence as the group nodded their understanding. The quiet was filled by the low buzz of the television as a news reporter discussed the ongoing investigation into hero disappearances, and after a bit, Mina sighed.

“I mean...yeah, it sucks,” she relented, tapping Kaminari’s leg with her foot. “To be honest, I tried getting more details out of Uraraka, but she was pretty cagey about it. But I mean...even if he was fine with being an omega, he probably knows he doesn’t fit the image. And he’s smart, he probably had a good reason for it.”
“We wouldn’t change around him,” Kirishima murmured. “It doesn’t matter if he fits the image or not.”

“Yeah, but...” Mina’s voice drifted, and for a second, she chewed her bottom lip. “I was thinking about all this—“

“That’s a change,” Kaminari quipped, snickering when Mina kicked him in retaliation.

“I was thinking, that maybe it’s more than just us. No one except for the teachers knew, right? And it wasn’t like he just lied—he was on suppressants and everything. Total lockdown on his presentation from day one, which is pretty weird.”

“Yeah...?”

“I mean, think about it! It’s not like most of us can even tell second genders apart yet, aside from me. The suppressants were overkill, and he’d have to have a permission from his parents at this age. So, it probably wasn’t because he was trying to hide it from us.”

The boys stared at her, brows furrowed and gears turning. Sero was the first one who caught on with a quiet “Ooh.” Kirishima and Kaminari, however, looked between the two of them with increasingly confused expressions.

Mina rolled her eyes. “Are you really that dense? He was kidnapped a few months ago by villains. There’s been an uptick in gender based attacks.” A look of understanding finally passed their faces, which then quickly morphed into an expression of mild horror. “I wouldn’t be surprised if U.A. told him to go on suppressants for a while to make sure he didn’t get targeted.”

“I...didn’t think of that,” Kirishima mumbled weakly. He dropped his gaze to the floor, thinking quietly.

“None of us did,” Mina reassured quietly, still tapping her foot idly against Kaminari’s leg. “But like, I think Todoroki’s right. We probably just need to give him time. I’ll bet he hated it, too, feeling like he was hiding or something, since he’s such a strong guy and all.”

The other three all nod, lapsing into another period of silence as they reconsidered their perception of the situation. The television droned on, words going unnoticed.

“So...we still haven’t figured out who the new top alpha is gonna be.” Mina turned slightly, glancing at the other two alphas in an attempt to lighten the mood.

It worked almost immediately. Kirishima perked up and tapped his chin. “I’d have to put my bets on Iida. You know, Mr. Class President.”

“What about you guys?” Kaminari asked, wagging his eyebrows as he unpause the game on his handheld. “Maybe one of you will actually have a shot now.” The other three laughed and shook their heads, modestly waving off the idea or claiming not to be interested.

“You’re all wrong. It’s gotta be Momo,” Sero declared confidently.

“Oh yeah, definitely Yaomomo,” Mina agreed immediately.

“I don’t know, I still think Iida would give her a run for her money,” Kirishima countered, crossing his arms with a shark-toothed smile. The rest of the afternoon was spent bickering playfully and comparing notes on the roster of potential candidates for the hypothetical top alpha spot, should there actually be a competition for such a thing. Before long, they had an entire spread of crudely-made
(and questionably accurate) graphs and charts, as well as a larger crowd of good company to join in the debate. A few friends remained missing, but maybe in time, things would go back to normal again.

Chapter End Notes

Some developments, and some fluff bc according to my watch it was about time for a little bit of fluffiness.

I also like the interpretation that Mina is good w reading people but kind of an airhead with school work. Also I love her

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