The Heart of a Hero

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Character: Kendou Itsuka, Monoma Neito, Shiozaki Ibara, Tetsutetsu Tetsutetsu, Tsunotori Pony, Kodai Yui, Honenuki Juuzou, Tokage Setsuna, Rin Hiryu, Shouda Nirengeki, Yanagi Reiko, Komori Kinoko, Awase Yousetsu, Kuroiro Shihai, Fukidashi Manga, Kaibara Sen, Tsuburaba Kousei, Kamakiri Togaru, Shishida Juurouta, Bondo Kojirou, Ken Sekijirou/Blood King, Yagi Toshinori/All Might, Shinsou Hitoshi, Hatsume Mei, Toqgata Miro, Amajiki Tamaki, Hadou Nejire, Yuyu (My Hero Academia), Midoriya Izuku, Bakugou Katsuki, Todoroki Shouto, Uraraka Ochako, Iida Tenya, Kirishima Eijirou, Aoyama Yuuga, Izawa Shouta/Eraserhead, Yamada Hizashi/Present Mic, Shuuzenji Chiyo/Recovery Girl, Thirteen (My Hero Academia), Ishiyama Ken/Cementoss, Kayama Nemuri/Midnight, Snipe (My Hero Academia), Ectoplasm (My Hero Academia), Majijima Higari/Power Loader, Inui Ryou/Hound Dog, Nedzu (My Hero Academia)/Class 1-B (My Hero Academia), Class 1-A (My Hero Academia), Shigaraki Tomura/Shimura Tenko, Dabi (My Hero Academia), Toga Himiko/Giran (My Hero Academia), Fujimi Romero/Sekigai Kashiko, Tadan Dadan/Lucky Strike, Mangoose Habuko/Shindou You, Nakagame Tatami, Makabe Shikkui, Touteiki Itjejirou, Yoarashi Inasa, Utsushimi Camie, Shishikura Seiji, Moura Nagamas, Intelli Saiko, Tatsuma Ryuuko/Ryuukyuu, Usagiyama Rumi/Miruko, Kamihara Shinya/Edgeshot, Nishiya Shinji/Kamui Woods, Takeyama Yuu/Mount Lady, Wild Wild PussyCats (My Hero Academia), Chatora Yawara/Tiger, Tsuchikawa Ryuuko/Pixie-bob, Sousaki Shino/Mandalay, Shirakura Tomoko/Ragdoll, Todoroki Enji/Endeavor, Hawks (My Hero Academia), Crust (My Hero Academia), Yoroimusha (My Hero Academia), Sakamata Kuugo/Gang Orca, Enigma (My Hero Academia), Selkie (My Hero Academia), Sirius (My Hero Academia), Mizushima Masaki/Manual,
The Heart of a Hero

by DrZenkai

Summary

What can someone do if they find themselves always in second place? Work until you're #1, that's what! Class 1-B of the hero course will learn to come together and overcome their many heroic trials, the comparisons to Class 1-A, and the many pitfalls of adolescence.

A story showing what Class 1-B is up to during the story of My Hero Academia that eventually diverges from canon. Action-packed story arcs mixed with fluffy chapters about these kids being kids. If Horikoshi won't give them the attention and credit they deserve, then it's my job!

Now with a TvTropes page!
https://tvtrpues.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Fanfic/TheHeartOfAHero
The world will one day know the story of Izuku “Deku” Midoriya, who’s inherited the power of All Might, the world’s greatest hero. This boy is destined to become the next symbol of peace, and his journey starts at the high school for heroes, U.A. This is not his story, though.

This story begins not long before Midoriya arrives at U.A. Stepping through the gate into her brand-new adventure was Itsuka Kendo, a student of the hero course in Class 1-B. She had a big smile on her face with her orange hair in a ponytail hanging off her left side. “It’s finally time. The next great hero is here, U.A.!” She pumped her fist up and strode forward with great confidence, crossing over to the building’s entrance quickly. “Before long, everyone will know the name Itsuka Ken—”

“Well, aren’t you a beauty.” She stopped herself when she heard a familiar voice off to the side. A particularly grating voice. It was Neito Monoma, chatting with a girl with earlobes shaped like auxiliary cords. He was leaning on the wall and running a free hand through his blond hair, trying his best to look charming. The girl looked annoyed at his antics, but he was too dense to notice, as usual. “The name’s Monoma. I’m in the Hero Course. Crazy, right.”

“Yeah, so am I,” the girl said, clearly trying to think of an excuse to go.

“Wait, really? Oh, OK…” Monoma paused and tried to think of something else to brag about, but before he could think of something…

“Monoma!” Kendo yelled angrily. Monoma yelped and lost his footing, sliding down the wall and crashing his head on the floor.

“Ow! Kendo?! How long were you watching?” The girl with the strange earlobes took this opportunity to slink away and head to her class.

“Long enough to see you make a fool of yourself.” Kendo grabbed his ear and hoisted him up like an angry mother with her child, hauling him off towards their classroom. “Let’s get going. We don’t want to be late on the first day.”

“I see what this is about,” Monoma said slyly as they went up some stairs. “You can’t stand to see me with another woman, yes?” Kendo twisted his ear towards the ground, making Monoma start grunting in pain and try to pry himself free.

“If I didn’t want you back in first grade, I don’t want you now. You should focus more on your studies and training, rather than trying to be the big man on campus.” Kendo let go and Monoma fell forward, clutching his ear. “Please try not to act like that with our classmates.” Monoma looked up and saw they had arrived at classroom 1-B with a few minutes to spare. He got up, straightened his tie, and slicked his hair down again, making sure he looked good. Kendo slid the giant door open and they both walked in.

The inside of the classroom was lively as a crowd had formed near the back of the group. Kendo and Monoma saw two desks had been pushed together and students had started arm-wrestling. A silver-haired boy with eyebrows that circled his eyes and sharp teeth was grunting and dramatically struggling against another boy with oval-shaped eyes and light brown hair.

“Well Kendo, is this exciting enough for you?” Monoma asked while walking off to find a seat.
“Wow, there’s a lot of strong-looking people here,” Kendo said as she watched the match. “Maybe I should try some arm-wrestling.”

Across the room, Monoma had sat down at the leftmost desk of the front row. Normally, he’d avoid a spot like that to make sure he could goof off at his desk, but something had drawn him there. That something was another pretty girl, sat looking out the window. She had gentle almond eyes and hair made up of green, thorny vines with one strand wrapped around her temples. Monoma spun around in his seat and planted his elbows on the girl’s desk. “Hello there, beautiful,” he said in a confident tone. The girl looked at him, but ignored his flirting and went back to looking at the trees outside. “I’m Neito Monoma. What does an angel like you call yourself—.” Suddenly, a hand grabbed the top of his head, which was pulled backwards and slammed onto his own desk, knocking him out.

Kendo dusted her hands off and fixed Monoma so that he was sitting normally with his head down on the desk. “I’m sorry about him, he’s just… well, I’m not totally sure what his deal is, but he’s harmless. My name’s Itsuka Kendo. What’s yours?” Kendo outstretched her hand and the other girl took it and shook.

“I’m Ibara Shiozaki. It’s very nice to meet you.”

“Likewise, Shiozaki. Let me know if Monoma’s a bother again and I’ll pound him.” Kendo smiled brightly at the vine girl, making her look away a bit. Kendo turned her attention back to the arm-wrestling and watched the oval-eyed boy begin to lose. “Hey, how did all that start?”

“I’ve only just arrived a minute ago, so I wouldn’t know.”

“I see. I’ll have to check it out myself.” She walked to the back of the room and slipped through the small crowd around the table as the oval-eyed boy walked off to sulk in the corner.

“Anyone else man enough!?” the victor asked in a gravelly but somewhat high-pitched voice. Before anyone else could respond, Kendo slipped into the seat and held her arm ready.

“You bet!” Kendo exclaimed.

“Alrighty! Let’s do this,” he said, taking Kendo’s hand. “On three. one… two… three!” Both started pushing against the other, but they remained evenly matched. After 15 seconds of wrestling, Kendo spoke up.

“How ‘bout we make this interesting?” she grunted. “Wanna use our Quirks?”

“OK, but get ready to lose!” he boasted. Kendo felt the boy’s hand become colder and harder as his skin turned to iron. “How d’ya like that?” he yelled. Kendo could practically feel the boy’s hot-bloodedness pass into her through their clenched hands.

“Don’t get cocky. You haven’t seen MY Quirk yet!” As the boy began to push down Kendo’s hand, he felt his grip begin to be forced open. Kendo’s hand was growing and growing, becoming the size of a large beach ball and swallowing up the boy’s forearm. Kendo flicked her wrist, meaning to simply bring his arm down, but accidently threw him out of his chair and into the wall.

“Oh geez! I’m sorry!” Kendo exclaimed.

The boy picked himself back up quickly and cricked his neck. “It’s cool! That’s some quirk you got! I didn’t stand a chance!” “Thanks,” she said with a smile. “My name’s Itsuka Kendo, by the way.”

**Itsuka Kendo. Quirk: Large Fists. Her hands can grow to enormous sizes, giving her great strength.**
As her fist shrunk, the boy took her hand and shook it vigorously. “I’m Tetsutetsu!”

“Nice to meet… wait, what?”

“I said my name’s Tetsutetsu! Tetsutetsu Tetsutetsu!”

“Oh… It’s nice to meet you,” she said with a good-natured chuckle. *What cruel parents.* As she broke off the handshake, the front door slid open and their teacher stepped in. He was a musclebound man in a red costume and a green mask. He had spiky gray hair, an X-shaped scar under his left eye, and pronounced canine teeth sticking out from the bottom of his mouth. On his left arm was a glove with a tube running behind him and into his skin. He looked gruff and no-nonsense, putting a few students on edge. The students around class immediately retreated to desks and sat at attention. Kendo sat to Shiozaki’s right, giving her a good view of the half-conscious Monoma so that she could keep his antics to a minimum.

“All right. Class has officially begun,” the teacher said in a deep, gravelly voice, standing tall at the front of the class. “My name is Sekejiro Kan and I’ll be your homeroom teacher. For those of you who’ve never heard of me before, I am the blood hero Vlad King, but here, you can just call me Mr. Kan.”

*Vlad King?* Kendo thought. *The name sounds familiar, but I’ve never seen him before.*

“Before we start, I’d just like to say that if you have any problems, don’t hesitate to talk to me about it. My job is to help you all achieve greatness and I’ll do that however I can.”

Most of the class relaxed after hearing that. *I guess he’s a nice guy. Just a little scary looking,* they all thought.

“Now, I’ll take attendance and then we’ll head to orientation.” Kan sat down at his desk and started rummaging around his drawer for his attendance book. While he was doing that, someone had come up outside the door.

“I… AM…” Bursting inside the classroom was All Might, dressed in a yellow suit instead of a hero costume. “…HERE AND HOPEFULLY NOT INTERRUPTING ANYTHIIIIIIIIIING! …Right?”

“No, go ahead,” Kan sighed, continuing his search for the attendance book.

“HA HA HA!” All Might bellowed. He took a few steps inside and stood before the class proudly. “HELLO, CLASS 1-B! IT’S GREAT TO SEE SO MANY YOUNG HEROES HERE. YOU ALL LOOK LIKE YOU’RE RARING TO GO, AM I RIGHT?”

All the students were star-struck from seeing All Might in the flesh, but still gave a resounding “Yeah!”

“GOOD TO HEAR! I LOOK FORWARD TO TEACHING YOU ALL ABOUT HEROICS! NOW, I’M OFF TO CLASS 1-A!” All Might stood still for a moment before leaning over to Kan. “Hey, Vlad, which way is 1-A again?”

“Next room on your right after you walk out,” Kan explained. “They aren’t there, though. I saw Eraser take them outside.”

“He’s already testing them? Crap… HA HA HA! WELL STUDENTS, IT’S TIME YOU SEE HOW HEROES EXIT.” All Might got into a runners position and took off in a flash, nearly breaking down the door. “LIKE THEY’VE GOT SOMEWHERE TO BE!” they heard echo through the halls.
“Well, that’s All Might for you,” Kan said. “Always in a rush. Now, let’s get this role call done and we’ll be ready to start.” After attendance was called, Class 1-B was lead to the auditorium for orientation, where Class 1-A was oddly absent. The principal, a mouse-dog-bear in a suit named Nezu, rambled on for a while about heroism, civic duty, studying, his favorite tea, how much he dislikes humans, and many other topics before another teacher, Present Mic, took over to wrap it up. After all that, they were dismissed and went back to class. “OK, we still have a lot to go over,” Kan said, “but for now, head to the cafeteria for lunch.” Kan then stepped out, leaving the students to group up and leave.

“Yo!” Kendo heard next to her. Looking up, she saw a girl with wavy, dark green and slightly sharp teeth. “You’re the arm-wrestling girl, right? The one with the yaoi hands?”

“Yaoi hands?”

“Yeah, your quirk is so cool!” the girl gushed. “I’m Setsuna Tokage. Just call me Setsuna.” Poking out from behind Setsuna was a shorter girl with brown, mushroom-shaped hair that covered her eyes.

“M-My name’s Kinoko Komori,” the mushroom girl said in a nasally, quiet voice.

“I’m gathering up all the girls to sit together,” Setsuna said. “interested?”

“Totally! I’m Kendo, by the way. Itsuka Kendo.”

“Sweet,” Setsuna said. She leaned onto Kendo’s desk and looked over at Ibara. “How ‘bout you, vines?” Shiozaki was surprised at being called out like that, but still smiled and nodded.

“Oh, of course,” she said. “Thank you for the generous offer. My name is Ibara Shiozaki, by the way. I’d prefer to be called that instead of Vines, if you don’t mind.”

“Yeah, sure! C’mon then!” Setsuna ordered. “Yanagi and Pony are scouting a table right now.”

Kendo and Shiozaki packed up and started walking to the cafeteria with Komori and Setsuna. Once they arrived, they bought lunches and joined Yanagi and Pony at their table. Yanagi had big lips and short gray hair that covered her left eye. She also walked in a stumble with her arms up, reminding Kendo of a zombie from old horror movies. Pony was short with wavy blonde hair and big blue eyes, along with two tall horns, a short tail that matched her hair in color, and horse-like hooved legs. They had heard from Mr. Kan in class that she’s a transfer student from America.

“Hey therrrre,” Pony said slowly. “I’m still getting handled on the… language, so please talk slow.”

“Sure thing,” Kendo said.

“Look at us, huh? First day and we’ve got a group going,” Setsuna said. “I think this’ll be a good year for us, eh?”

“Totally,” Kendo agreed.

“Now then,” Setsuna began, “I say we get down to the serious business.”

“What business?” Yanagi asked in a monotone voice

“We’re high school girls now! Take a wild guess.” No one responded, which annoyed Setsuna. “Seriously? High school boys! We gotta talk about the high concentration of hotties in our class.”

“That’s it?” Kendo asked. “That’s not all that big a deal. It’s still our first day, too.”
“Oh, the irony,” Setsuna said. “You say that now, but I saw you during class. You kept staring at that blond boy in the front row, you saucy minx!”

“Huh? I wasn’t staring at Monoma. I was keeping an eye on him. He seems to act like a fool 24/7. Trust me, I’ve been dealing with his antics since first grade.”

“Oh, do tell! Childhood friend romances are always so cute,” Setsuna cooed.

“It’s jus’ like one of ma animes,” Pony chimed in.

“Quit making stuff up,” Kendo huffed. “Let’s talk about something else.”

“Um, e-excuse me,” Komori interrupted. “I t-think we’re missing someone.”

“What do you mean? This is everyone, right?” Setsuna said.

“No, I’m think she is right. There was one another girl in the class.” Pony said with some difficulty.

“Was there?” Setsuna asked herself. “Hmmmm… did she have black hair?”

“I th-think so,” Komori said. “I wonder where she is.” The girls all scanned the cafeteria, but saw no trace of the last 1-B girl.

Kendo took this opportunity to check on Monoma. To her surprise, he was sitting with another group of 1-B students and making small talk. Maybe you’re not hopeless after all. Her gaze hung on him for a moment before she heard Setsuna’s voice.

“You’re staring~,” Setsuna said in a singsong voice.

“You’re the one that made it weird,” Kendo fired back. “So, what if I check up once in a while?”

“Oh, you pure maiden!” Setsuna squealed.

“Shut up,” Kendo said with a flip of her ponytail. Setsuna’s changing the conversation ended up making the girls forget about their quick search for the last girl in their class.

As Class 1-B slowly returned to their classroom, Kendo checked over the room, having remembered the conversation about the girl near the end of lunch. On the left side of the room in the middle row, she saw her. A girl with a blank look on her face with a black bob haircut.

“Hey there,” Kendo said with her usual friendliness. The girl looked up at Kendo, but had no other reaction. Her face remained emotionless and she said nothing. “The rest of the girls in the class sat together during lunch today, but we forgot about you and feel really bad.” Still no reaction. “So, I wanted to invite you to sit with us tomorrow.”

“OK,” the girl said. Her voice was flat and listless.

Is she a robot or something? “My name’s Itsuka Kendo. What’s yours?”

“Yui.”

“Well… I’m glad you’ll be joining us, Yui.” Kendo turned back and fled from the awkward conversation. What she didn’t know was that Yui kept staring at her as she walked away. In time, Class 1-B slowly grew back to full size in time for their afternoon classes. None of them would want to miss it, as their first afternoon class was hero training.
“CLASS 1-B! I… AM… HERE FOR YOUR TRAINIIIIIIIING!” All Might entered, just as energetic as before, this time wearing his hero costume.

“I can’t believe we’re actually learning this stuff from All Might!” Tetsutetsu yelled.

“This is so awesome!” Setsuna squeaked.

“Is that his silver age costume? That’s so cool!” The oval-eyed boy exclaimed as All Might walked dramatically up to a podium in front of the class.

“Well now, it’s finally time for your hero course to officially begin,” All Might said, a little calmer than usual, but just as theatrically. “Right here in the same academy that trained me, you’ll learn what it means to be a hero and fight for justice. Think of this class as ‘Heroism 101.’ We’ll get right into it today with a special Heroes vs. Villains exercise. IT’S TIME TO BATTLE YOUR HEARTS OUT, CLASS!” All Might stepped out from behind the podium and posed pointing at the left wall. On cue, several drawers in the wall automatically came out with briefcases inside. “Now you’ll start looking the part! These were created based on your designs and specifications, as well as your Quirk registration forms. YOUR VERY OWN COSTUME!” The whole class erupted into cheers and nearly leapt out of their seats to grab their costumes. “Now, suit up and meet me at Training Ground Beta!”

“Yes, Sir!”

Chapter End Notes

First Chapter is over and out in the world. I hope you all enjoyed it. I definitely won’t find this cringy in 20 years. Special thanks to Quirkwizard on Tumblr and 1b-headcanons on Tumblr
Heroes Vs Villains

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

**Class 1-B hero costumes**

* means it’s from the show/manga

EDIT: This chapter was published long before chapter 194. If you prefer the canon costumes and wanna picture those instead, go ahead, but just know that the writing will refer back to these occasionally.

*Itsuka Kendo: black domino mask, light blue qipao dress, black corset, brown utility belt, black booty shorts, dark gray shoes with light gray lining

*Neito Monoma: navy blue tuxedo, light violet shirt with popped collar, purple tie with black dots, belt with stopwatches, black dress shoes.

Ibara Shiozaki: long, flowy white dress with green vine pattern on skirt hem, elbow length dark green wrap/cloak/shawl, turquoise utility belt with medical supplies and water bottles, turquoise gloves and boots

*Tetsutetsu Tetsutetsu: I can’t describe it. Just look up a picture.

*Pony Tsunotori: horse harness around head, belts around biceps, torso, and shoulders, long, tight aqua blue shirt with light blue sections, light blue fingerless gloves, light yellow pants, aqua blue hoof guards with stirrups

Juzo Honenuki: yellow tank top, red wrist bracers, light brown utility belt, red pants with horizontal black stripes on sides, light brown boots

Hiryu Rin: red Kung-Fu shirt with green dragon design on the back and white cuffs, black belt, white pants, black shoes
Reiko Yanagi: black hooded cloak, black bandana mask with white skull mouth design, tight black bodysuit, short red tutu skirt, dark red shoes, small black bag strapped to left thigh.

Yui Kodai: violet bodysuit with vertical red stripes on sides, pointy pink shoes with no soles (they wouldn’t work with her Quirk), white gloves, purple domino mask

Kinoko Komori: green body suit with white vertical stripe on front, dark green hooded cape, brown rounded shoulder guards with white dots, yellow utility belt with attached yellow skirt cape, brown shoes with white dots.

Nirengeki Shoda: high collar aqua blue jacket, white undershirt, red gloves, black pants, red shoes

Yosetsu Awase: white bandana with thin blue crisscross stripes (that he wears all the time), large metal shoulder pads, dark blue-gray sleeveless shirt, black wrist bracers, black leather belt with large silver buckle, light blue pants, metal kneepads, black boots

Shihai Kuroiro: silver circlet, black cape with jagged bottom and high collar held by gold chain, purple bodysuit with a big hole in the chest, black shoes

Manga Fukidashi: light blue bodysuit with white collar and gold parts (shoulders, upper arms, lower legs, starburst symbol on chest), white utility belt, gold boots

Sen Kaibara: Metallic blue helmet (kind of like Uraraka’s), sleeveless dark blue shirt with white V-shape on it (shoulder to bottom to shoulder), black gloves, blue pants, white utility belt, white shoes

Jurota Shishida: orange bodysuit with red stripe down the middle, orange utility belt and suspenders, camo boots

Kosei Tsuburaba: black domino mask, red jacket, black and orange striped shirt, dark red pants, black shoes

Setsuna Tokage: short and thick red scarf, short sleeve green bodysuit with tan stomach and short suit legs, green boots
Togaru Kamakiri: Sleeveless dark green body suit with yellow sides, orange utility belt, red goggles on head, brown boots

Kojiro Bondo: sleeveless white bodysuit with wide orange stripe down middle, orange arm bracers, orange boots

At the fake city called Training Ground Beta, All Might stood on his own in front of the entrance tunnel. He stared into the darkness and eventually saw Class 1-B walking towards him. “Young heroes, I’ll bet you see now how important a hero’s costume really is.” All 20 students walked with heads held high into the light. “Wearing it fills you with vigor and confidence, am I right? From now until you graduate, you are all…” They arrived in front of the number one hero dressed in their own unique hero costume. “HEROES IN TRAINING!” All Might felt nothing but pride seeing the young heroes standing before him. “I’M STARTING TO GET FIRED UP! YOU ALL LOOK SO COOL! Now, let’s get started, newbies!”

“This is the same city from the entrance exam. More robot fights in the streets?” Kendo asked.

“Not quite,” All Might said. “Instead of taking to the streets, you’ll be fighting in one of these buildings. You may think of villain attacks only happening outdoors, but on average, most heinous crimes occur indoors. Backroom deals, hostage situations – clever villains lurk where they can stay hidden. To simulate this, you’ll all be split into 10 two-person teams, where 2 teams at a time will fight. One team is heroes, the other is villains. Now we’ll decide the teams byyyyy… DRAWING LOTS!”

All Might produced a small box with slips of paper inside. Each student came up and picked their lot. One by one, the teams were formed. “All right, now let’s see who’s going first.” All Might reached into two boxes, one marked hero and another marked villain. “First teams up are…” He pulled out two balls, a white one marked C and a black one marked J. “…Hero team C and villain team J. So, we have…” He paused and then checked his clipboard hidden behind the boxes. “OK, on our hero team is Yosetsu Awase – please step forward, young Awase.” A boy with spiky black hair held up by a white and blue bandana walked to the front of the crowd.

“Ready for action, sir,” Awase said with a salute.

“Good! By your side will be Shihai Kuroiro… young Kuroiro, are you here?”

“Present,” a voice in the back of the crowd said. The voice was gravelly and scratchy, sounding almost villainous. Out from the crowd came a tall boy with messy white hair, jet-black skin, and a scowl on his face.

“…ALRIGHTY,” All Might continued, “WE HAVE OUR HEROES! Now for the villains. Itsuka Kendo –”

“Right here, sir!” Kendo exclaimed.
“– and Yui Kodai.”

“Here,” Yui said, barely above a whisper. She walked up to Kendo’s side and glanced indifferently at Awase and Kuroiro.

“Now, before we get started, I’ll explain the specifics of the game. The villain team goes into the building first. Their goal is to defend a dangerous weapon they’ve stashed somewhere in the building. You’ll have five minutes to prepare, in which the heroes may not enter or look inside the building. The villains can move around the building to set traps and prepare themselves, but they must be back in the weapon room when prep time is up. After five minutes are up, the game will start and you’ll have 15 minutes to fight it out. The heroes must either subdue and capture the villains or secure the weapon to win the game. For the villains to win, they must subdue and capture the heroes or defend the weapon until time runs out.”

“How do we capture people?” Awase asked.

“With this!” All Might said, holding up a small roll of tape. “Capture Tape! Wrap it tightly around your opponent to ‘capture’ them and remove them from play. Each of you gets a roll, along with these earpieces.” He handed the four students a roll of Capture Tape and a small earpiece. “You can keep in touch with your teammate with these, and I can speak into them just in case. Your classmates and I will be watching closely from a monitoring room, so if I see anyone going too far, I’ll be stopping the fight.” All Might handed Kendo a folded slip of paper and began to walk away. “Those are the directions to the weapon you’re protecting, villains. Your five minutes of prep time starts now. Get moving!” Kendo and Yui walked into the building as All Might led the rest of the class to the monitoring room.

“So, Yui…” Kendo began, not knowing what to say. “That’s a cool costume. Are you happy with how it came out?”

“I am.”

“Cool,” Kendo said. *At least I got more than a word from her.* As Kendo led the way, Yui stared intently at her while trailing behind. Before long, they reached the third floor where their weapon was stored. The large fake bomb was in a small room in the middle of a hallway, so it couldn’t be seen unless someone was right in front of the doorway. “This shouldn’t be too hard, right, Yui?”

“Mm,” she grunted in response.

*Great, I’ve downgraded to just sounds from her.* “So, if we’re gonna work together, we should know about each other’s Quirks. I’ll go first.” Kendo’s fist started enlarging until it was about as big as her torso. “I can make my hands big, which increases my strength. Simple enough.” Yui said nothing. “What’s your Quirk?”

“Size,” she answered. “I can shrink to about handheld, or grow to about four times my normal size. It takes more effort to move around in as I change size.”

“Wow! That’s an awesome Quirk!” Kendo was hoping for at least a smile, but her Yui had no reaction the compliment. With no other ideas for what to talk about, Kendo settled for just sitting in silence. She sat cross-legged in front of the weapon while Yui sat in the corner behind her, still staring at her back. Before long, they heard All Might’s voice echo through the building.

“Heroes vs. Villains Training: begin!” Kendo got up and cracked her knuckles in anticipation.
“It’s time to kick some butt! Ready, Yui?” Her question got no response. “Yui?” She turned to look where Yui had been sitting, but realized she was right next to her and finally noticed her staring. “Uuuuhh, you’re a little close.” Kendo chuckled nervously and backed away, but Yui didn’t react.

“I have a question, Kendo.”

“OK, what is it?” Kendo hesitantly asked.

“…How do you get so excited?” Yui asked.

“Huh?” Kendo was surprised by the innocence of the question. “Why do you ask?”

“You seem really excited about hero training,” Yui said. “Heroes like All Might always look excited too. I’d like to know why that is.”

“Oh… well, I guess hero work has always interested me,” Kendo explained as she rubbed her neck bashfully. “If you don’t mind me asking, why did you come to U.A.?”

“…I was told my Quirk was suited for hero work, and I have no interest in other careers. You act so passionate, Kendo. I want to learn how to act like that.”

“It’s… something you feel, not something you learn. I get excited by heroics because I focus my whole mind on it. You should find something that you can be passionate about and focus on it.” Kendo slowly put her hand on the shoulder of her teammate, who watched confusedly. Yui stared at Kendo’s hand for a moment before making eye contact again.

“Why are you touching me?” Kendo immediately recoiled and chuckled nervously.

“S-Sorry about that. I just wanted to reassure you a little. That’s what friends do, y’know?”

“Friends?” Yui parroted. “We’ve only just met. How are we friends, Kendo?”

“Yui… I’m sorry to cut this off, but our opponents can arrive any second. I’m gonna go scout near the stairs.” Kendo walked out the doorway, but popped her head back in for a moment. “Awase and Kuroiro will be coming this way. I’ll fight them off and try to keep them away. If they get by me, I’m counting on you to protect the weapon until I come back.”

“You’re… counting on me?”

“Of course. I have faith in you, Yui.” Kendo walked off, leaving Yui on her own. “Kendo… has faith in me?” She stood in silence with only her teammate’s words on her mind. I still don’t understand. She barely knows me, but…

Chapter End Notes

For future reference, if there’s any inconsistencies with the character's costumes, go back to this chapter and look again because I may have edited them a bit. I doubt I'll do much of that though. Also, if the manga or anime ever shows more costumes of the 1-B kids, I'll be sticking with the ones described here instead of using the canon ones. If you prefer the canon ones and want to imagine them, that's up to you, but I'll be writing with these outfits in mind. Later.
Kendo stood alone in the hallway; close to the stairway, but still checking behind her. *They’ll probably come this way, but they may try going the long way around to trick us. They may also split up, in which case, I’ll move back to the doorway and try to block it.* Slowly, the sound of boots slamming into the stairs starting echoing towards her.

“Checking the basement for so long was a real shitty idea in hindsight,” she heard Awase say.

“Oh, you think?” Kuroiro angrily shouted. The voices and footsteps were getting closer by the second, prompting Kendo to press against the wall and peek around the corner. She saw her opponents quickly finish running up the stairs and catch their breaths.

*Now’s my chance,* Kendo thought. She enlarged her fist and jumped out into the open. “Not so fast, heroes!” she exclaimed. Kuroiro swished his ragged black cape to the side while Awase took a fighting stance. Kendo charged towards them with her giant fist cocked.

“Awase, stay behind me,” Kuroiro hissed. He held his arms out in front of him and waited as Kendo got closer.

As she approached, she started moving faster. Faster than she knew she could go. She tried to stop, but felt something pulling her forward. Taking a closer look, she saw the hole in Kuroiro’s bodysuit that normally exposed his chest was instead a swirling black portal. Smaller portals were also on Kuroiro’s palms that were pulling Kendo with even more force. She tried backing up, but the pull was too great.

“Don’t worry,” Kuroiro said. “This won’t hurt a bit.” Kendo lost her footing a flew towards her opponent’s chest. As she reached the portal, she clenched her eyes tight and passed straight through. When she opened her eyes, she looked around and saw wasn’t inside the building anymore. She was in total darkness, floating in a void.

“Wh-Where… am I?”

“I should be able to hold her until we’re finished,” Kuroiro said, “but I won’t be able to suck up Kodai without giving Kendo an exit.”

**Shihai Kuroiro. Quirk: Black.** He can form black holes on his chest and palms to suck stuff up, shrinking them down and storing them in his body. He can only hold a certain amount of stuff in him, and people can break out if they make a big ruckus.

“That’s fine,” Awase said. “You’ve done more than enough. I’ll handle Kodai. Let’s go.” Awase and Kuroiro began to run, but suddenly, Kuroiro doubled over.

“Urrgh… Kendo must be flailing around inside me,” Kuroiro said.

“You okay?” Awase asked. Kuroiro suddenly spasmed and a slamming sound came from his body, as if he had been punched in the stomach.
“She’s too strong,” Kuroiro grunted. “She’ll be free soon! Get ready to – urgh – use your Quirk!” Kuroiro’s chest became a portal again and Kendo dove out of him, prompting Awase to grab her enlarged hand and redirected her into the wall. She crashed into the back of her hand and fell to the floor, panting.

“What the hell… was that.” Kendo’s breath was erratic and her eyes were still closed. Once she regained her bearings, she opened her eyes and stood up. Seeing Awase so close, she tried swinging her giant hand, but felt it stuck to the wall.

“Don’t try moving your hand,” Awase warned, “unless you don’t mind tearing it off.”

Yosetsu Awase. Quirk: Weld. He can weld two things together at a subatomic level if he’s touching both and the two objects are touching.

“Let me go, dammit!” Kendo yelled. Looking over her shoulder, she saw Kuroiro unfurling his capture tape. As he crept closer, she quickly grew her free hand and backhanded Kuroiro into the wall behind her. The steel wall crumpled and contorted from her strength as Kuroiro was pressed into it. On her left, Awase came at her with his own strip of capture tape and she swung again. She had lost the element of surprise though, so Awase jumped back in time to avoid her. Kuroiro pried himself from the dented wall and returned to Awase’s side, making sure he was out of Kendo’s reach.

“We shouldn’t bother,” Awase said. “My quirk will hold her to the wall unless I free her myself.” The heroes ran down the wall leaving Kendo stuck.

“Get back here!” she screamed as she futilely pulled her arm. With her free hand, she clicked on her earpiece. “Yui! Yui, come in!”

“What’s wrong?”

“Awase stuck me to a wall. They’re coming to you. I’m sorry.”

“Do you need me to come help you?”

“No. Forget about helping me. Protect the weapon until I find a way to break free. I’m counting on you, Yui.”

She’s counting… on me? Kendo… has faith… in me? Yui could hear Kuroiro and Awase running in her direction. She looked back at the weapon, trying to think of the best course of action. I can’t block the door with my body. I’d lose sight of them and won’t see they’re Quirks coming. As her opponents drew closer, Yui got an idea. She ran behind the weapon and began to grow larger. It may hurt, but It’s all I can do. Kendo is counting on me. She trusts me. As Kuroiro and Awase ran through the doorway, Yui’s body had grown big enough for her plan to work. She hooked her legs and arms around the weapon and held her chin over the top.

“I see,” Kuroiro said. “Using your body to shield the weapon. With your back to the wall and facing the only entrance, you have no blind spots either.” He summoned his chest and palm voids again, but the suction was too weak. Yui didn’t budge. “I’ll keep trying to suck her up. Awase, you try and break through to the weapon.”
“Break through?”

“Is there a problem?” Awase looked up at Yui, then back at Kuroiro.

“No. This is heroes vs. villains, and she’s a villain.” He rolled his shoulder and came closer to Yui.
“I’m not gonna hold back, Kodai, but I’ll give you an out. Surrender or this’ll hurt like hell.”

For the first time in a while, Yui’s face wasn’t blank. She had a steely, determined grimace. “Kendo is counting on me, so I’ll hold out as long as it takes.”

“…Alright then.” Awase dashed forward and let loose a flurry of rapid punches on Yui’s limbs. Yui grunted and tensed up, but didn’t give up an inch of space. The suction of Kuroiro felt stronger as she took damage, but she stood resolute against the onslaught. *Kendo… believes… in me.*

In the monitoring room, All Might and the rest of 1-B watched as Yui used herself as a human shield.

“This is hard to watch,” Tetsutetsu commented.

“I feel bad. He just keeps hitting her,” Setsuna said.

“All Might, this is too much brutality,” Shiozaki said. “Didn’t you say you’d stop the fight if it went too far? I beg you, end this.” All Might stayed silent for a moment, but then turned to the class. “My students… I know this may seem brutal, but this is the reality of hero work. You must get rough, rougher than you may be comfortable with. Young Awase and young Kuroiro are doing what any hero would do in this situation, so don’t hold this against them. Not only that, but stopping now… would be an insult to young Kodai.”

“What do you mean?” Shiozaki asked.

“Look closely, my students. Take a good, long look into young Kodai’s eyes.” They all looked at Yui, who was biting her bottom lip and squeezing her fists tight. Some understood, but most others still didn’t. “I’m sure some of you noticed the stoic look she’s had all day. Emotions don’t come easy to her according to her previous teachers, but now… I don’t know exactly what, but something has jumpstarted her heroic resolve. Look at the fire in her eyes! Young Kodai has awoken!”

“Dammit, why won’t you move!” Awase yelled. “We’re running out of time!” Yui kept her determined look and tensed her muscles for another assault. “Kuroiro, your Quirk isn’t working, so just help me attack!”

“Fine,” Kuroiro said as he deactivated his portals. “Time to end this.” The two students ran apart to Yui’s sides. Both boys let out a shout and started pounding into Yui’s ribs. Yui squealed and gritted her teeth, careful not to move her limbs.

*Kendo… believes… in me… She has faith… in me…*
“Nothing’s fucking working!” Awase yelled as he stopped his assault and returned to Yui’s front. “Kuroiro, you keep attacking while I try her arms open!” Awase pushed up on Yui’s arm and held the other arm down. Normally, Yui’s giant strength would be much greater than what Awase could muster, but the continuous attacks were taking their toll. She clenched her eyes, struggling to keep tears from forming as Kuroiro’s punches made it more and more difficult to breathe. Awase pushed her arm further up, giving him a clear view of the weapon. “I just need to… slip through and…” Awase began reaching for the weapon. As he got closer, a mere few inches from ending the game, he felt something grab his leg. He was pulled from the gap between Yui’s arms and thrown out of the room, crashing in the hallway. “What was— huh?” He looked up, dazed, and saw Kendo standing in front of him.

“What the hell are you doing to Yui?!”

“Kendo,” Yui said in relief, “you’re here…”

“Awase, I thought you said she’d be stuck to the wall.” Kuroiro stopped his attack on Yui and ran to confront Kendo.

“I did,” Awase said tried to stand, “and she still is.” Kuroiro was confused, but then saw Kendo and understood. Her giant hand had a slab of metal stuck on the palm.

“So, you broke off the piece of wall? Clever girl.” Kuroiro activated his Quirk and pulled Kendo closer, but before he could bring her into his void, Yui’s giant hand slapped him away.

“Kendo, I’m too large for his Quirk to work on.” She held her hand over Kuroiro, pinning him to the wall. “There’s less than minute left. Keep Awase out of the room and we’ll win.” Kendo nodded and smiled at Yui. She ran to the doorway just in time to slap Awase back into the hallway. He crashed into the wall, but immediately pushed off of the dented steel and dashed at Kendo. He tried to punch her, but she hit him with the metal slab once again. He crashed in the same spot, but dove again. He’d rush and rush, and each time, Kendo slapped him away, but with each hit, he’d fly at her faster and faster. Finally, a shoulder-check landed in her stomach and she slid backwards.

“Fuck it! I’m going for it!” Awase rolled to the side and dove towards the weapon, but Yui moved her free hand and slapped him backwards. Kendo grabbed him in mid-air and slammed him to the floor as the last few seconds of the match ticked away.

“TIME’S UP!” All Might’s voice rang through the building’s hallways. “THE VILLAIN TEAM… WIIIIIIINS!” Yui sighed and let Kuroiro free from the wall as Kendo fell to the ground next to Awase.

“That was… intense,” she panted.

“You’re telling me,” Awase said. “Gimme your hand and I’ll unstick you from that wall chunk.” He touched her hand and the metal slab, deactivating his Quirk and freeing Kendo. “Good game, you two.”

“Yeah, same to you,” Kendo said as she shrunk her hand down and rubbed her sore palm. She propped herself up and walked over to Yui, who shrunk down to her normal size.

“Kendo… I did it,” Yui said in a weak mumble. “I protected the weapon.”

“You sure did. Great, great job. I’m sorry I left you alone like that.” Kendo put Yui’s arm over her arms and propped her up. “Let’s get you to Recovery Girl.”

“Hold on,” they heard Kuroiro say. “Lemme just say… I’m sorry. I may have gotten a little…
“It’s fine,” Yui said. “It’s Heroes vs. Villains, like Awase said. I was given a chance to surrender, too. I don’t blame you for my stubbornness.” Kuroiro’s permanent scowl seemed to soften for a moment before going back to normal as he helped Awase up. The four students walked to the first floor, where All Might waited with two stretchers being pulled by robots.

“CONGRATULATIONS, ALL OF YOU! A splendid showing for our first match!”

“Thank you, sir,” Kendo said as she eased Yui onto a stretcher.

“I was especially impressed with your showing, young Kodai.” All Might bent down on one knee and looked Yui in the eyes. “Your passion for protecting the weapon was something to see. I hope you can get pumped like that for all of your training.”

“Thank you, All Might.” As the robotic stretcher began pulling Yui away, Kendo and All Might saw she had a big smile on her face.

“You should get going too, young Awase.”

“Actually, I’d rather wait,” Awase said. “I’m not hurt too bad, and I’d like to see the other fights.”

“You’re not hurt after that thrashing,” Kuroiro asked. “Damn, your sturdy.”

“Suit yourself,” All Might said. He led the three remaining students to the monitoring room, where they were greeted with praise from their classmates.

“Kendo, that was super awesome!” Setsuna cheered. “Where’s Kodai?”

“She’s at Recovery Girl’s office,” Kendo said.

“ALL RIGHT, STUDENTS!” All Might bellowed to get attention back on him. “That was quite the intense match and all four of them fought spectacularly, but it’s time to declare the MVP! Any guesses?”

“It’s gotta be Kodai, right?” Tetsutetsu suggested. “She was super manly out there!”

“A good guess, but I’m afraid not. Any other ideas?” There was a quiet pause, but eventually, another hand raised. A large, hairy hand. “Yes, young Shishida.” Everyone turned to see a tall boy covered in brown fur with long, scraggly hair and rectangular glasses.

“The answer is Kuroiro,” He stated in a refined and eloquent voice. His classmates were all shocked, but some for different reasons.

Why Kuroiro? His team lost, most of them thought.

I thought his voice would be rough and beastly, a few others thought.

“I’ll explain,” Shishida continued. “While Kodai had an impressive showing in her protecting the weapon, it was obvious she hadn’t planned for the situation of fighting alone and was forced into using herself as a human shield – a tactic that was obviously going to backfire if Kendo hadn’t arrived when she did. She also wasted time talking to Kendo when the match had started instead of during their preparation time. As for Kendo, she fought well, but fell into Kuroiro’s trap instantly, forcing Kodai to fight alone and nearly costing them the match.”

“He’s totally right,” Kendo said as she hung her head in shame.
“As for Awase, his insistence on thoroughly checking the basement wasted a lot of time at the start of the match. He also neglected using his Quirk once he and Kuroiro reached the weapon.”

“I was sure they’d be in the basement,” Awase moaned, joining Kendo in hanging his head. “Villains are always in basements.”

“Kuroiro, on the other hand, used his Quirk effectively to trap Kendo, and when that plan was failing, he formed a new strategy involving his partner’s Quirk. He treated Kodai as the villain she was roleplaying and refused to take it easy on her when it was clear she wasn’t going to surrender, whereas Awase had hesitated. It’s obvious that Kuroiro is the MVP of this round.”

The entire class was stunned speechless by Shishida’s detailed analysis, especially All Might, who was fiddling with the buttons below the monitors. “…Well, you nailed it. That’s basically what I…was going to say… SO CONGRATS TO OUR HERO MVP!” The class gave a round of applause, while Kuroiro looked absolutely baffled.

“I’m… the MVP?” He looked around, expecting someone to snicker and reveal it was a prank, but everyone seemed earnest about the choice. “You think so?”

“You fight real good and your Quirk is cool, too!” Pony gushed.

“Very manly, I’ll say,” Tetsutetsu said with a thumbs-up.

“See, young Kuroiro?” All Might said, patting Kuroiro on the back. “Everyone agrees. You did splendidly.” Kuroiro looked up at All Might, then back at his classmates. The once permanent scowl had transformed slowly into an awkward grin and his cheeks turned from jet black to a dark red. “ANYWAY, IT’S TIME FOR OUR NEXT MATCH!”
The Conceited Copycat

“I’ve taken the liberty of picking out the remaining fights,” All Might said as he read his clipboard. “So, for our next round, our heroes are Team B. Please come forward, Neito Monoma and Kinoko Komori.” Monoma straightened his tie and walked with confidence to the front of the room while Komori was shaking and fiddling with her hands. “Now for our villains, we have Team D: Setsuna Tokage and Hiryu Rin!” Setsuna practically bounced her way to the front of the room, while the more reserved Rin simply walked. Rin was a boy with black hair pulled into a short, low braid. “Here’s your earpieces and capture tape, my students. Now get to it!” As the four walked out the door, Kendo poked her head out and grabbed Monoma’s sleeve.

“What’s up, Kendo?” he asked. Kendo pulled him close to whisper in his ear.

“Listen. Komori seems like the nervous and self-doubting type—”

“Oh wow, did you figure that out all by yourself?” Monoma’s sass earned him a quick chop in the arm. “Ow! What?”

“Don’t be condescending or anything to her. Don’t insult her Quirk if you can’t think of a way to use it.”

“C’mon, Kendo. I have more tact than that.”

“No, you don’t,” Kendo said matter-of-factly. Monoma pulled his sleeve from Kendo’s grip and caught up with Komori. As they reached their designated building, Rin and Setsuna entered while Monoma and Komori waited outside.

“So, we’ll need a strategy,” Monoma began. “Do you know either of their abilities, Komori?”

“Uh, n-no… sorry.”

“It’s fine. What about your own Quirk?”

“M-My Quirk is called Mushroom,” Komori said.” I c-can grow m-mushrooms of different sizes by s-spreading spores from my hair.” Komori shook her head around, causing a cloud of green spores to fall onto the pavement. After a few seconds, the spores grew rapidly into a cluster of mushrooms.

“Is that it?” Monoma bluntly asked. Komori stuttered and fiddled with her hands before Monoma realized how he sounded. “I mean, uh, I’m just asking if you have… any strategies for your… fantastic mushrooms. I’m sure we can come up with a good plan to use them.” Komori seemed to calm down from Monoma’s backtracking and explained more of her Quirk. _Man, being such a nice guy like this is hard work. How does Kendo do it?_

On the second floor of the building, Setsuna and Rin were having their own strategy meeting. Rin was leaning against a vent blowing cool air on him as Setsuna explained her powers. “…Anyway, that’s how my Quirk works,” Setsuna said to a disturbed Rin. “Pretty neat, huh?”

“Well… it’s certainly unique,” Rin said. _How would you even discover that? It sounds_
“So, what can you do?”

“Oh, yes, my Quirk.” Rin pulled up the sleeve of his costume and held his arm out. “Mine is called Scales. I can transform my skin to become draconic scales.” Setsuna watched closely as his hand transformed, his skin turning jagged and sharp. “It gives me better offense, defense, and heat resistance, but as time goes on, it becomes harder to maintain and I can get overheated.” To Rin’s surprise, the sight of his scales caused Setsuna to start blushing.

“Cooool. You’re just like a dinosaur.” Setsuna looked up at him with big eyes and a cute smile, making him look away.

“I, uh… we should… ah-hem, probably just prepare to fight. We can’t really set traps or anything with our Quirks—”

“So, let’s just meet them head-on,” Setsuna suggested. She came in closer to Rin, leaning forward with a mischievous smile. “There’s no point in waiting for them to come to us. We’ll block them right from the start and if they get past us, we’ll just chase ‘em down.”

“You, uh, have a good point, s-so—”

“Sooolly, until the match starts, we can get to know each other better.” She put her hand on the wall and pushed her chest into her partner’s. “Don’t you want to be close friends?”

“Setsuna really doesn’t mince words,” Kendo said with a chuckle. Most of the class was looking away from the screen with the villain team, though some were watching intently like it was a TV drama.

“She’s so confident. Should I be doin’ stuff like that?” Pony asked innocently. Almost immediately, Shiozaki put her hands around Pony’s eyes.

“Uh, Shiozaki?” Kendo began. “What’re you—”

“Protecting the innocence of the child from Setsuna’s influence,” Ibara said without a hint of irony.

“Oh… I see,” Kendo said. *Child? We’re all the same age.*

“Heroes vs. Villains training: begin!”

“Let’s head in, Komori,” Monoma said. As the two heroes moved inside, Komori used her Quirk to make a large mushroom on the ground. She climbed on top and pressed her ear to the ceiling.

“I hear their f-footsteps,” Komori said. “They’re heading towards the stairway d-down the hall.”
“Then let’s greet them, shall we?” The hero team moved forward, keeping their eyes on the stairway entrance ahead of them. As they got closer, they heard footsteps echoing from inside the stairway. Not long after, Setsuna leapt down the stairs with Rin not far behind her.

“Well, isn’t this some coincidence,” Setsuna said. “I think they were expecting us, Rin.” The hero team backed up slowly and watched their opponents closely. “If you guys don’t wanna make the first move, then I’ll do it.” Without moving any closer, Setsuna cocked her fist behind her and threw a big punch. Suddenly, Monoma felt the full force of Setsuna’s punch across his cheek and skidded back down the hallway, stopping only when he fell on his back. “Bullseye!” he heard Setsuna cheer.

“A-Are you OK, Monoma?” Komori asked. Monoma instinctively reached for his aching jaw, but something was in his way. Sitting up and opening his eyes, he saw what was in his hands – a severed forearm.

“What the hell!?” he yelped, tossing the arm away and scooting backwards. Looking back at Setsuna, he saw the arm had come from her, having detached from the rest of her body. Komori looked at her, shocked, while Rin looked more sickened than surprised. The arm on the floor began to decay and turn to dust while a new forearm burst from Setsuna’s stump.

“It’s always fun to see the reactions,” Setsuna giggled.

Setsuna Tokage. Quirk: Autotomy. Her limbs are easily detachable and can regrow, but she loses some blood with each use.

It’s more disturbing than her description, Rin thought. Monoma skittishly got up as Komori retreating to his side.

“Any i-ideas, Monoma?”

“Part of one,” he answered. He smirked and held his arms up defensively. “I’ll make up the next part once I see what Rin can do.” He broke into a sprint, rushing towards Rin. Setsuna grabbed at him, but he narrowly dodged and raised his fist. Rin activated his Quirk in response and blocked Monoma’s attack with the back of his scaly hand. “I see. This seems very useful,” Monoma quipped. Behind him, Setsuna dove across the ground and wrapped her arms around his legs.

“I got him! Let him have it, Rin!” With one fluid motion, Rin pulled Monoma towards him and drove his fist into his opponent’s stomach. For a moment, Monoma seemed winded, but suddenly, he revealed his still-smirking face.

“Sorry, was that supposed to hurt me?” Monoma grabbed Rin’s shoulders and pushed down quickly, vaulting over his opponent. Setsuna gasped as Monoma’s legs broke off just like her own could. As Monoma sailed over Rin, he grew a new pair of legs and landed in front of the stairs. I guess spreading a layer of Komori’s mushrooms on my torso to block an attack was a stroke of pure genius. Monoma’s hands and now-bare feet began to scale up as he sprinted up the stairs with Rin not far behind. It’s time to leave these two in the dust!

Neito Monoma. Quirk: Copy. He can copy other people’s Quirks for five minutes once he touches them, but he can only use one at a time.
“I’ll let Rin take care of Monoma for now,” Setsuna said, taking a crouched fighting stance. “No hard feelings, right Komori?”

“Mhm.” Komori ran a hand through her hair and spread a cluster of spores in front of her. Setsuna crawled slowly towards her opponent before leaping down the hall. Once she was above the spores, they grew almost immediately into a huge pile of mushrooms that Setsuna crashed into.

“OOF!” After her crash, Setsuna got up and punched the wall of fungus in front of her, but she couldn’t break through. “Never knew mushrooms could get this tough.” After a moment, she turned and walked away. “I guess if I can’t get to you, I’ll just go back up Rin. Catch you later!”

“W-W-Wait!” Komori yelled from behind the mushroom wall.

Damn, he’s catching up quickly, Monoma thought. He looked over his shoulder at Rin, who was only about 20 feet behind him. I think Tokage’s quirk may have some blood loss side effect that’s slowing me down. I can’t win against Rin with his own Quirk, so my best bet is to hide somewhere. He turned right and looked down the hall, noticing an air duct with an open hatch on the top of the left wall. Bingo! This is a testing facility, so there’d obviously places to hide out and sneak around. Picking up speed, Monoma jumped up and grabbed the edge of the air duct on the wall. Hoisting himself up quickly, he closed the latch with his foot and slid further into the ventilation system. As he crawled away, he heard Rin run by, but then turn back. Looks like I’ve evaded him for now. He and Tokage were on this floor at the beginning of the training, so the weapon is here too. I should try and follow Rin for now. After losing me, he’s bound to return to the weapon and protect it. Pressing his ear to the wall, he heard the small thumping of Rin’s running going back the way he had chased Monoma. I wonder if Komori can handle Setsuna on her own?

“Rin, where’d you go off to?” Setsuna said into her earpiece. She was running through the second floor, checking behind her constantly in case Komori had caught up.

“I lost Monoma,” Rin responded. “I’m going to protect the weapon.”

Maybe I should go protect the weapon too, Setsuna thought. I don’t know where either hero is, so that’s probably my best course of action. Hanging a left, Setsuna returned to the weapon room, relieved to see neither Monoma nor Komori had found it yet. For now, I’ll stand guard over—ah. Her thoughts were interrupted by the sound of running out in the hall. Jumping out, she saw Rin and sighed in relief.

“Tokage,” Rin began, “where’s Komori?”

“After you left, she made a wall to protect herself that sorta blocked her way to the stairs. I came to back you up, but I got a little lost.” Setsuna rubbed her head in embarrassment and peaked out into the hallway.
“She’s probably gone around and come upstairs by now. Monoma and her have probably regrouped, so leaving the weapon unguarded would be foolish. We’ll have to protect it the old-fashioned way.” Rin turned his fists to scales and clashed them together.

“Sounds good. Also… I told you to call me by my first name.”
“Are you sure? We just met today.”

“Of course. You’re gonna be my dinosaur boyfriend, so get used to it.”

“E-Excuse—”

“Shush. Someone’s coming.” Setsuna dipped back inside and pressed against wall. “It’s Komori. I think she saw me.” Rin stepped forward with his fist ready to attack. As he waited for Komori, he saw her jump in front of the door. Rin sliced his scaly fingers towards Komori, but then realized what he had actually attacked. Thrown in front of him was a human-shaped dummy made of mushrooms with Komori’s cape wrapped around it. As the realization hit him, the real Komori’s hand grabbed his wrist and pulled it towards her, letting a cloud of spores rain over it. The spores solidified on Rin’s hand, creating a layer of fungus over his scales. He tried to swat her away, but Komori dodged just in time. Setsuna dove out of the room and threw a huge punch, breaking off her arm so that it flew into Komori’s stomach.

Komori was winded and thrown backwards, but landed on her feet. Rin came at her with is left fist this time, as his right one had a soft coating of mushrooms over it. Komori dodged again and made a grab for his arm, but Setsuna tackled her to the ground. “Got you now!” Setsuna yelled as Rin backed up to the doorway. “What’re you gonna do?” Komori attempted to smirk at Setsuna, but it appeared as more of an uncomfortable grin, and out of nowhere, a loud voice rung in the building.

“WEAPON CAPTURED! THE HERO TEAM WIIIIINS!”

“WHAAAT!?” Setsuna shrieked.

“How did— huh!?” Rin looked inside the room and saw Monoma leaning against the weapon with a smile.

“I’m sure you’re wondering how I’ve done it. Well—”

“The air vents!” Rin suddenly realized, looking at the vent he had leaned on earlier.

“Hey!” Monoma yelped defensively. “I wanted to explain it.”

“How’d he do it?” Setsuna asked from the hallway.

“He crawled into the vent system after he escaped me in our chase,” Rin answered. “Komori was a distraction.”

“C’mon, man,” Monoma whined. “You could’ve at least let me explain my ingenious plan to your teammate.” Rin didn’t answer and left the room. “Tch. He’s just a sore loser.” Out in the hallway, Setsuna was helping Komori to her feet. Once she saw Rin, she stumbled backwards into the wall and slid down to the ground, holding the back of her hand to her forehead.

“Oh, Rin,” she whined in a voice even Monoma would call melodramatic. “I’ve lost so much blood from my Quirk. You have to carry me outside in your big, muscly, scaly arms.” Rin looked down confusedly, then sighed and walked right past her.

“You told me you could do it at least 10 times in a day. Get up.”
“Kay.” Setsuna stood up and followed Rin with her normal energy, leaving Monoma and Komori in an awkward silence.

“G-Good job, Monoma,” Komori said. “We got the win because of you’re thinking.”

“…Yeah, but I couldn’t have done it without you. You’re the real deal, Komori, so give yourself some credit.” He grabbed Komori’s hand and gave it a quick, discrete shake.

“Thanks,” Komori said. “You’re a nice guy, Monoma.”

“I know,” he answered with a flip of his hair. “I really am the complete package, eh?”

“…”

“I’ll take you’re silence as a yes.”
After returning to the monitoring room, the class congratulated the heroes and villains on a job well done. Kendo could practically see Monoma’s head swell as he was named the MVP of the round.

“Let’s see who’s next,” All Might. “It seems our Hero team will be Team I: Jurota Shishida and Togaru Kamakiri. Please come forward.” The large and hairy Shishida came out from the middle of the crowd of students, leaving most of the people he brushed by in awe of both his size and the softness of his fur. Kamakiri, who was of about equal height, gave off an entirely different impression, looking angry and resembling an insect. He had a mouth that jutted forward and featured two mandibles coming out of his cheeks and curving inwards. His slanted, angry-looking green eyes matched his green Mohawk, which stood tall on his head while the rest of his hair was shaved almost completely off.

“As for our villain team, Team F,” All Might began as he looked closely at the clipped board. There was a moment of silence before All Might read of the name. “Tetsutetsu… Tetsu…tetsu.”

“That’s me!” the silver-haired boy shouted, already in front of everybody.

I thought that was a typo, All Might thought with a bit of pity. “Yes, good! Our other villain is Nirengeki Shoda. Come forward, young Shoda.”

“Here, sir,” a quiet voice said. Stepping forward was as short and chubby boy with gray hair and a fearful expression.

“Let’s have a good match, boys,” All Might said as he handed out the ear pieces and capture tape. “Get out there!” The four boys exited the room and began to walk to their building, but stopped when Shishida turned around.

“Before we start this exercise,” he began courteously, “I’d just like to say that I hope we have a clean match with no hard feelings afterwards.”

“Afraid we’ll beat you already?” Tetsutetsu said with a toothy grin.

“No. I’m just trying to extend an olive branch,” Shishida said as he extended a hairy hand to Tetsutetsu. “Let’s have a good game.”

“Totally!” Tetsutetsu said, vigorously shaking Shishida’s hand. “Same to you, guy!” he said to Kamakiri. Instead of returning the gesture, Kamakiri folded his arms and walked away.

“I apologize for his rudeness,” Shishida said as he followed his teammate.

“No worries, dude,” Tetsutetsu said with a laugh.

“That guy’s scary,” Shoda said, making sure only his teammate would hear.

“Nah. I’m sure he’s just trying to be intimidating. I bet he’s not all that scary once we start fighting.”

“You sure?”

“…Nope! But if it makes you feel better, I’ll take him, buddy!” The villain team continued their walk to the building, where they entered to find the weapon room. According to All Might’s directions, it was in a small room in the basement. Once they arrived, they saw how dark the large
basement was compared to the higher floors. They nearly tripped over the many cardboard boxes and wooden crates strewn about as they searched for the weapon. The tiny room where it was stored was in the corner with one open entrance.

“It looks like we can’t really fight near the weapon,” Shoda pointed out. “We’ll have to block off the doorway.”

“Probably,” Tetsutetsu said. “…I know! We’ll stack the boxes in front of it.”

“That’s a good idea, but we can’t make that look inconspicuous.”

“Huh?”

“I’m saying that’ll draw attention,” Shoda explained. “We can’t really hide the weapon in that way without it being obvious. Even if we position ourselves somewhere else, I’m sure Shishida will figure us out. He seems pretty smart.”

“That’s true. In that case, we’ll use every crate and box here and make it the best barricade ever! We’ll protect it as best we can and have the barricade to stop them in their tracks!” Tetsutetsu ran off to grab some boxes and make their barricade.

‘W-Wait, Hold on!” Shoda said. “We also have to be inside the weapon room when the round starts.” Tetsutetsu stopped mid-stacking and blankly stared at Shoda. “We have to leave an exit to crawl out of when the round starts.”

“Oh! Got it!” The remaining prep time was spent making a barricade of crates in front of the door to the weapon, leaving an opening to crawl out of once the round started.

“Heroes vs. Villains Training: begin!”

“LET’S DO IIIIIIIIT!”

“Quiet!” Shoda said nervously, “They’ll hear us. You have to be quiet.”

“SORRY!” Tetsutetsu yelled. Once both boys crawled into the open space of the basement, they plugged up their crawlspace, leaving the doorway completely blocked. “You ready, buddy?”

“Yeah,” Shoda said. He clenched his fists tight and tried to make his normally fearful grimace into a look of determination. “…Hey, Tetsutetsu?”

“‘Sup?”

“I need you to do something… can you punch me in the stomach.”

“Huh? Is this some ‘help me calm down by slapping me’ things like in movies?”

“No. It’s actually for my Quirk.” Shoda turned to Tetsutetsu and took a deep breathe. “Just one solid hit.”

“If you’re sure,” Tetsutetsu said. He reeled back slowly, waiting to see if Shoda would chicken out, but he didn’t. Tetsutetsu slammed his fist into Shoda’s stomach, making him double over. “Too hard?”

“No… perfect actually,” Shoda coughed out. He stood up slowly, holding his stomach. “It’s just what I needed.” As he stood up, Tetsutetsu watched as Shoda’s hair began to glow. The normally gray hair was shining silver, and a few strands clumped together and stood on end. It looked to
Tetsutetsu like a lightning bolt sticking out of Shoda’s head.

“I dunno what your Quirk is, but I like it already,” Tetsutetsu growled with an excited smile. That was when they heard footsteps on the stairs.

“Looks like you were right, Shishida,” They heard a scratchy voice say, who they correctly assumed was Kamakiri.

“It was a simple job for my animal senses,” Shishida said as he descended the stairs. He peered over his glasses and looked at Tetsutetsu. “You’ve had the smell of breakfast foods lingering on you all day.”

Jurota Shishida. Quirk: Beast. He has the strength, agility, and senses of an animal.

“Dammit!” Tetsutetsu yelled. “My mom always said my pocket bacon would be my downfall one day!”

“You’ve had bacon in your pocket all day?” Shoda asked in disbelief.

“Hey Shishida,” Kamakiri said, “check it out. The weapon’s probably behind that stack of crates.”

“Most likely.” The hero team reached the bottom of the stairs and stared down the villain team. “I’ll tear it down and secure our target. Pick an opponent, Kamakiri.” The mantis boy immediately looked down at Shoda and walked forward.

“How about you?” he growled.

How about me!” Tetsutetsu yelled, flinging himself towards Kamakiri. Throwing a right hook, his attack was dodged, but Kamakiri saw his fist was shiny and metallic. “I’ll be your opponent! ME!”

Tetsutetsu Tetsutetsu. Quirk: Steel. He can harder his body into steel for the ultimate offense and defense.

“Fine then,” Kamakiri said, jumping back to avoid another attack.

“It looks like we’ll be fighting.” Shishida said as he approached Shoda. “I’ll try and make this quick.” Shishida reeled back his fist and threw a punch, but before he hit Shoda, he swerved his attack towards the ground. He pushed off the ground, flying over Shoda in a somersault.

A feint! Shoda thought. He’s coming from above. Shoda jumped back into Shishida’s path as he descended from his rolling jump. He threw a powerful punch at Shoda, who blocked it with his crossed arms. As Shishida landed, another clump of Shoda’s hair spiked up into a lightning bolt shape. Shoda then pulled his arm back preparing for a palm strike. Shishida crossed his arms and angled them down to block the attack coming from below. The palm strike flew upwards and hit Shishida’s arms, blowing them upwards with amazing force. Shoda’s other palm flew forward into his opponent’s stomach, smashing it with another huge shockwave. Shishida skidded backwards until he lost his footing and tumbled, crashing back into the stairs.

“I won’t let you past me,” Shoda said as his hair flattened and returned to normal

Nirengeki Shoda. Quirk: Twin Impact. He can absorb and store the kinetic energy in the attacks that hit him, then use that energy in a palm strike.

Across the basement, Tetsutetsu kept up his steel-enhanced assault on Kamakiri. He threw a big
punch, which was dodged like his other attacks. As he returned to his fighting stance, Kamakiri had created a bigger distance between them. “It’s my turn,” Kamakiri said. “Try not to get killed.”

Suddenly, the mandibles on his face began to grow, shooting forward until Tetsutetsu was between them. From his perspective, it was like being in the middle of a pair of scissors. He forced his whole upper body in iron-like hardness just as the two mandibles closed in on him. The blades crashed into Tetsutetsu’s shoulders, where the steel blocked them.

“Is that all!?” Tetsutetsu yelled. He grabbed the mandibles and forced them apart, giving him an opening to run at his opponent. Kamakiri stepped back and angled his mandibles towards Tetsutetsu’s neck.

“Keep your hands at the level of your eyes,” Kamakiri warned. The blades closed in and chopped into Tetsutetsu’s neck, cutting through the steel and drawing blood. “I guess you have a limit of hardness.”

**Togaru Kamakiri. Quirk: Razor Sharp. Those two curvy mandibles on his cheeks can grow into long and sharp metal blades that work like scissors.**

“I HAVE NO LIMITS! YOU HEAR ME!?” Tetsutetsu forced the blades open again and gripped them tight. He lifted Kamakiri off his feet before throwing him high in the air. Running underneath, Tetsutetsu waited for his opponent to fall right next to him before unleashing a huge blow to his head. Kamakiri flew backwards into the basement wall.

“Ugh… Don’t think you’ve won yet,” Kamakiri said. “I’m just getting started!”

“BRING IT OOOOON!”

On the other side of the basement, Shoda was busy blocking attacks from Shishida’s animal claws. *This is bad, Shoda thought. He’s figured out that hitting me is how my Quirk activates. Clawing attacks won’t activate it like blunt hits do.* Shoda jumped back until he was right in front of the crates and stomped his foot, imitating a sumo wrestler. It looked like Shishida was going to follow, but he instead started backing up. He hunched over and snarled like an animal before dashing forward. As he dashed, Shishida rolled into a somersault and flew towards Shoda.

“Spinning Cannonball!” Shishida called out. Shoda opened his arms and stood resolute as his opponent crashed into him. For a moment, Shoda thought he had caught Shishida, but then he was thrown off his feet and they both crashed through the barricade. The crates right behind them broke apart while more on the side flew off. When Shoda had come to a stop, he felt his hair stand up and readied his palm. Shishida, who was on top of Shoda, was dizzy from the rolling and didn’t see the attack coming, meaning the uppercut palm strike blindsided him. He was thrown into the ceiling before falling back down, where Shoda hit him with a normal palm strike cross the room.

*Please tell me that finished him,* Shoda thought. He was panting and becoming nervous as the adrenaline started to wear down. *The barricade is almost completely gone. If he gets by me, he’ll tear through it easily.* To his disappointment, Shishida was getting back up. He got to his feet, then hunched over again to prepare another rolling attack, before an announcement came through his earpiece.

“Kamakiri had been captured,” All Might said through his earpiece. Looking back, Shishida gasped as he saw Tetsutetsu standing above an unconscious Kamakiri.

“Yo,” Tetsutetsu said as he punched his steel fists together. “I’ll be taking you now. Thanks for holding him off, buddy.”
“S-Sure thing,” Shoda said. Tetsutetsu ran forward and readied a punch for Shishida, who turned to face him. Just as Tetsutetsu reached him, Shishida suddenly backflipped, bringing both of his feet up into Tetsutetsu’s chin. Knocked off the ground, Shishida grabbed him and threw him towards Shoda, who caught his teammate.

Shoda barely had time to think. Once he had caught Tetsutetsu, he looked up and saw Shishida rolling at him with his Spinning Cannonball again. With no time to plan, Shoda threw Tetsutetsu out of the attack’s path. Shishida crashed into an unprepared Shoda and they both flew through the remaining barricade. Once he had landed, Shishida wasted no time and tackled the weapon.

“Captured!” he yelled.

“WEAPON CAPTURED,” All Might announced through the building. “THE HERO TEAM WIIIIINS!”

With the trial finally over, Shishida fell to his knees and groaned, rubbing his head. “That move is always such a headache.”

Outside of the weapon room, Tetsutetsu was checking on his half-conscious teammate. “You OK, buddy?” he asked Shoda who sat up and held his stomach.

“Looks like we lost, huh?” he asked with a downtrodden face. “Sorry, Tetsutetsu.”

“Dude, you were awesome!” Tetsutetsu yelled with a thumbs-up. “It was so freakin’ manly! You were all like ‘BAM!’ It was crazy!” He pulled Shoda to his feet and then put a hand on his shoulder. “Most importantly, you threw me out of the way of Shishida’s attack, but still tried to block it. That was manly as hell, bro.”

“Think so?” Shoda asked with a hopeful smile. To his surprise, Tetsutetsu pulled him into a tight hug.

“Of course, little buddy!” he yelled with tears running down his cheeks.

“Cool… you can stop crying now.”
Uphill Battle

With all four of the previous fighters on their way to Recovery Girl’s office, the next round was set to begin shortly. “Let’s see who’s next here,” All Might said. “Our hero team is Team A: Ibara Shiozaki and Kojiro Bondo.” Both students stepped forward quickly, though not without some strange looks on Bondo’s half. He was the largest student in the class at 6’3 with yellow skin and enormous, muscular arms, but this wasn’t his most noticeable trait. What really caught people’s attention was his head, which was shaped like a glue dispenser, had seven eyeholes with no visible eyes, and had a jagged mouth that went around his entire head.

“it’s very nice to meet you,” Shiozaki said to Bondo with a small bow, which Bondo returned.

“Now for our villain team, I’ll need Team H: Juzo Honenuki and Reiko Yanagi.” The two villain team members joined their opponents quickly, where they each received an ear piece and capture tape. Honenuki looked mostly normal with his ashy blond hair, especially next to Bondo, but his face was still odd. It looked almost skeletal with a lack of lips, an almost-nonexistent nose, and sunken-in eyes.

As the students left, All Might sighed to himself. “What’re the odds?”

“Something wrong, sir?” Kendo asked.

“No, it’s nothing… Students, have you any idea of the recommended students in your class?”

“It wasn’t mentioned by Mr. Kan,” Kendo asked.

“Well, in your class, the two recommended students are young Honenuki and young Yanagi.”

“They’re on the same team?” Pony chimed in. “I know it’s a random picking, but it’s still seeming unfair, a little bit.”

“That’s not all,” All Might continued. “Not only are their Quirks a great pairing, but with them being the villain team and having the weapon on the top floor… Let’s just say our hero team are in for an uphill battle. Who knows, though! Both of our hero team members are extremely talented. They scored highly on the entrance exam and they have excellent Quirks. I’d say this match will be extremely close.”

“So, Bondo,” Shiozaki said as they waited outside the building, “Are you enjoying school so far?” Bondo said nothing, but nodded. “Are you pleased with your costume?” Again, another nod.

“What’s your Quirk? I’ve shown you mine, so would you please show me yours?” Bondo pointed to his eyeholes, out of one of them came a white substance that pooled up on the ground and hardened almost immediately. “Oh my. That looks quite useful. What is it called?

“Cemedine,” Bondo finally said in a deep voice. When he spoke, his entire head flopped backwards like a puppet’s.

“I… see,” Shiozaki said with a smile. Not long after, they heard All Might’s announcement.

“Heroes vs Villains Training: begin!”

“Let’s go,” Shiozaki said as she and Bondo walked through the entrance. “Perhaps we should survey the lower floors and work our way up. Is that alright with you, Bondo.” Turning around to
see Bondo’s answer, Shiozaki saw something further down the hall. Near the entrance, she saw a black blur dart down the left hallway. *Yanagi was wearing a black cloak, wasn’t she?*

“Hm?” Bondo grunted.

“It seems our enemies are down here with us. I just saw Yanagi near the exit.” Shiozaki ran back the way she came, turning the corner that she saw Yanagi take. When she reached it, there was no sign of her opponent. *I’m sure I saw her.*

“Behind you,” she heard Bondo say. Shiozaki snapped to attention and clasped her hands together over her chest. Without turning around, her vines shot out and rushed down the hall, enveloping the area.

**Ibara Shiozaki. Quirk: Vines. She can control and stretch out her hair vines, as well as detaching them at will.**

*It doesn’t feel like I’ve caught her. I’m even feeling around in the rooms. Where could she have gone?* She turned around to look for Yanagi, but only saw Bondo. “Did you see where she went?” she asked. Bondo shook his head no, but then pointed at the ceiling. Looking up, Shiozaki saw that the ceiling was coming closer. “The ceiling’s falling? No, it’s… melting?” As the ceiling fell, Bondo activated his Quirk, shooting a giant stream of glue from his eyeholes. The glue hardened instantly, stopping the ceiling’s descent for the moment. “Good thinking, Bondo. Let’s head upstairs. It seems our opponents are above us.” Shiozaki shed most of the extra vines she had grown, allowing her to easily outrun the melting ceiling, but her much slower partner was having trouble. “Bondo, do you need help?”

“No,” he grunted, shooting more glue to stop the ceiling. “Go ahead.”

“If you insist,” Shiozaki said, running up the stairs. As she climbed, she heard another person above her. She sped up, expecting to see Yanagi, but she instead found Honenuki climbing up to the third floor. Before she could command her vines to snag him, Honenuki pounced at Shiozaki. He grabbed her by the head and slammed her into the wall. After the painful crash, Honenuki exhaled deeply and Shiozaki felt her head sink into the wall. As she regained her bearings from the attack, she stopped sinking as Honenuki inhaled. “W-What is this?” Shiozaki asked as she tried pulling her head from the wall.

“This is goodbye,” Honenuki said. He began to climb the stairs while the steps behind him lost their form and melted.

**Juzo Honenuki. Quirk: Softening. He can soften anything he’s touching by exhaling. Whatever is softened will return to normal over time, or by him touching it and inhaling.**

“Hrrgh… my vines can’t move,” Shiozaki whimpered. “I’ll have to separate them at the roots.” Commanding her vines to detach, Shiozaki lurched forward and pried her now bare head from the misshapen wall. Almost immediately, a new set of vines grew from her scalp, but the regrowth made her fall to her knees. Her breath was heavy and her new vines were brittle and dry. *I’ve lost too much of water from overuse of my Quirk. Searching for Yanagi already used up a lot…* She took one of the water bottles in her belt and drank half of it quickly before dumping the rest onto her head. From further down the stairs, Shiozaki heard the heavy footsteps of her teammate approaching. “Bondo, up here.”

As he approached, Bondo looked to Shiozaki for an explanation on what happened to the walls and stairs. “It was Honenuki’s Quirk. He was able to soften the wall and steps, then re-harden it on command. It looks like the stairs have re-solidified, but climbing them will take time and effort
now.”

“I’ll go around,” Bondo said. Without warning, he picked up Shiozaki in his arms.

“Wait, what are you— aieee!” He threw Shiozaki far up the stair well, going up past the third floor. As she reached the apex of her impromptu flight, she grabbed a hold up the railing with her vines and swung towards the floor’s entrance. Landing more gracefully than the beginning of her ascent, she was able to silently peek her head into the hall

At least I’m up here, but I’d prefer some warning next time. My skirt almost flew up. Her thoughts of possibly wearing tights under her costume were interrupted when she saw Yanagi down the hall. She was facing the other way and talking to Honenuki over her earpiece.

“If you’re sure that she’s stuck, then I’ll track down Bondo next,” Yanagi said in her normal monotone. Stay with the weapon for now.” As Shiozaki silently crept closer, Yanagi removed her earpiece and place it in the bag around her leg.

It seems her Quirk doesn’t let her use her earpiece when active. If she can’t talk to Honenuki now, then I must act! Shiozaki cupped her hand together and shot her vines towards Yanagi, who finally noticed her opponent’s presence. Yanagi leapt towards the wall to avoid the vines, but her legs were snagged. To her Shiozaki’s surprise, her opponent had actually begun to phase through the wall, as her upper body had disappeared beyond it. With a quick yank, Yanagi was pulled back into the hallway, where she floated with vines wrapping around her legs.

“I figured you’d be a bad match-up,” Yanagi said as she half-heartedly kicked her legs around, “but Honenuki said you were stuck, so I assumed I was safe for now.”

Reiko Yanagi. Quirk: Poltergeist. She can transform into a ghost-like state that lets her float around and phase through solid objects, though she can still interact normally with living things.

“A phasing Quirk? So that’s how you evaded me,” Shiozaki said as she unfurled her Capture Tape, “but now—”

She was cut off when she felt something drip onto her head. Looking up, she saw the ceiling had been softened and was about the fall right on top of her. Shiozaki dashed forward, outrunning the falling ceiling, but the lack of focus on her Quirk led to Yanagi slipping from her vines grasp.

“Bye,” Yanagi mumbled stoically as she phased through the floor.

Shiozaki turned a corner and continued to run, but the ceiling was falling just as fast. Further down the hall, she saw another stairwell. Just a little further, she thought. Just as she felt the ceiling catch up with her, she dove through the doorway, narrowly evading being buried by the softened steel.

Steadying herself with her vines, Shiozaki rose to her feet and ran up the stairs, hearing a familiar thumping as she climbed. “Bondo? Is that you.” There was just a grunt in response, but she knew it was her teammate. She smiled and sped up, rejoining Bondo at the entrance to the fourth floor. “I’m sorry,” she said as she caught up. “I wasn’t able to capture Yanagi.”

“It’s fine,” Bondo said. The hero team walked into the fourth-floor hallway, but saw no sign of the villain team.

“Splitting up hasn’t worked well for us. Let’s stick together,” Shiozaki said. Bondo nodded in agreement, and they both silently walked through the halls. We’re starting to run short on time, Shiozaki thought. We need to speed up if— Her thoughts were paused when, while peeking around
a corner at an intersection, she saw Honenuki standing in the hall, guarding an open doorway.

Ducking backwards, she heard Honenuki begin to speak. “Yo, Yanagi. Where are they now?”

“Quiet down,” they heard Yanagi say from the other side of the intersection. “I think they made it to this floor.” Bondo gestured that he would attack Honenuki and for Shiozaki to go after Yanagi, which Shiozaki nodded in agreement to.

Jumping out into the open, Bondo ran towards Honenuki, who backed up and took a fighting stance. With some effort, Bondo shot an impressive stream of glue towards Honenuki, who jumped back to avoid it. This was all part of Bondo’s plan, however, as the glue had formed a wall between them, with Bondo on the side with the weapon room. He ran to the entrance to claim the bomb, but he realized his efforts may have been wasted. The ceiling had melted over the weapon and then re-hardened, forming a metal shell over it. Before he could run in, he felt a kick hit his ribs and he slid backwards. Looking up, he saw Honenuki standing in front of the softened puddle that had been Bondo’s glue wall.

Shiozaki’s vines were already flying towards Yanagi by the time she had come around the corner. They grabbed at her limbs and forced her towards Shiozaki, who was readying her capture tape. “I apologize, Yanagi,” she said. Yanagi looked surprised at first, but didn’t seem worried. She was pulled in front of Shiozaki, who wrapped that tape around her.

“Reiko Yanagi has been captured,” they heard over the loudspeakers.

“OK,” Yanagi droned. “Good luck with Honenuki. It looks like you’ll be fighting him alone.” Shiozaki gasped and turned back to see Bondo punching at Honenuki, who was swerving and ducking out of the way. After another attempted punch to the head, Honenuki moved in and delivered a barrage of punches to Bondo’s stomach. He grabbed Bondo’s arm and brought it over his shoulder, pivoting around at the same time. Bondo was pulled into the air by Honenuki, who exhaled and softened the ground in front of him. He threw Bondo towards the floor, where he passed through the softened metal and crashed on the third floor.

“Bondo!” Shiozaki called out. She forced her vines towards Honenuki, making sure they covered the entirety of the hall, though this blocked her view. Despite this coverage, she still missed him somehow. I don’t understand. How could he disappear like that? He didn’t jump down to the third floor, and he can’t pass through the wall like Yanagi. That was when the realization hit her. Wait! If he softened the wall, he could! This epiphany came too late, as she felt a pair of arms wrap around her waist. Shiozaki was picked up and thrown backwards in a suplex by Honenuki. She passed through the softened floor, flying down and crashing headfirst into the third floor.

“Oh damn,” Setsuna mumbled in shock. The other students in the monitoring room were silent after seeing Shiozaki’s crash, but All Might was quick to grab the microphone.

“I’m stopping the fight here. The villain team wins,” he said quickly. Turning off the mic, he turned to his other students. “I’m going to check on our hero team.”

“Do you think they’re alright?” Kendo asked with obvious worry in her voice.

“Not to worry! Once Recovery Girl sees them, they’ll be right as rain!” All Might broke into a sprint faster than the others could see, heading towards the training building. That said, Shiozaki landed headfirst. I should probably take her there myself.
He was in front of the building in less than 6 seconds, and jumped to the third floor with ease. Jogging through the hallways, he came upon the fallen hero team in no time, along with the villain team. Yanagi had Shiozaki’s head on her lap, and Honenuki had his head in his hands. Bondo seemed to be conscious, but immobile, while Shiozaki was out cold. “Let me see,” he said to the ghost girl, taking Shiozaki in his arms. From what he could tell, Shiozaki had a minor concussion, but with Recovery Girl’s help, she’d be fine.

“All Might, sir,” Honenuki began. Despite the lack of expression on his zombie-like face, All Might could hear the sadness in his voice. “Is she alright?”

“Nothing Recovery Girl can’t fix. She’ll be fine.”

“Are you sure?” All Might stood slowly, holding Shiozaki in just one arm so that he could place his free hand on Honenuki’s shoulder.

“My boy, you’ve learned an important lesson today,” All Might said. “You’re a strong young man with a strong Quirk, but that means you think of other people’s limits. I haven’t fought at my full strength in years – not because I’m lazy, but because no common criminal could handle it. In the future, you must try and gauge what the minimum force needed is. Do you understand, young Honenuki?” The boy didn’t speak, but he did nod. “Good.” He walked past the boy to Bondo, who was sitting up against the wall. “I’m gonna take Shiozaki to the nurse’s office myself. Do you mind waiting for the stretcher robots?”

“No.” All Might flashed a thumbs-up to the boy and prepared to run off, but then stopped and looked to Yanagi.

“Oh yes. You did splendidly too, Yanagi. Sorry, kinda forgot about you since you weren’t injured… AND I’M OFF!” All Might jumped out of the window and ran towards the school. He blew through the mostly empty hallways and arrived at Recovery Girl’s office in no time flat. “Knock knock,” he said sheepishly.

“All Might?” She said in surprise before noticing Shiozaki in his arms. “Oh, for goodness sakes! That’s the sixth student today, I’ll have you know.”

“Ehehe… there’s another on his way.” After putting Shiozaki on a cot, he felt Recovery Girl smack his leg with her cane. “Ow, ow!”

“That’s what you get for pushing these kids so hard on their first day,” she huffed. After getting in enough cane whacks, she inspected Shiozaki’s head. “Well, it’s an easy fix, at least.”

“She may be a little dehydrated too, but that’s from her Quirk,” All Might explained. “Thanks again, ma’am.”

“Just how many more of these kids will you be sending here?” Recovery Girl asked sternly.

“There’s only one match left,” All Might began, “and a few may stop by for scratches and bruises. That’ll be it for today.”

“It better be. I don’t want any big injuries like this when you train with Class A tomorrow.”

“Uh…Yes, ma’am.”
Wild Horses

With Shiozaki and Bondo in the care of Recovery Girl, All Might and the villain team returned to the monitoring room. Honenuki was named the MVP in the round, though it was obvious that he didn’t feel like one. “Alright then, my students,” All Might began. “I know it’s been a long day, but it’s time for our last matchup! Please step forward, Team G: Pony Tsunotori and Manga Fukidashi!”

Pony stepped forward with big smile, flashing an “anime peace sign” as she called it. No one could tell if her teammate was smiling though, as he didn’t have a face. Instead of a normal head, he had a blank white speech bubble. He was also shorter than Pony, most likely the shortest in the class, but no one really noticed. It was pretty normal compared to his speech bubble head. “Hi, I’m Pony. Looking forwards to work with you.”

“Same to you,” The boy said. His voice didn’t come from a mouth, but was emitted from all around his head. His words also appeared on his face, disappearing after few seconds. “I’m Manga.”

“No kidding!” Pony said with a laugh.

“For our last pair, we have Team E: Kosei Tsuburaba and Sen Kaibara!”

“Ready, sir,” the oval-eyed boy said as he approached. His partner, Kaibara, stayed quiet as he approached. His hair was a darker brown than Tsuburaba’s, but this was his only noticeable trait.

“Alright, my students. Give us a good final round.”

“Okie dokie,” Pony said as she took her earpiece and capture tape. The four students left and walked towards the building, though it certainly wasn’t quiet. Pony, with seemingly no prompt, was talking very quickly about anime, drifting in and out of English. “An’, an’ then, he said ‘You truly are the lowest scum in history. You can’t pay back what you owe with money.’ An’ then—”

“Uh, Pony?” Tsuburaba interrupted. “We’re here… and I’ve already seen the show. See you two in five minutes.” He entered the building with his teammate at his side.”

“I didn’t get to finished,” Pony mumbled with a pout.

“I’m still here,” Fukidashi said. “I mean, I’ve seen it too, but if you want to continue…”

“…An’ then Jotaro punched him a bunch and said “ ORAORAORAORAORAORAORA—”

“Looks like the weapon’s on the third floor,” Tsuburaba said as he climbed the stairs. “Hold on. I’ll make a barrier here.” As Kaibara slipped past him, Tsuburaba took a deep breathe. Once he exhaled, the air he blew solidified in front of him, becoming a clear wall that blocked the stairway.

Kosei Tsuburaba. Quirk: Solid Air. He can solidify his breath into walls and footholds, the size of which depends on his lung capacity.

“Don’t make too many of those,” Kaibara said. “They’ll be able to figure out where we’ve been if you make a lot.”

“…You can talk!?” Tsuburaba shouted.

“Of course, I can. I spoke during lunch and—”
“I didn’t mean literally,” Tsuburaba said, rubbing his head sheepishly. “Just messin’ around a little. You’re right, though. I won’t put any more until we reach the weapon.” He gave his teammate a playfully hit on the arm and continued up the stairs. “So, what about you’re Quirk, Kaibara?”

“It’s Swiveling,” he answered. Tsuburaba craned his head back to watch as Kaibara’s lower arm began to spin like a drill. “I can spin my arms and legs.”

“That’s pretty cool, man,” Tsuburaba said, giving his teammate a smile and two thumbs up. “Looks like you’ll be doing the damage this round, huh?”

As the two boys continued to climb the stairs, Kaibara’s mind was stuck on his teammate’s smiling face. That’s pretty cool, man played in his mind on repeat. Shit, Kaibara thought. It’s happening again. Guess I’ll start hoping he’s into guys.

“Gyro wasn’t the hero of the story,” Pony huffed. “Johnny was!”

“Johnny was no hero,” Fukidashi said, his arms crossed in annoyance. “Gyro was the protagonist. Steel Ball Run was a very contrarian story, so it makes sense that the hero wouldn’t be a Joestar.”

“He was!” Pony yelled while flailing her arms. “He was because Johnny was the hero an—”

“Heroes vs Villains training: begin!”

“Crap!” Fukidashi yelled. “We got distracted by JoJo and forgot to make a plan!”

“It’s OK,” Pony said as she bent over, putting her hands on the ground with her hooves. “Mount me!” She waited for Fukidashi to climb onto her, even kicking some gravel back at him, but he was motionless. Eventually, a few symbols appeared on his face.

“/>/<”

“Don’t be embarrassed,” Pony said. “We’re losing the time, so please get on top, partner.” Fukidashi hesitantly climbed on Pony’s back, putting his feet in the stirrups on her hoof guards.

“OK, I’m— woah!” Pony immediately took off in a sprint, running on all fours like a horse. Fukidashi held onto the harness to keep from flying off his partner’s back. “So, what’s the plan. How can we find them?”

“We’ll just got to search around the place. You keep the looking out.” Fukidashi looked over every doorway they passed, but saw no sign of the villain team.

“Let’s head upstairs next,” Fukidashi said.

“On my way!” Pony retuned to the main hallway and quickly trotted the staircase. As the two heroes ascended, Pony suddenly stopped dead and fell to her side, knocking Fukidashi off. “OWIE! My nose!” Pony cried as she held her face.

“What was that?” Fukidashi asked. As he placed a hand on Pony’s back, he reached up and felt the air wall Tsuburaba had left. “It must be one of their Quirks. It feels like a wall. Looks kinda like glass, too.” Pony got up and kicked the wall, but nothing happened. “I might be able to break it. Let’s back up a bit.”
“Please do that! Wall is jerk!” After descending the stairs, Fukidashi looked up at the wall and tensed up.

“BOOM!” he suddenly shouted. With his shout, his head changed shape for an instant, becoming jagged like an action word bubble in a comic. At the wall, a small explosion appeared before it, blowing the solid air back to its gas form. “Looks like I only need one to break these.”

**Manga Fukidashi. Quirk: Manga. He can summon different effects by shouting onomatopoeia, like making an explosion with “boom.”**

“Super cool!” Pony gushed. “Let’s go!” Fukidashi climbed back onto his teammate and they made it to the second floor to continue the search. They checked the floor for their opponents, but found no trace of them, so they continued to the third floor. “How’s our time, partner?”

“We’re fine so far,” Fukidashi said. “Thanks to your speed, we’re searching at a pretty quick pace.” Once they were on the third floor, Pony ran down the hallway to pursue, but Fukidashi saw something down a different hall. “Hold on.”

“What up?”

“Those walls were clear, but they glimmer like glass at certain angles,” Fukidashi explained. “I think I just saw one down that way.” Pony backed up and trotted in the direction her partner pointed, eventually seeing the shiny glass-like wall he noticed.

“You’re right.”

“Once we’re close enough, I’ll blow it up with my—”

“No,” Pony said. “I wanna try. Now that I can see it…” She tore off at a top-speed gallop and put her horns forward. “I wanna smash one!” Fukidashi braced himself for a crash, but instead, his teammate pierced the wall with her horns. They slowed down quite a bit, but Pony broke through with ease, and their speed returned once Pony kicked off again.

“Looks like we’re on the right track. There’s another one just ahead.” Pony put her horns down again, but Fukidashi was ready with his own attack. “BOOM!” The wall shattered and the duo sped up. As they came to an intersection, the speech-bubble boy noticed Kaibara peeking around the corner. “Hang a left. I saw Kaibara.”

“Gots it!” Pony galloped down the hall and prepared to make a left, but as she began turn, Kaibara jumped out into the open, his right arm spinning at a high speed and aiming at Fukidashi. As her partner crossed his arms, hoping to block the blow, Pony bucked her legs up, flinging Fukidashi over Kaibara and out of harm’s way. Kaibara quickly corrected himself to aim at Pony, but she knew how to counter.

“Now, super Pony horn cannon attack!” she called out. Her left horn fired itself out of her head like a missile, flying into Kaibara’s shoulder. It wasn’t hard enough to pierce his skin, but his punch went sailing over Pony’s head and dug into the floor. She dashed behind Kaibara and kicked both legs into his butt, sending him flying forward.

**Pony Tsunotori. Quirk: Horn Cannon. Aside from her horse-like speed, strength, and stamina, she can fire her horns out like a cannon. Her calling out an attack name is just for show, though.**

“Those things can detach!?” Fukidashi said as stood back up.
“Yup!” Pont said as she picked her horn up and placed it back into her head.

“Those things can reattach!?”

“Get back on,” Pony asked. Fukidashi jumped onto Pony’s back, but Kaibara came at them again with another spinning punch.

“FWOOSH!” Fukidashi called out with his head becoming more cloud-shaped. Out from his head came a strong gust of wind. Kaibara tried to fight against it, but he was blown back and the hero team ran off. “Good thing we escaped him for now. I doubt we could beat him head-on.”

“You could say that two times,” Pony said. She put her head down and ran into another air wall, piercing it with her horns. As she pushed off to regain her speed, she crashed face-first into another wall, knocking her and Fukidashi down. “OW! AGAIN, THE NOSE!” Fukidashi looked and saw the air walls were closer together now, but this at the end of the hall, he could see the weapon. It was in a small room at the very end of the hall with Tsuburaba guarding the entrance and making more solid air barriers.

“Pony, we’re almost there.”

“Really? Then let’s— uh oh.”

“What?” Fukidashi asked. Turning around, he saw Kaibara was running towards them. “Crap. Nowhere to run from this guy now.”

“That’s OK, partner,” Pony said, standing up and walking towards Kaibara. “You break the walls and get the bomb. I’ll fight.”

“If you insist,” Fukidashi said. “BOOM!” he called out. With the walls so close together, his explosion damaged a few at once.

“Pony’s ready to kick butt,” the horse girl declared as she got down on all fours again. She charged at Kaibara, who was spinning both arms, and rammed her horns into his hands. Kaibara caught the horns, which stopped his spinning for a moment, but they began to move again soon after. Pony’s left horn broke off and she was spun around by her right one. Kaibara turned around and pitched Pony down the hall, where she landed in a tumble.

“Dizzy yet?” Kaibara said as he raced after his opponent. Pony seemed to be nauseous from all the spinning, so once Kaibara reach her, he spun his arm again for a finishing blow. As he raised his fist, Pony’s dizzy expression turned back to a determined glare. She rolled forward into a handstand and thrust her hooves up, hitting Kaibara in his chin. She smiled, congratulating herself on a successful attack, and galloped down the hall to collect her horns.

“BOOM!” Fukidashi yelled, destroying more of the air barriers. He was tired and out of breath, but he had worked his way forward, closing in on Tsuburaba. The oval-eyed boy continued to reinforce his barriers, but it was clear from his ragged breathing that the constant Quirk usage was taking its toll. “Hey, Pony!” he called out.

Turning around, he saw Pony’s hooves clashing against a spinning punch from Kaibara. The two attacks canceled each other out, making Kaibara skid back and Pony backflip onto all fours.

“What?”

“Get ready to go for the weapon. Another hit and the path will be clear.”

“I don’t think so!” Kaibara yelled running past Pony. He spun his arm and raced towards Fukidashi,
but a pair of sharp pains in his thighs forced him to the ground. Pony, now without her horns, dashed past him as Fukidashi took a huge breath. Tsuburaba took his own deep breath and formed one more barrier on front of him and the weapon.

“BOOOOOOM!” A big explosion destroyed the remaining solid air barriers and threw Tsuburaba off his feet. Pony galloped past her teammate and leapt through the doorway, landing face-first on the fake bomb.

“Got it!” She cheered while hugging the weapon.

“Weapon captured!” All Might said over the loud speakers. “THE HERO TEAM WIIIINS!”

“Aw man,” Tsuburaba said as he rubbed his head.

“Hey,” Pony said, extending a hand to Tsuburaba. “Good game! Your Quirk is neat!”

“Uh, thanks,” Tsuburaba said as Pony helped him up. “I’ll need to work on it if we ever fight again.”

“How’re you feelin’, Fukidashi?” Pony asked as she bounced over to her teammate, who was busy catching his breath.

“I’ll be fine… just tired.”

“How ’bout you, Kaibara?”

“I’m OK,” Kaibara said as he handed Pony her horns. “Good game.”

“Yeah! Super fun!” After putting her horns in place, Pony grabbed her teammate’s hand and ran down the hall, leaving the villain team on their own.

“Man, Pony’s got way too much energy,” Tsuburaba quipped.

“Yeah.”

“She’s pretty cute.”

“…Yeah,” Kaibara said. Tsuburaba wasn’t sure why, but he could tell Kaibara was a little dejected.

“Don’t get jealous on me. You’re cute too, dude.” He gave his teammate a wink and walked off to join his classmates. Kaibara made sure he was alone before his neutral face slowly transformed into a big grin.
“HA HA HA! Well done, all of you!” The remaining class 1-B had returned to the tunnel where they had entered the training grounds to meet the hero and villain teams. All Might had gone back to his normal theatrics once he named Pony the MVP of the final round. “We did some great training today! There were a few injuries, but you should see that as your incredible strength and desire to win pushing you! Now go get changed and head back to class!” As soon as he finished talking, All Might was gone, sprinting down the tunnel and leaving a trail of steam in his path.

“Does anyone feel like he was rushing there?” Kendo asked.

“Eh. He’s a busy guy,” Setsuna answered with a shrug. “He’s probably got something important to do.” With their first hero class over, the students returned to the school building and changed back into their uniforms. While most went back to the classroom, Kendo, Setsuna, Awase, and Honenuki had decided to go to the nurse’s office and check on their classmates.

“So, what’s the deal with the nurse here?” Setsuna asked. “I feel like All Might really talked here up.”

“She has a healing Quirk,” Kendo explained. “Everyone should be healed by now.”

“Oh yeah? …Hey, guess you’re right.” gesturing ahead, Setsuna pointed out Shoda, Shishida, Bondo, and Kamakiri walking their way.

“Hello, everyone,” Shishida greeted. “The rest of the training went well, I assume.”

“Yup,” Awase said. “All Might said to go get changed. You were the MVP of your round, by the way.”

“Good job, man,” Kamakiri said, bumping Shishida’s arm. The costumed students walked by to go change, with Bondo and Honenuki sharing a knowing nod.

“I don’t think he’s mad at me,” Honenuki said with a relieved sigh.

“I wouldn’t worry about it,” Kendo said as they continued to the nurse’s office. “If Bondo doesn’t hold a grudge, then I’m sure Shiozaki will have nothing against you.”

“Agreed,” Setsuna added. “I doubt she could even hold a grudge for more than 10 seconds.” After a minute of walking, the group found Recovery Girl’s office and walked in.

“Excuse me,” Kendo said as they entered.

“Oh, hello,” Recovery Girl said. “Are you kids hurt?”

“No… well, Awase is.”

“Yeah, I think my shoulder’s out of its socket,” he casually stated.

“We’re from class 1-B,” Kendo explained. “Are our friends here?”

“YO!” They heard Tetsutetsu yell. He popped out from behind a curtain, looking no worse for wear. “Class over?”

“Yeah, we came to check on you guys,” Setsuna chimed in. “How’s things?”
“We’re good,” Tetsutetsu said. Kendo walked past him, checking the behind the curtains for her other classmates. Just behind the iron boy, she found Yui climbing out of a cot.

“Hey! Feelin’ better?” Yui perked up when she heard her friend’s voice, with her normally blank stare having a wide-eyed elation.

“Kendo… Yes, I am.” Yui shuffled her foot around and looked at the ground, not used to conversation.

“Great! Class is over now, so you should head back to the changing room.”

“I, uh… I don’t know where it is from here.”

“That’s fine,” Kendo assured her. “C’mon. I’ll show you.” She offered her hand to Yui, who stared for a moment before taking it. As Kendo led Yui out of the office, Honenuki walked to the cot in the back of the office. Laying in it was a sleeping Shiozaki. The guilt from before welled up in Honenuki again, but a hand falling on his shoulder distracted him from it for a moment.

“Was that you?” Tetsutetsu asked. The skeleton-faced boy nodded in confirmation. “She’s fine, dude. She’s just asleep ‘cause Recovery Girl’s power makes you sleepy, see?” Honenuki turned around to see Awase already in a deep sleep on Tetsutetsu’s cot. “Just watch… WAKE UP!”

“Stop screaming!” Setsuna screamed. Honenuki ignored the two and watched Shiozaki began to stir from her sleep.

“Mnn… Who’s…?” She opened her eyes slowly and saw her classmates looking over her. “Oh… Hello, everyone.”

“Shiozaki,” Honenuki began, “I’m so sorry. I was too—”

“I forgive you.”

“Huh?” Shiozaki sat up in her bed, leaning up to eye level of her friends. Honenuki had gone mute in shock while Setsuna giggled and Tetsutetsu slapped his back repeatedly.

“Called it,” Setsuna said.

“I hold nothing against you,” Shiozaki said. “Don’t beat yourself up. I’m fine now, so there’s nothing to worry about.”

“I… Thank you!” Honenuki said with a deep bow.

“All’s well that ends well!” Setsuna declared. “First day is over and no one’s dead or worse. I call that a win.”

“You said it!” Tetsutetsu said, high-fiving the lizard girl.

By the time everyone returned to class, the school day was just ending. In just one day, friendships, rivalries, and even crushes had sprouted among the students. Kendo stood at her desk and looked over her classmates with a small smile.
“What’re you looking at?” Shiozaki asked.

“What?” Kendo answered. “Hey, check it out.” She motioned at the opposite corner of the room, where Setsuna was talking to Rin. They couldn’t see her face or hear what she was saying, but it was obvious she was doing all the talking.

“She certainly works fast,” Shiozaki said as Setsuna handed a slip of paper to Rin. He looked down and blushed as Setsuna turned and walked away. Now that she was facing them, Kendo and Shiozaki were shocked to see that she was blushing too. Her hands were folded and her smile seemed more innocent than mischievous. Her eyes locked with Kendo’s and she walked over, now pouting.

“Were you guys watching?” she asked.

“Can you blame us?” Kendo countered. “That was adorable. After how bold you were during training, I’m surprised how bashful you looked.”

“Perhaps her bark is worse than her bite,” Shiozaki added.

“Shut up,” Setsuna barked, blushing even deeper.

“Oh, you pure maiden,” Kendo mocked, imitating Setsuna’s voice.

“It’s different,” the lizard girl explained as she looked away. “Flirting is easy. Being forward and serious is tough.”

“I gotcha. I was just joking,” Kendo assured her. “If you’ll excuse me, I’ve got a train to catch.”

“I’ll also be going to the station,” Shiozaki said. “Shall we walk together?”

“Sounds good,” Kendo said. “Hey, Monoma! Train’s leaving soon.” The blond boy gave her a thumbs-up and held up his packed bag, not bothering to look back from his conversation with Tetsutetsu.

“I take it you two live near each other?” Shiozaki asked.

“Yup. Same apartment building.” The two girls left the room and walked down the hall, joined not long after by Monoma and Tetsutetsu.

“Hey, hey, guess what?” Tetsutetsu said excitedly. “Me and Monoma are gonna be best buddies!” Kendo gave Monoma an aside glance as he was put into a headlock by Tetsutetsu.

“It was a… spur of the moment decision,” Monoma explained.

“Well, good for you, ‘best buddy.’” Kendo said as she ruffled her friend’s hair. “Now that I think about it, Setsuna was right.”

“How about what?” Shiozaki asked.

“I think this year’s gonna be a good one.”
While the Hero Course was the crown jewel of U.A. and always had the attention of the public, there was more to the school than just heroics. Not only did they have general studies and business classes, but they also had a second-to-none Support Course to let the next generation of inventors run wild. Support items will always be in demand, so the future heroes will need top-tier support. Vlad King had said that they’d need to make friends in the support course eventually, but a few students from 1-B decided to be proactive and pay them an early visit. Honenuki was leading the way after Tetsutetsu had gotten the group lost. While they headed the group, Kaibara, Awase, Tsuburaba, Rin, and Setsuna followed close behind.

“It should be just around the corner,” Honenuki said.

“We’d have gotten here eventually if we went my way,” Tetsutetsu grumbled. Before anyone else could speak up, an ear-splitting explosion went off just around the corner, shaking the ground beneath them.

“W-What the hell?” Awase yelled. He and Tetsutetsu were the first to turn the corner while the rest were not far behind. On their left was an open set of blast doors that a cloud of smoke was pouring out of.

“Is everyone OK!?” Tetsutetsu yelled as the group ran inside. A giant fan at the opposite side of the workshop had blown all of the smoke out of the room, letting the support students inside continue on as if nothing happened.

“Don’t worry, kids. We’re all good in here,” the teacher said as he came up to the 1-B group. They recognized the Support Course teacher as the Pro-Hero Power Loader, a short man with large hands and hook-like fingertips. Instead of his usual robot armor, he only wore the yellow helmet, which looked like a cross between a dinosaur skull and a mechanical crane. “You’re all from the hero course, right? Class 1-B? What can I do for you?”

“That’s us,” Setsuna answered with a wave. “We all came to see if we could get some support gear.”

“Alright, I think we can work something out,” Power Loader said. “Come on in.” The group walked inside of the large design studio, where the support students gave them a quick glance before returning to their work. “It’s still early in the school year, so some of our first-years are still getting used to things. I’m sure one of our upperclassmen could help you today.” Power Loader looked through the rows of design work for a student that wasn’t busy. “hmm… It seems most of our older students are busy, so I may set some of you up with a first-years. Do any of you kids know what you want?”

“Oh! Oh! I do!” Tetsutetsu said while waving his arms around. “I wanted this thing that’s like… It’s like, uh… Awase, what do we want?”

“We wanted something for training,” Awase said. “Me, Tetsutetsu, and Kaibara came here for the same thing, and I think it’s kinda simple, so we’ll take a first-year if you need.”

“Perfect,” Power Loader said. “Hatsume! You’ve got a request!” Almost Immediately, a girl with
pink hair that resembled tentacles came running their way. She wore steampunk-style goggles on her forehead, a black tank top, loose brown cargo pants, and black work gloves. Her face was also covered in soot, oil stains, and chocolate stains.

“Seriously?! Awesome!” the girl squealed. “What is it?”

“Ask him,” Power Loader said, pointing to Awase.

“Hey, all! The name’s Mei Hatsume of Class 1-H.” Out of her pocket, Hatsume produced six business cards with her face printed on them. “Here’s my card if you need any future work done. Here, here, taketaketaketa,” she quickly said, handing her cards to each student. “Follow me to my work station, whoever you are!” Awase gave a nervous look at Power Loader before being dragged off by Tetsutetsu and Kaibara.

“Alright, the rest of you want different things, right?” Power Loader asked. “In that case, I’ll grab a third-year for you. Haya!”

“What’s up?” From a workstation in the back came a taller girl with very short blonde hair who was busy wiping soot from her face. She wore a plain black shirt, red gloves, a red bandana around her neck, and loose jeans. “Got a request?”

“A few. These are some first-years from the Hero Course. Take care of ‘em for now.”

“You got it, sir.” With the last of the hero students set with a support course member, Power Loader walked off to continue his own work. “I’m Yuyu, by the way,” the older girl said. “Let’s head to my station and I’ll try and hook you all up.”

While Yuyu took her share of the 1-B students to her workstation in the back, Hatsume brought her three customers to her cluttered space. “OK, OK,” she said, hastily clearing her station and grabbing a notepad. “What can I do for you guys?”

“We want something to train our punching and grip strength, since all three of us are physical fighters,” Awase explained. “My idea was a pair of gloves that forces the hand into a fist, so it works out your hand when you move it. All three of us wanted one, and if it’s simple enough to make, Honenuki and Rin over there wanted some too.”

Hatsume wrote down the request and frowned to herself. “It’s a simple job. I can knock it out in an afternoon.”

“Awesome!” Tetsutetsu said.

“NO! Not awesome!” Hatsume complained. “It’s not complicated enough! There’s no metal rivets, there’s no power source, not even a navigational A.I!”

“What do you mean?” Kaibara asked.

“I want a challenge!” she whined. “Maybe you guys need some gear for your Quirks. Show ‘em to me.” Awase wanted to tell her that’s all they needed, but Tetsutetsu jumped in front of him almost immediately.

“Check this out,” he boasted, turning his skin to metal. “Cool, huh?”


“Me?” Kaibara asked. “I can spin my arms and legs like drills.” Hatsume rubbed her chin and
squeezed at Kaibara before gasping.

“Propellers!” she squealed. “Wrist mounted propellers, and when you spin them, they work like a helicopter and you can fly!” She whipped around and grabbed blueprint paper, sketching her idea at an unreal speed.

“That’s kinda funny to imagine,” Awase said, “but—”

“I like it,” Kaibara said in his usual monotone.

“Seriously, dude!? You’d cut your fucking head off!!”

“I’ll work on a safer version later,” Hatsume said, putting away her blueprints. “What’s your Quirk, big guy?”

“Uh, mine’s not really compatible with any support items,” Awase explained, trying to think of an exit. “It’s just welding.”

“Welding?”

“As long as I’m touching them, I can fuse two things at a subatomic level.” Hatsume stared blankly before darting off. She went to a shelf of half-finished inventions and grabbed two broken-looking ones, bringing them back to Awase.

“Show me,” she asked. She shoved the junk into Awase’s hands and looked up at him expectantly.

“Uh, sure.” He jammed two flat ends together and activated his quirk, fusing them into one. Hatsume took it back and tried pulling it apart, but it wouldn’t budge.

“Woah, it’s really fused! This could be very useful indeed.” She switched her gaze from the fused inventions to Awase, looking him up and down and smirking. “You should come back here more often. You’re Quirk could really help us out, big guy.”

“Uh, sure… the gloves are really all we need, so—”

“Hold on,” Hatsume interrupted. “I can still make you some gear… What are your thoughts on becoming a cyborg?”

“Huh?”

As Hatsume worked with her clients, the rest of the 1-B worked with Yuyu on their requests.

“Alright, so that’s two breath regulators,” she said, looking at Tsuburaba and Honenuki. “And you wanted the undershirt to help you avoid overheating, right?”

“That’s right,” Rin said. Yuyu scribbled on her notepad and look down at Setsuna.

“What about you?”

“Like, um,” Setsuna twirled her hair through her fingers, trying to find the right words. “OK, so, I want metal claws to scratch at things with, but I can’t really wear them ‘cause my Quirk makes my limbs detach. Is there some work around for that?”

“Hmm… maybe. I can have them strapped to your upper arm and make them retractable. That way, when you pop your forearm off, the claws aren’t in the way. How’s that sound?”

“Perfect,” Setsuna said with a thumbs-up. “Thanks a bunch!”
“Sure thing,” Yuyu said. “Always happy to help the younger students. They’re usually more grateful to us support kids.”

Suddenly, a crash was heard near the front of the design studio. Yuyu turned around to see Awase sprinting out of the studio with Tetsutetsu and Kaibara not far behind. “She’s a fucking lunatic!” he yelled as he ran out. Hatsume was trailing them with a set of blueprints in her hands.

“Come back! Cyborg’s are the future of heroics!” She ran out the door, but stopped there. “Call me!” she yelled down the hall. She sauntered back inside with a pleased smile on her face. “I gave him my card. He’s got my number,” she said to Yuyu, who looked unimpressed.

“Mr. Maijima?” Yuyu called out. “Hatsume scared off those 1-B kids. Can I put her in time-out?”

“Up to you,” Power Loader yelled from his office.

“No fair!” Hatsume whined as she ran further into the workshop. Yuyu held her arm out and activated her Quirk, stretching out her fingers like tentacles. Her fingers crossed the room and grabbed Hatsume, wrapping around her waist and plucking her into the air. “This is BS, man!”

Yuyu Haya. Quirk: Sticky Fingers. She can stretch her fingers into long, sticky tendrils. Perfect for grabbing far-away tools or her excitable classmates.

“15-minutes time out,” Yuyu said, stretching her other finger into the corner near her workstation. In that corner was a small cage with a wooden sign above it that read “Time out,” with the words “Hatsume’s desk” spray-painted next to it. Yuyu opened the cage and dropped Hatsume into it.

“No fair!” Hatsume yelled.

“If you don’t like it, then stop scaring people off,” Yuyu lectured.

“Seems extreme,” Tsuburaba said.

“Well, Hatsume’s an extreme person,” Yuyu said. “Besides, I’m used to excitable people. My girlfriend’s the same way.”

“I demand a trial!”

“20 minutes,” Yuyu declared, making Hatsume immediately quiet down. “Anyway, I can get the shirt and breath regulators done in two days. I’ll work on blueprints for those claws and give you an update when I can.”

“Thanks again,” Setsuna said. “You support kids look super busy. It hasn’t even been a week since school started.”

“Well, we like to jump right into things,” Yuyu said. “Most kids don’t even stop during break and just work at home. You definitely feel like a mad scientist after a while. Some more than others,” she said with a glance in Hatsume’s direction. “Check back in a couple to get your gear, boys.”

“Sounds good,” Tsuburaba said as the group walked away. “See you around.” Yuyu waved the kids off before turning to Hatsume and unlocking the cage.

“You’re already a handful, but you’ve got skill. Get back to work.”

“Thanks,” Hatsume said as she hopped out. “I’ll try not to scare the next ones.”
“Somehow, I doubt that.”

Chapter End Notes

EDIT: Yuyu's real last name, Haya, was revealed recently, so I went back to this chapter and replaced my previous stand-in, Betayubi. No word on her Quirk though, so I kept it the same.
Here's just a quick one-off chapter to cover the class rep elections. Be on the lookout for the start of the USJ arc coming soon

U.A., being one of the top hero schools in Japan, was obviously exclusive. This means that, with certain exceptions, most students came in with no one familiar. With so many new classmates, one would think it would take a while to figure each other out and pick up on their traits and personality. In Kendo’s case, however, no one in class 1-B had this problem. From the beginning, it was clear – she was the class mom.

It wasn’t even a week into school when people began to notice. Of course, Monoma had a part in this, pointing it out to his friends. He was sat on the edge of Kaibara’s desk in the back-left corner of the classroom with Tsuburaba and Kuroiro next to him. “She’ll be back from the bathroom any second,” the copycat began, “Who’s gonna be her target?”

“Probably Shishida,” Kuroiro guessed. “He’s sleeping at his desk.”

“I’d guess Awase. He’s playing video games,” Kaibara said.

“Fukidashi’s drawing and he’s closer to the door,” Tsuburaba pointed out. “I’d say him.”

“You fools,” Monoma said with a haughty chuckle. “The answer is all of them. She’ll pounce on all three within five seconds.” The four boys looked expectantly at the door, and after a moment, it slid open. “Just watch.”

Kendo walked inside and surveyed the classroom, immediately noticing people who weren’t ready for class. “Fukidashi, class is about to start, so put your drawings away for now. You too, Awase. Turn off your game. Shishida, wake up.”

Monoma silently cheered to himself while his friends gave him an unimpressed look. “Wow, good guess,” Tsuburaba said sarcastically. “It’s not like you’ve known her for years.” Before Monoma could retort, they heard Setsuna from the hallway. It had become almost a routine that she arrives while singing her favorite show’s theme song.

“EXTREME! EXTREME! EXTREME DINOSAURS!” she screamed from down the hall. “TAILS THAT SNAP LIKE THUNDERCLAPS—”

“Setsuna!” Kendo chided from the doorway. “You shouldn’t disturb the other classes like that.”

“You’re not my dad,” Setsuna said quickly as she entered the classroom. She was followed by Pony, who entered while finishing up an apple.

“Hey, Kendo,” she said with her mouth dripping with water.

“Hi, Pony,” Kendo greeted while handing Pony a handkerchief. “Class is starting soon, so you should clean up a bit.” As Pony cleaned off her face, Kendo turned her attention to the boys. “You
guys, get to your seats, and tuck in your shirt, Kuroiro.”

“It’s because I’m black, isn’t it?”

“Man, that just gets funnier every time you say it,” Tsuburaba sarcastically quipped.

“Yeah, it does,” Kuroiro said, still giggling to himself. As everyone in class took their seats, the door opened again to reveal Mr. Kan.

“Alright, class has begun,” he said as he entered. “It looks like everyone’s here, so let’s get right down to business. I’ve finished looking over the footage of your matches. For the most part, I was impressed, but you all can still improve. Winners and MVPs, don’t think you had a perfect showing, and the losing teams, don’t dwell on the past. Once you figure out what you can do better, you can put it out of your mind. Now, on a different note, you all have to pick a class representative today.”

Almost every student perked up at those words. At U.A., being the class rep was a great way to get noticed by agencies, so it was a hotly contested spot every year. “I wanna do it!” Tetsutetsu called out.

“No, me!” Setsuna said with her hands up.

“It should be me,” Kuroiro announced.

“Please don’t pick me,” Shoda said.

“Calm down!” Kan said. “We’ll be choosing the old-fashioned way – with an election. If you want to run, then you’ll come up and say a few words about why you’re the right person for the job. After the candidates have said something, we’ll vote. You can’t vote for yourself, either. Is that fine with all of you?”

“Yes, sir,” the class said.

“Good. Everyone who wants to run, raise your hand and we’ll go in alphabetical order. You have 5 minutes to prepare.”

Shit, shit, shit! Awase thought as he stood at the podium in front of the class. I hate going first. I still don’t know what I want to say. Do I even want this job? It had been a while since he came up, but Awase was still silent.

“Are you going to make your speech?” Kan asked.

“DON’T VOTE FOR ME!” Awase blurted out. After another moment of stillness, he returned to his seat. No one said a word. Pony clapped.

“I’ve been the class representative all through middle school,” Kendo said. “I have plenty of experience, and I honestly enjoy the work. If you vote for me, I promise to do my very best.”

“Darkness is always closing in,” Kuroiro growled. His hand was running through his hair, making it appear spikier. “That darkness of villainy creeps ever closer, but with the Ebony Hero at your helm, this ship shall never be lost in the night.”
This is a weird metaphor, the class thought. It reeks of Chuunibyo. Pony still clapped.

"I'm sure you've all noticed my great intellect by now," Monoma said. "Having me as your class rep will certainly benefit you all. With my copying Quirk, I already have to pay close attention on you all so I know what to do if I copy your Quirks, so you'll always have my focus if I lead this class. I'm sure you'll make the smart choice."

He makes a good point, the class thought, but that ego's too hard to deal with.

Kan was waiting for an opportunity to interrupt, but Shishida didn't seem to be stopping anytime soon. "To be a competent leader, both in the classroom and in the field, requires traits such as charisma, knowledge, empathy, and so much more. I believe I have those such traits. If your vote —"

"Shishida," Kan finally said, "It was supposed to be under a minute."

"...I see."

"I'll give you all cybernetic enhancements!" Hatsume announced. "It's the future of heroics."

"Young lady, are you a member of this class?"

"No, I am not," Hatsume said, placing a stack of business cards on the podium. "I'll just leave these here." She left without another word, but she did wink at Awase, who shuddered. Pony clapped.

"I'm really strong!" Tetsutetsu exclaimed. "A leader's gotta be strong, right? So, if you pick me, I'll be even stronger!"

I don't think he knows what a class rep does, the class thought.

"Who here like's dinosaurs?" Setsuna asked. "If I'm your class rep, I'll make sure all the other classes know our power. How, you may ask? I'll get Support Course to make us a robot dinosaur to be our friend and we can ride him around and he'll fight with us and—"

"That's enough, Tokage," Kan said.

"...and his name will be Jeff Goldblum, thank you!"

"I heard robot dinosaur!" Hatsume yelled from the hallway. "Do you guys need me?"

"Go back to your own class," Kan yelled back

Once everyone had voted, the class was in total silence as Kan counted the ballots. "All right," he
began, “it looks like your class representative will be Itsuka Kendo. Your deputy representative will be Jurota Shishida.” The class gave a small round of applause as the two elected students went to the front of the class.

“Thank you,” Kendo said with a small bow. “I promise to do my very best.”

“As will I.” Shishida added.

Chapter End Notes

Captain America: Dr. Zenkai, now would be a good time for you to end the chapter.
Me: That’s my secret, Cap. I never know how to end a chapter.
I was thinking about the 3rd ending for the anime with the fantasy world, and I was wondering what 1-B would look like in that kind of setting. Here's my attempt at incorporating that: A D&D game. Let me know if you've enjoyed this chapter and I might make a follow-up in the future.

“OK, I think we have everyone,” Fukidashi said. He was sat at the end of a long table in his apartment, having finally finished preparing the game board. Tonight was the second meeting of Class 1-B’s Dungeons and Dragons group. On his left, Fukidashi could see Setsuna, who was playing with her phone while huddled under her dinosaur-themed sweatshirt, and Monoma, who was rolling his dice to see which one’s felt lucky to him. Across the table was Tetsutetsu, who was inspecting his Goliath Barbarian mini-figure. On the right side of the table was Kuroiro, who was checking the player handbook, and Shoda, who had just finished updating his character sheet. That wasn’t everyone around though, as Kendo was sat at the corner of the table.

“Yeah, we’re all ready,” Kuroiro said.

“Feels a little crowded in here, doesn’t it?” Setsuna said, looking at her friend. “What’s up with that? I didn’t think you would be interested in this stuff.”

“I’ve never tried it,” Kendo said, “so I asked Fukidashi if I could play a guest role.”

“Is everyone ready?” Fukidashi asked. “If so, I’ll start the recap. Last time, in the adventures of the Howling Scavengers, you continued on the quest given by the disposed king of Syndalle, King Dracule, to rescue his daughter, Princess Saphro. You had entered the underground hideout of the bandit leader, Bulstarro, where you’ve fought against his underlings and a gargoyle. You had some close calls, including the near death of your bard—”

“I thought gargoyles could be poisoned! Sue me!” Setsuna yelled at no one in particular.

“—but you’ve all made it through, miraculously, and have hunkered down in the barracks for a long rest. Now…”

The soon-to-be legendary rogue, Phantom Thief Roark Duskbringer, awoke from his uneasy sleep on a hammock in the bandit’s barracks. He groggily opened his eyes to see the half-draconic bard of the group, Vodette Komodoensis, was asleep on the floor. Remembering that she was supposed to be taking the last lookout shift before they continued the mission, he lobbed a nearby metal trinket at her head.

“OW! What?” Vodette asked he she rubbed her head.

“Lookout was pretty boring, huh?” Roark said as he climbed out of the hammock.

“Well, yeah…” Vodette said, avoiding eye contact and twiddling her fingers. “It’s not like anyone could get in if there were any bandits was left.” She gestured to the door, or more specifically, the
goliath sleeping in front of it. Their resident barbarian, Grog Blackforge, had been sleeping in front of the door, but was beginning to stir.

“Smash?!?” he yelled as he awoke, grabbing his hammer.

“Not yet,” Roark said as he dug through the clutter around the room, snagging a few valuables for himself. “Hey, wake up, you two.”

“Man, you guys are too loud in the morning,” a voice said from under a blanket. Poking a white-haired, jet black-skinned head out was the dark elf wizard, Xanther Paleblud. As he climbed out of the hammock and smoothed out his red and gold robes, the last member of the party got up from the floor and stretched.

“Now that we’re all rested, we’ll continue with the mission as planned, right guys?” asked Valon Star, the dwarf paladin clothed in heavy armor and a blue tabard.

“Yeah, but we should scout it out first,” Vodette suggested. “We don’t know where the princess is, so if we’re all wandering around aimlessly, we may end up in another big fight.”

“Send Grog,” Grog said dimly. “Grog can smash his way to the princess.”

“And where is she, Grog?” Xanther asked smarmily. “In which direction will you smash?” Grog didn’t answer, but he did drool a little.

“As I was saying,” Vodette continued, “Mono— Roark is the sneakiest, so he can scout ahead. Once he makes sure an area is clear, we can all go through.”

“I suppose I could,” Roark said, casually looking over his findings, “but what’s in it for me?”

“I won’t hit you with my lute,” Vodette said, brandishing her stringed instrument like a club. “How’s that for a reward?”

“I’d take it,” Grog suggested as he scooted away from the door.

“Alright, but if I get killed, none of you get my stuff. Bury me with it.” Roark peeked out the door and, seeing it was clear of enemies and booby traps, walked outside. His companions followed several feet behind, making sure they were far enough behind to not give his position away to any enemies.

“So, what kind of rewards do you think the king will give us?” Xanther asked. “I could use some new books on Magic.”

“Grog needs better weapon. Handbook says royalty can give really good items.”

“No Metagaming,” a voice in everyone’s heads said.

“C’mon, Fukidashi,” Tetsutetsu said as he pulled out a few crumpled dollar bills and some bacon from his pocket. “Can I get something cool?”

“No bribing the DM,” Fukidashi said.

“I’ll throw in this half-eaten bag of chips.”

“I gave you those.”
“…You can eat?”

“I don’t think our reward will be anything too plentiful,” Valon said to the disgruntled Grog. “The kingdom has been taken over, so the king doesn’t have much anymore.”

“Wait!” Roark yelled, racing back to the group. “What are we getting for this mission?”

“…The gratitude of a father?” Valon said, trying his best to sound positive. Roark scowled and looked ready to throw a tantrum, but after seeing Vodette readying to swing her Lute, he returned to his sneaking duties. He snuck and snuck, but no enemies were found. Eventually, after a long, winding cavern of nothing, he happened upon a locked door.

“Hey, guys. I think we got something.” The group joined their rogue in front of the door, which seemed too strong to smash, much to Grog’s disappointment. “I think I can pick it, but I’ll need some inspiration. Vodette, gimme some lock-picking tunes.” Vodette gladly pulled her lute back out and began to play while prancing around.

Oh yeah, he’s... picking a lock~

He’s doing that thing... because he rock...s~

He sure does know how to pick~

Even though he’s a total prick~

“…Thanks,” Roark said. “I think I’ve got it.” He picked the lock easily and opened the door to a pitch-black room. “Anyone got a torch?”

“Grog’s got one.” With a torch now lit, they could make out the room. It was a small portion of the cave sectioned off to be a dungeon. Inside was a prisoner on the far side of the room, a young woman sat on the floor, bound with ropes and gagged. She had fair skin, a fancy blue dress and purple cloak, and long ginger hair.

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“What’s so funny, Monoma?” Kendo asked the snickering blond boy.

“You’re the princess?” he asked between his laughter. “I thought you would be the bandit guy.”

“You don’t have to be an ass about it,” she huffed.

“You’re right about him being an ass,” Setsuna began, “but I’m also kinda surprised. I didn’t think you’d wanna be a princess if you could be some sort of fighter.”

“What’s wrong with that?” Kendo asked, a little dejected.

“N-Nothing!” Setsuna said. “Nothing at all! I was just curious is all, hehehe.”

The young woman lifted her head when the torchlight broke through the darkness. She had been in the dark so long that the fire’s light stung her eyes even when closed. She began to panic when she heard footsteps approach, but they sounded lighter than the steps of the bandits. A pair of hands came around her head and untied her gag. “Who’s there?” she asked fearfully. Before anyone could respond, Roark began to snicker.
“That’s your princess voice?” he asked.

“Dude,” the voice in his head chided.

“Sorry, sorry…”

“You’re the princess, right?” Vodette asked. “Princess Saphro? We’re your rescue party, girl. Sent straight here by your pops.”

“My father… so he’s alive. I’m so glad.” As her eyes adjusted slowly to the light, she opened them to see a blonde man kneeling in front of her, wearing leather armor and a black scarf. “Who are you all?”

“We’re the badasses who busted in here for you: The Howling Scavengers. Patent pending,” Vodette said as she helped untie the princess. “I’m Vodette, I’m a dragon… Well, dragon-in-training, that is.”

“I see,” Saphro said with a confused look.

“So, how’re you holding up?”

“I’ll be fine, than— mmph!” Roark suddenly stopped untieing the princess and put the cloth back over her mouth.

“Vodette, back up,” he instructed. Vodette was confused, but followed the order and ran behind Grog.

“What, what is it?” she asked. “Is she a secret monster person? Is this a trap?”

“I had a thought,” Roark began. “Who would give us more treasure for the princess? Her kingdomless father or the guy who took the kingdom in the first place?”

“What are you getting at?” Xanther asked, already guessing where Roark’s mind had gone.

“You can’t be serious,” Valon said.

“MMMPH!” the princess squealed.

“Hold on, slow down,” Roark said with his hands up. “I’m not suggesting anything… but tell me, who’d give us more treasure?”

“MMPH!”

“Not now,” he said while pushing the princess’s face away from his own. “Who’d give us more, Valon?”

“Roark, that’s not—”

“Because I think the new king of Syndalle would. That’s my guess. Who’d give us more?”

“Roark,” Xanther began.

“Who’d give us more?” Valon sighed and face-palmed as Roark waited for an answer.

“…The new king.”
“So, I’m right,” Roark said. “Sooooo— ACK!” He was interrupted by the princess ramming her head into his own. “Ouch! Not very princess-like of you.”

“MMGHMMMNMN!” Princess Saphro was stomping her bound feet and mumbling obscenities at Roark, who ducked behind Vodette.

“As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted,” Roark began while squinting at the princess, “we could get a ton of treasure if we hand her over to the new king.”

“Not very nice,” Grog said. “She’d probably die.”

“Don’t be so sure,” Roark countered. “The new king doesn’t want to hurt her. In fact, he wants to protect the princess. I know this because, dramatic pause… he’s my older brother!”

“You didn’t mention this in your character profile,” Fukidashi said.

“I know. I’m lying,” Monoma said.

“…Roll for bluff.” Monoma grabbed his purple D20 die and spun it across the table.

“…9.”

“Everyone else roll insight,” Fukidashi instructed. “If you get higher, you see through the lie.”

“Not a chance,” Xanther said.

“Don’t make stuff up,” Valon scolded.

“You’re not fooling Grog,” Grog said, flicking Roark upside the head.

The princess mumbled something that sounded like “I don’t believe you.”

“Seriously?!?” Vodette exclaimed. “That’s awesome! Can he get me dragon scales?”

“He can,” Roark fibbed.

“What about a sword made of platinum?”

“Vodette, he’s lying,” Valon explained.

“…Oh.” Vodette said disappointedly. “In that case, no way. Now go untie her, Roark.”

“…You untie her.”

“Not a chance.” Vodette grabbed Roark and threw him forward, making him fall face first into the princess’s lap.

“Ehe… Your rescue has arrived, fair lady.” At this point, Saphro’s anger had done a complete 360 and became a calm rage as she let Roark untie her. “All done,” Roark said as he untied her hands and ran backwards. The princess got up, untied her gag, and smoothed out her dress and cloak.

“Thank you all for rescuing me,” the princess said with a bow. “I am Saphro, princess of Syndelle.”
“No hard feelings, right?” Roark said. A glare from Saphro was all it took to make him duck behind Grog again.

“If you’ll accompany me back to my father, I will reward you in some way. I do not have much anymore, but whatever I can give, I will.”

“We should probably skip the introductions for now and get going,” Valon suggested. “We may have fought some bandits, but their leader—”

As if on cue, the group heard a mess of footsteps coming from down the hall. “They’ve reached the princess!” A booming voice yelled. “Kill them all and recapture her!”

“…is right down the hall,” Valon finished.

“Grog will smash them all!”


“You should probably take this, princess,” Valon said as he handed the princess a short sword.

“Everyone behind the tanks!” Vodette ordered, taking the princess with her behind Grog.

“Don’t worry, everyone,” Roark said. “We got this.”

“Is that why you’re hiding behind me?” Valon asked.

“If anyone needs to be healed, I can help you,” Saphro said. The group readied their weapons as the bandits drew closer.


“Justice?”

“Knowledge?”

“Smashing?”

“Dragons?”

“Survival,” Roark clarified. “fight for survival… ‘Let’s not die’ on three. One, two, three!”

“LET’S NOT DIE!”

Chapter End Notes

Let me just explain this. This is a fanfiction for an anime about superheroes where the characters play D&D. If that’s not the nerdiest thing in the world, then I’ve failed you all.
The normal day for a student of U.A.’s Hero Course began with subjects like Math and English like any other high school. After lunch, however, was Hero Basic Training, a class exclusive to Hero Course students. Some days were spent in the classroom where they learned proper hero protocol, they exercised and practiced combat on other days, and some days had them practicing hero work in their costumes. Class 1-B was spending their day in the classroom while Class 1-A was doing rescue training in a special facility called the USJ.

“Moving on, let’s talk about victims and any signs of distress,” Kan said from the podium. “Some are obvious, like waving your hands above you head – Tsunotori, demonstrate for us.” Everyone turned to see Pony, who frantically swung her arms above her head. “That’s an obvious one, but if a victim isn’t in a position to give an obvious hint, they may try for something subtler. If you think someone is in any danger, try and make eye contact with them. Their eyes can tell you exactly what’s happening. Someone may also subtly activate their Quirk to get attention, such as if Shiozaki started moving her hair in an erratic way or Kaibara was slowly spinning his arms. All of these—”

Kan suddenly stopped himself when he heard something. A loud banging from outside. The students with window seats could see a metal wall rising around the perimeter outside U.A. “Isn’t that the U.A. Barrier?” Monoma asked.

“Yes, it is,” Kan said, looking out the window. “It activates when someone enters the premises without clearance, or it can be activated manually if security has been compromised in any way. It’s most likely the press again. They’ve been restless since All Might began teaching here. Just ignore —”

The classroom door was suddenly yanked open. Everyone turned to see Midnight and Ectoplasm in the hall. “Vlad, we’ve gotta go,” Midnight said.

“What’s wrong,” Kan asked

“There’s villains attacking the USJ,” Ectoplasm explained. “Eraser and 13 are there, but apparently, the 1-A students were split up by a warping Quirk. All Might is on his way, but he’ll need backup. One of my clones is asking some third-year students to come keep an eye on this class.” Kan growled to himself and glanced at his class before walking to the door.

“Class rep?”

“Yes, sir?” Kendo answered.

“You and Shishida are in charge until the senior students arrive. Under no circumstance will any of you leave this room. Understand?”

“Y-Yes, sir.” Kan picked up the pace and left the room, but then turned back to his class

“Stay safe. I’ll be back soon,” he said before shutting the door. The class sat in silence for a moment before Awase spoke.

“Holy shit.” No one had to add anything. He had said exactly what they were thinking.
“1-A’s being attacked?” Pony asked for clarity. “Hope they’re OK.”

“They said All Might’s on his way,” Rin said. “I’m sure it’ll work out—”

“You don’t know that,” Kuroiro said. He wasn’t looking up from his clenched fists on his desk. “We don’t have any details… so… they could all be—”

“That’s enough, Kuroiro,” Shishida said. “This is no time to be saying that. We just have to be patient and have confidence in our teachers.”

“Agreed,” Kendo added.

“This is stupid!” Tetsutetsu suddenly yelled. “Do they just expect us to sit around while our schoolmates are attacked?

“That’s what we’re told to do,” Kendo said sternly.

“We have to go help them,” the iron boy said as he slammed his desk with his fist and stood up. Kendo rose from her seat to lock eyes with Tetsutetsu.

“We’re not leaving the classroom. Sit back down.” She stared down the iron boy, but he still left his desk and walked to the head of the room. Kendo went and blocked off his path, not breaking eye contact. “I said to sit—”

“I’m with Tetsutetsu,” Kuroiro said, now standing. “We have to go and help.”

“Both of you, just calm down,” Shishida said. He left his seat and grabbed Kuroiro’s shoulder. “You both heard Mr. Kan. We’re not to leave the classroom.” Kuroiro grabbed the hairy boy’s hand and squeezed, pulling away and looking back. Shishida could see pure rage in the boy’s eyes.

“I’m going,” he snarled.

“You too, Kuroiro?” Kendo asked in disbelief. “You’re usually more mature and levelheaded than this. What’s gotten into you?” Kuroiro shifted his eyes to Kendo as he joined Tetsutetsu.

“My cousin is there.”

“You’re cousin?”

“The Space Hero 13 – they’re the reason I want to be a hero,” Kuroiro explained. “They’re a rescue specialist, not a fighter. I have to help 13, or they could die.”

“If you’re that close to your cousin, you should have more faith in them,” Shishida said.

“Before this goes any further,” Kendo began, somewhat nervously, “does anyone else want to leave and go help 1-A?” She waited, hoping no one else would stand up. Eventually, Honenuki left his desk, his eyes hidden by his hair. “Honenuki?”

“I… I don’t want to see my schoolmates hurt if I can help it,” Honenuki shakily said. He seemed to be forcing himself to stand more than the others. After another moment, someone else rose up.

“You too… Shiozaki?” Kendo watched her vine-haired friend join the boys, still as composed as ever.

“Everyone sane is going crazy,” Shoda mumbled in his seat.
“Yeah, and Tetsutetsu too,” Reiko added.

“I cannot ignore someone in distress,” Shiozaki said. “I hope you can understand.”

“I don’t!” Kendo snapped. “I don’t understand why you can’t just leave this to the teachers! We’re not ready to fight villains yet.”

“Maybe not, but neither is 1-A,” Tetsutetsu said. “They’re being forced to fight before they’re ready, so we have to go back them up.”

“You don’t! There are pros going to help right now.” Kendo began to slowly back up, pressing against the door. “Do you think you can do something that they can’t? They’ll probably have resolved the situation by the time you get there—”

“So, we should do nothing?” Kuroiro asked.

“That’s right.” Kendo hoped that they would back down, but all four students seemed resolute. “I’m not letting you past me.

“It’s four against one,” Kuroiro pointed out.

“Are you going to fight me?” Kendo asked. No one answered. They didn’t want to.

“Actually, it’s four against two,” Shishida said, joining Kendo in front of the door

“Make that three.” Behind the group at the head of the class, Monoma appeared and walked through to the class reps’ side. “Everyone’s getting hot-headed and emotional, so it’s fallen on me to be logical.”

“I don’t want to do this,” Tetsutetsu said as he activated his Quirk.

“The don’t do this,” Kendo pleaded. The room fell silent once again as the all seven students stared each other down. No one wanted to fight, and no one wanted to see them fight.

That’s when the face-off was interrupted. The door slid open slowly, making Kendo jump forward in surprise. She whirled forward with her hands up, half-expecting a villain. Instead, it was a boy in a U.A. uniform with a mop of black hair and pointed ears.

“Ah, you must be the upperclassmen that Mr. Kan told us would be coming. I’m Jurota Shishida, the deputy representative. This is Itsuka Kendo, our main representative. As you can see, we were having a bit of a situation with our classmates, but with you here, I’m sure it can be resolved much more simply.”

The older boy grimaced as he looked over the students, who were all staring back at him. Slowly, the boy’s head lowered and he began holding onto the doorframe for support. “It’s not working. Mirio, Nejire… I’m picturing them naked, but it’s not working.”

“Did he say naked?” Tetsutetsu asked. “I’m not naked.”

“What… are you OK?” Kendo said.

“Everyone’s staring,” the boy grunted. “I know they’re judging me. I can’t do this.” He backed up and slowly closed the door.

“Well… that happened,” Monoma said. “Good timing, though. Now that everyone’s calmed down, we can resolve this logically.”
“Resolve what?” a voice said from the desks.

“Haven’t you been paying attention?” Monoma asked. “We’ve been… wait, who said that?” Everyone looked to the source of the voice on the left side of the class. It sounded like it had come from Yanagi’s desk, but it wasn’t her. Instead, they saw a face with beady black eyes and a big smile poking out from the wall.

“A… phasing Quirk, I’m guessing,” Yanagi said. The face turned to her and moved further into the room, revealing a whole head with blond hair.

“Yup! You too?” Yanagi nodded while the rest of the class just watched. “Cool! I’m Mirio Togata from class 3-B. I’m here to look after you all.” The boy’s head moved up the wall as he fully phased into the classroom. The only problem was that he was fully nude.

“Wooooooaaah!” Monoma said in shock.

“Please dress yourself!” Shishida yelled while turning away.

Tetsutetsu stared straight at the naked boy before gasping. “So that’s what that guy meant when he said ‘naked!’ Right?” He turned to Shiozaki for confirmation, who was hiding her blushing face behind the iron boy. Most of the quieter students simply turned their heads. Yui decided that she had made the right decision not to turn around. Rin scooted his desk further away from the naked upperclassmen. Setsuna covered her eyes, but then spread her fingers apart to see. Pony looked on confusedly before her eyes were covered by Tsuburaba.

“Huh? Oh!” Togata finally said. “I forgot my school uniform can’t phase with me. It’s been a while.” He stood still in the deafening silence of the classroom before turning to the students at the front. “Anyone wanna arm wrestle?”

“Put some clothes on!” Kendo yelled with her hands over her face.

“Oh yeah. Be right back.” Togata turned around to exit through the wall, forcing Yanagi to lean back to avoid being hit in the face.

“Today is weird,” Fukidashi said.

“That’s understating it,” Kaibara added.

“I-I saw it,” Yanagi slowly said with wide eyes. “It w-was right in fr-front of me.”

“I was too late,” Tsuburaba moaned. “Pony… she saw… it.”


“Not big deal,” Pony calmly said. “Who’s care if we saw his—”

“Ding dong!” a voice said as the door opened. It was a third upperclassman, a girl with long blue hair that swirled around at the end. “Hello! Class 1-B, yeah? What’s up? Why are you guys standing? Is it a game? Can I play?”

“Not a game,” Monoma quickly said. “Some of us wanted to go help at the USJ, so we we’re just having a disagreement.”

“Ooooooh, OK. That’s a bad idea, right, Amajiki? Amajiki? Hey, come on.” The girl reached into the hall and grabbed the dark-haired boy by the collar, dragging him inside. “I’m Nejire Hado, this is
Tamaki Amajiki, and you know Togata already.”

“A little too well, you might say,” Monoma added.

“OK, I’m dressed,” Togata announced as he walked inside. “What’s up?”

“Some of them want to go help at the USJ,” Nejire explained. “Bad idea, right?”

“Yeah,” Togata said, rubbing his head. “I’m glad we’ve got some hot-blooded first-years, but I doubt you’d get to do anything by the time you made it.”

“It feels wrong to do nothing, though,” Shiozaki said.

“I get what you mean,” Togata said. “It’s the four of you want to go, right? It’s good that you want to help, but you’re still just students. Right, Tamaki?”

“Right,” Amajiki said, now huddled in the corner and facing the wall. “Until you get a license, you’re just students. Your job is to learn while the adults fight.”

“You heard our seniors,” Shishida said. “So, would you please sit down?” After a few moments of hesitation, Honenuki and Shiozaki returned to their desk with their heads down. Tetsutetsu growled to himself, but still sat back down. Kuroiro looked the angriest, but realized he was outnumbered and sat.

“OK, we got some time to kill,” Togata said. “Uuuuuh, what’s something we can do. Nejire, do you know any games?” The senior girl ignored her classmate, focusing on the 1-B students.

“Hey, why’s your head shaped like that?” she asked Bondo. “Oh! Oh! You! Why do your eyebrows go around your eyes? Hey, you’ve got a speech bubble for a head! What’s that about?”

“…Hangman it is!”

The sun was already beginning to set by the time the U.A. barrier had gone down. The loud banging of its disarming drew everyone’s attention as the class had long since become silent. Despite their upperclassmen’s attempts to keep everyone distracted, the students of 1-B had a lot on their minds. They were worried about 1-A, worried about their teachers, and worried about each other after a fight nearly broke out. There was a tension in the air that they all felt.

“Looks like the situation’s been resolved,” Monoma said. “About time.”

“That’s good,” Kendo said. “We’ll finally know what’s happened.”

“Don’t get down in the dumps, guys!” Togata yelled. “I’m sure it all worked out fine, so stay positive!” The students tried to internally match their senior’s vigor, but none could manage it.

“Guys, I think Yanagi’s still traumatized,” Shoda said.

“Why’s that?” Togata asked.

“Oh, I don’t know,” Monoma began. “Maybe because her face was about an inch from your—”

“Cocky little pricks!” they heard from the hallway. It took a moment to recognize, but they realized it was Present Mic. “Can’t believe they thought they could beat us Pros.”

“Tone it down, Mic,” They heard Kan say. After a moment, the door slid open and Kan walked
inside. “Alright, you seniors are free to go.”

“’Kay,” Nejire said as she dragged Amajiki outside. Togata waved goodbye and followed his classmates.

“Alright, I’m sure you’re all curious about what’s happened,” Kan began. “…Why do some of you look traumatized? Especially you, Yanagi.”

“I saw it,” she mumbled to herself. “It was… right in my face.” Kan stood in a confused silence before noticing Shiozaki was crying and glancing at Pony.

“Shiozaki, why are you crying?”

“Pony’s innocence has been taken,” she half-sobbed. Kan looked to Pony, who seemed normal. What Pony wanted to say to her teacher was “the upperclassmen kept us safe and entertained, although Togata had a wardrobe malfunction.” This may have raised a question or two from Kan, but would be ultimately harmless. What she said instead was “Togata got naked and showed us good time. I felt safe with him.” After a moment, Kan walked out of class and cracked his knuckles.

“I’ll be right back.”

“Wait!” Kendo called out as she ran after him. “It’s a misunderstanding… kind of.”

“Where was I?” Kan said, now back with his students. “Oh, Right. A villain with a warping Quirk teleported a large group of thugs to the USJ during 1-A’s training and split the students up across the facility. Thankfully, most of the students held them off without serious injury.”

“So, they’re all OK?” Tetsutetsu asked.

“For the most part. One student was severely injured in his legs, but that was apparently due to his Quirk.”

“A Quirk that hurts its user that badly?” Shishida said. “I wonder how he made it into the hero course.

“What about the teachers?” Kuroiro asked.

“The 3 teachers that arrived before us – Eraserhead, 13, and All Might – sustained some serious injuries. Eraser had broken arms and a cracked skull, but it’s non-fatal and he’s expected to recover, albeit with some damage to his eyes. 13 has some lacerations on they’re back, but they’ll also recover. All Might took damage as well, but he should be back to normal by tomorrow.”

“I didn’t even think All Might could be hurt,” Setsuna said.

“That’s all the information I can give you. Class tomorrow is cancelled, so you’re rescue training has been delayed until Wednesday so the USJ can be repaired and its security system upgraded. That’s all – you’re dismissed.” Kan left the classroom in silence. Everyone’s packing up seemed slow and quiet compared to the usual.

I wonder how 1-A is doing, Kendo thought. Mr. Kan said they weren’t injured, but fighting villains like that must’ve been scary.

“Thinking about something?” Monoma asked.
“It’s nothing… Actually, I wanted to see if I could find someone from 1-A. They’re probably still here, so I wanted to, y’know…”

“Check up on them?”

“Yeah.”

“Might as well,” Monoma said while pulling Kendo towards the door. “You’d be moping on the train if you didn’t, so let’s go. I’ll tag along so you don’t feel weird.” Kendo softly smiled at her childhood friend as they left the room.

You’re worried too. Aren’t you, Monoma? Shutting the door behind her, Kendo heard footsteps approaching from behind. She turned and saw Shiozaki and Tetsutetsu coming up to her.

“Kendo,” Shiozaki began, “I… I’m sorry for how I acted. I was unreasonable and made trouble from you. Please forgive me.” She bent down into a low bow, which Tetsutetsu copied.

“I’m sorry too,” he added.

“It’s fine, you two,” Kendo said. “Today was really tense, so I don’t blame you. I’m sure I acted a little high-strung, but I was worried that you’d get in trouble, or worse, that you’d be caught up in the villain attack.”

“We won’t do it again!” Tetsutetsu suddenly yelled. “You were so manly to keep is in line.”

“We appreciate that you can kept us from acting rashly,” Shiozaki said.

“If you guys are done kissing her ass, I can hear some people down the hall,” Monoma said. “Kendo and I are gonna ask how they’re doing if you wanna come.”

“Totally!”

“I would love too.”

The four students walked down the hall to 1-A’s classroom, but found it deserted. “I guess they all left,” Monoma said.

“Not all of them. Two people’s desks in the front still have their stuff,” Kendo pointed out.

“Should we wait or try catching up with whoever just left?” Tetsutetsu asked. Before anyone could make a decision, another voice spoke up.

“Move.” The voice was gravelly and harsh, almost bratty. The 1-B students looked and saw a student with an unkempt uniform and wild blond hair behind them. They moved from the doorway, letting the student through.

“Excuse me, you’re in 1-A, right?” Kendo asked.

“What’s it to you?” the boy asked, not looking back as he grabbed his bag.

“We heard about the incident at the USJ,” she continued. The boy ignored her and walked outside the classroom.

“Yeah, it sounded wild,” Tetsutetsu added.

“It was nothing,” the boy said, finally looking at them. His face was twisted up with anger, looking
all too natural that way. "Those villains were all weaklings. I would’ve killed them all myself if the pros didn’t show up."

"Killed them?" Shiozaki softly gasped.

"What the hell are you extras asking for?" His voice was starting to rise and his fists were clenched.

"Calm down, man," Monoma said. "We just came by to see if you 1-A kids were OK." For some reason, this really set the boy off. He grabbed Monoma by his tie and pulled him close, while in his other hand, a series of small explosions came out of his palm.

"Those shitty villains were nothing! I could’ve killed them all myself! You shitbag extras better back the fuck off! I DON’T NEED YOUR GODDAMN PITY!" He threw Monoma forward onto the ground and walked off, still creating explosions in his hand. Tetsutetsu hardened his fists into iron and lurched forward, but Shiozaki held him back.

"Please, don’t start a fight, Tetsutetsu," she begged.

"That 1-A bastard just threatened my buddy," he growled. "Let me kick his ass."

"Monoma, are you alright?" Kendo asked. She bent down and looked over her friend before helping him up.

"I’m fine," he assured her. As he watched the 1-A boy’s back, he felt his blood begin to boil. "I’m just fine."

Chapter End Notes

There you go. USJ arc is done... or is it?
Even with a day off, Kendo couldn’t rest easy. She knew that Monoma was upset after what happened with the 1-A student, but he just wouldn’t show it. Whenever she would text him or when she dropped by his apartment, he would act normal. The news wasn’t making her any more relaxed as the media consistently piled praise on the “brave students of Class 1-A.” It’s not that Kendo didn’t agree with them – they’re obviously talented if they made it into U.A.’s hero course, and fighting against villains with barely a week’s preparation definitely qualified them as brave – but she knew her own class would have mixed feelings at best. Once Wednesday rolled around, she was anxious to see the state of her classmates, starting with Monoma.

It had been a quiet train ride that morning. Monoma would respond normally to Kendo’s attempts to start a conversation, but that was all he would say. For the most part, he just seemed low-energy. This changed once they reached their stop. After exiting the train, there was a giant screen playing the morning news across the street. The anchors were talking about 1-A again, noting that U.A.’s opening its doors for the first time since the incident. “We’ll be sure to keep an eye those strong first-years from Class 1-A,” the anchor said.

“Did you see, Kendo?” Monoma asked, wistfully staring ahead as they left the station.

“Yeah, looks like the news is still on the USJ incident,” Kendo said. “I’m not surprised, though.” She glanced over her shoulder and saw the news changing to another topic, but not before showing footage of the 1-A students.

“Not the news itself. The footage of 1-A. Notice anything about them?”

“They seemed… normal, I guess.”

“That’s the problem,” Monoma said. “The media says that 1-A are ‘so brave for fighting off those villains,’ but most of them seem fine. Chipper, even. If it were us at the USJ, we’d be in the spotlight.” Kendo thought over what he had said and quickly got angry.

“Monoma, we have no idea what it was really like there,” Kendo said. “You’re trying to make this about you when they’re still victims. Even if they came out physically fine, some of them may be traumatized.”

“You think that guy was traumatized?”

“That’s no excuse for saying something so selfish. You’re trying to make this about you when they’re still victims. Even if they came out physically fine, some of them may be, traumatized.”

“You think that guy was traumatized?”

“So, it is about him. Monoma, people were out to murder him. It’s not that crazy to think he was at least in a bad mood.”

“Kendo, you know how well I can read people,” Monoma said. Kendo didn’t respond, but she knew he was right. Monoma was cocky and boastful, but his boasts tended to be about his actual talents. He just had the habit of bragging about them, and far too often at that. “You could tell as well as I did that anger and violence are normal for him. If the media is calling him a ‘brave hero-in-training,’ then what are we?”

“We’re brave heroes-in-training too. This whole news cycle about 1-A doesn’t change the fact that
we’re in the hero course too.”

“I wonder who realizes that besides us?”

“If recognition is all you want, then you shouldn’t be envying your peers,” Kendo lectured as they entered the U.A. grounds. “You should be working hard to get noticed some other way.”

“Easy for you to say.” Monoma looked away from Kendo and walked ahead. “Miss Perfect.”

“Monoma, you know that I’m not perfect.”

“Doesn’t stop you from acting like it.”

“Did I so something? What’s this really about?”

“…No. I’m just… frustrated.”

“I know. I can understand why, but we should both just try and continue on with school like normal. At least, for now.”

“…You’re probably right.” Kendo knew this wasn’t the end of their discussion, but that was all she’d get from Monoma for now, so she relented and they continued to class. Once she arrived, she could tell the tense atmosphere from Monday was still present.

_I guess Monoma’s not the only one feeling down about all this._ Seeing that she still had time before class started and that she and Monoma were the last to arrive, she walked to the podium and cleared her throat. Most of the class were already quiet and at their seats, so Kendo had their attention already. “Hey, everyone,” she began. “I wanted to say something. I know you all have different thoughts on what’s happened with 1-A’s media attention of the past couple of days, but I think we should put all that behind us. We’re all awesome and people will notice. We’ve just gotta work hard and do our best. Thank you.” Kendo returned to her seat, but not confidently. Everyone’s anxiety wouldn’t leave with a single pep talk, but she was content with taking small steps if it meant returning to how things were before the USJ incident. Everyone had been growing close, but the argument she had with Kuroiro and the others had made them skittish to a degree, and comparing themselves to 1-A wasn’t helping.

As the morning bell rang, Kan entered the classroom. “Class is in session,” he said. “It’s good to see you all. I hope you spent your day off productively and you’re ready for today. Now that the USJ is rebuilt with an overhauled security system, we’ll be doing our Rescue Training for our afternoon classes. In order to ensure your safety, five teachers will be present – Myself, All Might, Snipe, Midnight, and 13. You’ll be learning how to rescue civilians from natural disasters and other incidents like fires or shipwrecks.” His announcement was met with silence and sullen looks, along with a few nervous glances around the room. “…Don’t look too excited,” he mumbled.

Morning classes had gone by quickly enough and Class 1-B had gone to lunch. To Kendo’s relief, everyone was sitting together and talking as they normally would. She was at the girl’s table, scrunched between Yui and Shiozaki.

“Are you feeling alright, Kendo?” Shiozaki asked. “You’re not eating much.”

“Hm? Oh, I’m fine.” Kendo gave a smile, but none of the girls were convinced.

“You’ve got something on your mind, girl,” Setsuna pointed out.
“It’s just… everything’s been weird since Monday. Everyone’s on edge and thinking about 1-A and the argument that happened. I know it could take time for things to go back to normal, but I wish it was normal right now.”

“I see what you’re saying,” Yanagi said. “I’ve noticed too.”

“Maybe we need something big to happen,” Setsuna suggested. “Like, something to bring us all together where we can all work together and play off our strengths.”

“That’s pretty vague, but I agree,” Kendo said.

“What could we d-do, though?” Komori asked

“Dunno. Maybe we’ll think of something over rescue training.”

Once afternoon classes had begun, Class 1-B was sent to change into their hero costumes and come outside. The USJ is an off-campus facility, so they took a 10-minute bus ride. Kendo had hoped people would be talking on the bus, but it was mostly silent. I gotta find a way to get everyone interacting, but my mind is blank. She looked over the students on the bench opposite her and noticed Setsuna fiddling with a hunk of metal strapped to her arm. “Hey, Setsuna, what’s that on your arm?”

“Oh, this?” She said, obviously glad that someone asked. “Check it out.” With a flick of her wrist, the gadget began to unfold down her arm. It folded over the top her forearm and hand with claws over her fingertips. “I got me some special claws to fight with. Best part is that they don’t mess with my Quirk.” By flicking her wrist up, the claw gauntlet popped up off her forearm, leaving it free to be popped off. “Pretty sick, yeah?”

“Yeah, they look pretty cool.”

“Hey, can I see those?” Kamakiri asked from further down the bench. Setsuna took off one of her gauntlets and handed it down. “It’s pretty well made. I may get something like this to help with my close combat. Who made it?”

“A senior girl in the Support Course,” Setsuna explained. “Her name’s Yuyu Haya, though you’d probably get a freshman to help you if you go now—“

“NOPE!” Awase suddenly yelped from his seat next to Kendo. “Stay far away, man.”

“What’s wrong, dude?” Kuroiro asked from the back of the bus. “Girl trouble?”

“More like stalker trouble,” he moaned.

“…Sucks to be you,” Kuroiro said with a laugh.

“Yeah, it does! I caught her sneaking her cyborg blueprints into my book bag during lunch.”

“Plus,” Honenuki interjected, “there was that time she took your measurements in the hall.”

“Wait, I don’t remember that!” Awase said worriedly. “Did that really happen?! Why didn’t you say something?!” Honenuki looked at Kuroiro and they both began to snicker.

“Sounds like a personal problem, man.” They both laughed loudly, which spread to the rest of the bus. Soon, almost everyone was laughing.
Looks like they’re back to normal, Kendo thought as she laughed. She leaned her head back onto the window and looked to her left. In the first pair of seats to the left of her bench, she saw Monoma sitting with Pony. He was staring out the window, seemingly lost in thought. I know there’s something else on his mind, but what?

Once the bus arrived at the USJ, the students disembarked. Outside of the building waiting for them were Snipe, 13, and Midnight. “Mr. Kan?” Kendo began. “Wasn’t All Might supposed to be here too?”

“He wasn’t feeling well,” Kan explained. “It’ll be fine with just us four. You’re up, 13.” As Kan moved to the back of the student group, 13 came up to them.

“Hello, everyone!” they said. “I’m glad to see you’re all here. Now that the USJ has been repaired, we’re finally ready for some rescue training. Come on inside.” As the class followed the pros inside, Kendo stayed in the back and looked at everyone’s faces. They didn’t seem as anxious as before, and Kuroiro especially looked excited. Small steps, she thought.

Inside of the massive dome-shaped building, 1-B found themselves comparing the facility to an amusement park. There was a few more domes inside, marking the fire and storm areas, a lake with a boat in the middle, a forest, a ravine, and even a damaged city area. “Holy crap!” Awase said. “It’s gigantic!

“I created this facility to prepare you aspiring heroes for any disaster scenario,” 13 said. “Landslide, shipwreck, fire, whatever you can think of. It’s the Unforeseen Simulation Joint, or USJ for short!”

“This is crazy!” Setsuna said. “I’m pumped!”

“Before we begin,” the space hero said, “I’d like to tell you about my own Quirk, Black Hole. Whatever I suck up through my fingers is disintegrated – even people. I can easily use this to kill, just like your powers can easily kill in some way. This is why Quirks are so heavily regulated and watched over. Never forget how deadly you can be if you’re not careful. But, on the opposite side, all of you have the potential to rescue someone with your powers. You’ve learned your strengths and weaknesses from your teachers so far, and now that you’ve used them in combat, you know how your Quirks can be used against villains. We will have no combat here, so focus your efforts on using your Quirks to help. That’s what being a hero is all about – helping others.” 13 gave a small bow as 1-B applauded his speech. “Thank you for listening. Now, let’s get rescuing!”
Anyone else notice that, just like in the manga, 13 debuted in chapter 13? No? Just me?
OK

“Right here will be our first exercise,” 13 announced. “The mountain zone!” Class 1-B had climbed up the small mountain area and were now staring down a ravine about 30 feet deep. Snipe had left the group to find a high vantage point to watch over the facility while Midnight stood guard at the entrance. “Firstly, three of you will play the victims and go to the bottom. One will be unconscious, one will have an injured leg, and one will be very worried. Once the victims are set, four of you will be rescuing them. You heroes will have these tools here at your disposal.” 13 gestured to a pulley, ropes, first-aid kit, and a sturdy stretcher on the ground. “For our victims, let’s have… you three.” They pointed over to a small group made up of Monoma, Shiozaki, and Kamakiri.

“Dibs on being asleep,” Kamakiri said quickly.

“Unconscious,” Monoma corrected. “In that case, I’ll take injured leg.”

“As for our heroes, how about you four?” 13 said, pointing to Kendo, Tsuburaba, Bondo, and Pony. “Sound good?”

“Yes, teacher,” Kendo said.

“Uh, question,” Kamakiri said. “How do we get down?”

“Normally, I’d have you just back walk down, but let’s try some lateral thinking,” 13 suggested. “Whose Quirks would work best for getting our victims down the ravine quickly?” As everyone thought over the question, Kuroiro raised his hand.

“I can suck them all into my body,” he said. “If someone else can lower me into the ravine, then you don’t have to do it 3 times in a row.”

“Great thinking, Shihai,” 13 said with a thumbs-up.

“In that case,” Shiozaki began, “shall I lower us in with my vines?”

“Works for me. Is that cool, 13?”

“Go right ahead,” 13 said. “Just be careful. If you need assistance, Vlad and I are right here.”

“Alright, hop in, you two,” Kuroiro instructed as his chest became a portal. Kamakiri and Monoma jumped through as Shiozaki detached a large bundle of vines that rooted into the ground. The vines wrapped around her and Kuroiro, slowly lowering them into the ravine. Once they reached the bottom, Kuroiro expelled the two boys from his body and the vines brought him back up.

“Alright, let’s get set,” Shiozaki said. Kamakiri laid on his back with his hands behind his head, looking a bit too comfortable. Monoma leaned against the cliff face and chose his right leg as the
injured one. “We’re ready!” Shiozaki called out as she sat down.

“Then call for help,” 13 explained. “You’re the worried one, right? Get the heroes attention.”

“Ah, right,” Shiozaki said. “Help! We’re down here! Please, save us!”

“She’s a good actor,” Kamakiri quipped.

“Cadavers don’t talk,” Monoma said.

“I’m unconscious, not dead.”

“Nah. I upgraded you to dead.”

“That’s not an upgrade,” Kamakiri complained.

“It is if you’ve been good,” Shiozaki said. “You’ll go to Heaven.”

“See? I upgraded you,” Monoma said. “Now stay still. I see some people coming.” Above the victims, Tsuburaba was steadily making air platforms going down. He and Kendo were jumping down on them, reaching the ravine floor quickly.

“Hey,” Tsuburaba greeted. “You guys need saving?

“Stop lookin’ at me with them big ol’ eyes,” Monoma said with a laugh. Tsuburaba didn’t seem amused. Pony clapped.

“How’d she even hear me?” Monoma wondered. While he was distracted, Kendo had come up to him and knelt down.

“You’re injured, right?” she asked. She went to touch his leg, but he pulled away with a sour look on his face. “You’re not supposed to move it.” Monoma relented and let Kendo examine his leg. “We’ll have to splint it before we bring you up. Tsuburaba, hand me the med kit.” Kendo took out supplies from the kit and began making a splint for Monoma’s leg, with him looking uncomfortable all the while. As she finished up, the stretcher was lowered down by Pony and Bondo.

“That was fast!” Tsuburaba shouted to his teammates.

“Bondo put it together super quick!” Pony yelled back as Kendo and Tsuburaba lowered Kamakiri onto the stretcher.

“You two are so good at this, I must say,” Shiozaki complimented.

“I’m mostly just following orders,” Tsuburaba said. “Kendo’s the real expert here.”

“I wouldn’t say that,” Kendo said. As the stretcher lowered back down, Kendo bent down and slid her arms under Monoma, picking him up in a bridal carry.

“Isn’t that cute,” Tsuburaba said. He laughed at his own joke for a moment before noticing his friend’s face. Monoma didn’t just look embarrassed, he looked mortified. Even more than that, Tsuburaba could see frustration and even vulnerability in his face. He was also facing away from Kendo. As she placed him on the stretcher, his expression changed back to normal, but Tsuburaba knew something was wrong. What was that about?

“Great job, everyone!” 13 cheered as the class left the mountain zone. “You all did so well at this
rescue training. Now, let’s move on to the shipwreck zone!” The students were led to the facility’s lake, where a lone boat was placed in the center. As 13 chose the heroes and victims, Tsuburaba looked across the crowd at Monoma. He seemed to be back to normal, but Tsuburaba wasn’t convinced.

“Hey, Kaibara?” he whispered.

“Hm?”

“Does Monoma seem… off to you?”

“In general?”

“No, just today.” Kaibara looked at the copycat and thought hard, but got nothing.

“Not sure.”

“I notice it,” they heard Pony say on their left. “Monoma’s been upset over something.”

“How can you tell?” Kaibara asked.

“Women’s institution.”

“Intuition,” Tsuburaba corrected. As the victims of the shipwreck exercise – Yui, Kendo, and Fukidashi – headed to the boat, Tsuburaba saw Monoma back up from the crowd and take a seat on the edge of a nearby fountain. The oval-eyed boy grabbed Pony and Kaibara, deciding this was a good time to confront his friend. “Hey, Monoma,” he greeted. “Mind if we sit?”

“Go ahead,” Monoma said casually.

“What’s upsetting you?” Pony bluntly asked.

_Right to the point, I guess_, Tsuburaba thought. _Having someone as blunt as Pony can be a blessing and a curse._

“What’re you talking about? I’m fine.” Tsuburaba and Kaibara sat down on Monoma’s left, while Pony sat on his right.

“During the first landslide exercise, I noticed you were pretty uncomfortable when Kendo picked you up. It was way past embarrassment.”

“We don’t want to pry,” Kaibara said, “but is there something going on between you and Kendo? I know you two grew up together. Did something happen?”

“Childhood friends romance,” Pony whispered to herself. Monoma stayed quiet for a while, but then sighed and leaned forward, leaning his head into his hand.

“Pony, have I told you that Japanese isn’t my first language either?”

“Really?” she said with a gasp. “But you’re super better than me at it.”

“My father is Japanese, but I was born in Belgium where my mother is from. We moved to Japan when I was six, so I’ve had a lot of practice since then.”

“I didn’t realize you weren’t fully Japanese,” Tsuburaba said. “Sorry, go on.”
“When we first moved, I wasn’t that great with the language, so that made socializing… difficult. My parents also dressed me like a nerd, so that didn’t help much either. What I’m getting at is that I was a pretty easy target for bullies. I guess this all started at the playground near my apartment building…”

"C’mon, fight back!” the bully yelled. “Use your Quirk or something.” Monoma knew he couldn’t fight all three of them, and his parents had told him that using Quirks openly was against the law. As he held his scraped arm, his frustration kept building until he began to cry. “Hey look! The little baby’s crying!” The three boys laughed at him, which only made Monoma feel worse. He rubbed his eyes and almost ran off, but someone spoke up before he could.

Leave him alone!” It was a girl’s voice. Rubbing his eyes, Monoma looked and saw a girl about his age standing up to the bullies. She had ginger-colored hair pulled into a ponytail by a blue bow that matched her blue dress.

“Hey, it’s that girl again,” one of the boy’s said. He and the other kid immediately bolted, while the leader stayed and tried looking intimidating.

“Buzz off!” he yelled. The girl took a few steps towards the bully, making him run after his friends.

“Are you OK?” the girl asked. Monoma took a while to answer, having to translate everything in his head.

“I’m fine, thank you.” He turned around to head home, but the girl grabbed his arm.

“You’re hurt. Let me take you to my mom. She can fix you up.” She didn’t bother waiting for a response, before dragging the boy off with her. “My name’s Kendo. What’s yours?”

“I knew it,” Pony mumbled to herself.

“So, Kendo would protect you from bullies,” Kaibara said. “Sounds like her.”

“She’d do it whenever and wherever she saw someone being picked on,” Monoma continued. “I just happened to need help a lot. Usually, she’d intimidate them into leaving, but sometimes, a fight would break out. I got used to patching her up if that happened. Eventually, the bullying stopped, but by then, me and Kendo were almost inseparable.”

“So, what happened?” Tsuburaba asked. “Why are things weird now?” Monoma sighed again and tilted his head down.

“I think I had my realization back in third grade. Kendo got in a big fight on my behalf and, of course, I needed to treat her injuries.”

“You didn’t have to do that,” Monoma said as he cleaned off the cut on Kendo’s face. “Why do you always do this?”

“I didn’t like the way they were treating you,” Kendo said with her arms folded and cheeks puffed. “Your mom’s gonna be mad.”
“I think she’s used to it.” Monoma stuck a bandage on her cheek and moved on to her scraped knee. “She’ll probably be madder that I ruined my new skirt. I don’t mind, though. Heroes always have damaged costumes after a big fight.”

“Heroes?”

“Yeah. When I grow up, I’m gonna be a hero,” she said with a big smile. “I wanna protect everyone like how I protect you!”

“That’s when it hit me,” Monoma said. “To Kendo, I’m someone who can’t protect himself. Someone who always needs a hero. She coddles me because she thinks I’m weak and incompetent.”

“It doesn’t seem that way to me,” Tsuburaba said. “She’s like that with everyone in class—”

“No. She looks out for everyone, but she knows you can all take care of yourselves when push comes to shove. If there was a disaster like the USJ, Kendo’s mind would immediately go to ‘protect the weak,’ and I’m who comes to her mind.”

“I don’t think you’re weak,” Pony said. “You’re super smart and strong and you’ve got a cool Quirk too. You’ll be good hero, Monoma.”

“…Thanks, Pony.” Monoma cracked a smile and patted Pony on the shoulder. “I needed that.”

“You guys have known each other for a long-ass time,” Tsuburaba began, “so I don’t think I can really comment. I just can’t see the whole picture of your relationship. I say you confront Kendo about this. It may get ugly, but the longer you put it off, the uglier it’ll be.”

“I agree,” Kaibara added.

“Maybe your right,” Monoma said. He looked up and saw the training was about to restart. “C’mon, let’s go watch the training.”

“’Kay!” Pony said as she hopped off the fountain.

“Never change, Pony,” Monoma mumbled to himself.

“Alright, it’s time for our last exercise,” 13 announced as they entered the ruined city area. “Four of you will be the heroes and all the rest will be victims – half of which have to remain silent. The victims will have 10 minutes to spread out and hide. Our four heroes will be… you guys.” The 16 victim students ran off into the buildings, leaving behind the hero team of Kuroiro, Yui, Tetsutetsu, and Monoma.

“I’ll let Midnight and Snipe know that we’re almost done,” Kan said.

“Sounds good,” 13 said. “…10 minutes are up. Get going, heroes.”

“We should split up,” Kuroiro suggested. “We’ll cover more ground that way.”

“Good idea!” Tetsutetsu said. “Wanna go together, buddy?”
“I’ll go with Kuroiro for now,” Monoma said. “Kodai has a better view of things with her size-changing Quirk, so you’d be better off with her.”

“Great Idea! Let’s go, Kodai!” the iron boy yelled as he ran off. Yui followed slowly as Kuroiro and Monoma walked off the other way.

“What’s taking those guys so long,” Honenuki thought as he tossed some rocks against a wall. He was in the half-collapsed second floor of a building – not hidden, but not in plain view. “I’m gonna die of boredom.”

“Funny. I’ve never been called ‘boredom’ before.” Honenuki instinctively jumped forward after hearing the deep, intimidating voice behind him. He turned around and took a fighting stance once he landed.

“Who’s there?”

“No one special,” the voice said. From out of the darkness, a giant, musclebound figure came forward. He wore black combat clothing with spiked shoulders and a gas mask with spikes along the sides. “Don’t bother fighting back. You cannot defeat me alone, boy.”

Chapter End Notes

That's right. This is an adaptation of the Rescue Training OVA, but with 1-B instead. I figured it'd be a good alternative to the real USJ that wouldn't mess with the canon. If you haven't seen it, you're not really missing out, and it's also hard as shit to find, but I hope my version can improve upon it.

PS: Before anyone asks, I'm not gonna do the Training of the Dead OVA. I don't like that OVA or the characters they introduce.

PPS: If you haven't noticed, I added Honenuki X Kuroiro to the relationship tags

PPPS: Tsuburaba openly loves disco music in this fic. Now that I've said it, it must be canon!

PPPPS: I love you all.
Call to Action

Chapter Notes

Once the fight starts, you better be playing You Say Run on a loop.

“This’ll be way easier when we find Yanagi and I can copy her Quirk,” Monoma said to himself as he paced around the street. “Almost done in there, Kuroiro?”

“Yeah, no thanks to you,” Kuroiro said as he walked out from the basement of a destroyed building.

“Hey, I spotted her,” Monoma said defensively. “I’m the eyes, you’re the carrier.” Kuroiro sighed at the copycat and opened his chest portal, allowing Kendo to tumble out onto the ground.

“Man, it’s dark in there,” Kendo said as she stood up. “Ever think about some interior decorating?”

“It’s a reflection of my soul,” Kuroiro grunted while swishing his cape. “It’s an ebony void of nothingness that consumes all—”

“Nerd,” Monoma and Kendo said together.

“…Let’s just drop her off and continue the search.”

At that moment, the three students felt the earth shake beneath their feet. A deafening crash came from further inside the city as they watched an entire building implode into itself. “What the hell?!” Kendo yelled. “Come on! We’ve got to see what happened!” They ran down the street and turned the corner, now facing the totaled building. Running toward them was Tetsutetsu, Shiozaki, and Shishida, who was carrying Shoda and Yui on his back.

“YOU GUYS! HOLY SHIT!” Tetsutetsu yelled as he reached the others. “THAT BUILDING JUST CAME DOWN!”

“WE NOTICED!” Monoma yelled back. “How, though?”

“C-Could it be a villain?” Shoda wondered as he and Yui climbed off Shishida.

“No way,” Kendo shakily said. “There was a full sweep of the facility after the attack. There’s a brand-new security system. It’s impossible…” The students’ hearts sank when they saw a titanic figure clothed in black emerging from the dust cloud. “No… way,” Kendo said, barely above a whisper.

“Look in his hand,” Shiozaki said. Gripped in the villain’s right fist was an unconscious Honenuki.

“Where are the teachers?” Shoda asked. “Where’s Snipe or Mr. Kan?”

“I can answer that,” they heard behind them. Yanagi was floating down and had lost her stoic expression, now looking fearful. “After the building came down, I got a bird’s eye view. The teachers… they’ve already been defeated.”

“You’re kidding,” Monoma said. “What the hell do we do now?”
“I’m gonna go save our friend,” Tetsutetsu said as he turned his skin to metal. “Shiozaki, Kuroiro, I know you’re with me.”

“Yes.”

“You bet your ass I am.”

“Kendo, Shishida… are you gonna stop us again?” Tetsutetsu looked to the class reps, who were lining up with him.

“You think I’d want to stop you now?” Shishida asked as he rolled his shoulders.

“You’re right, Tetsutetsu.” Kendo said while tightening her mask. “We can’t run. It’s our fight this time.”

“If Kendo’s going to fight, then I will too,” Yui declared.

“Looks like we have no choice,” Yanagi said.

“This is gonna suck,” Shoda moaned as he cracked his knuckles.

“Guys, we should think about this before we rush in,” Monoma said. “That guy destroyed a building.” The class reps took off in a sprint, followed by their classmates. “He defeated four pros,” the copycat said as he ran with them. He could tell instantly that convincing them not to fight yet was pointless, so he begrudgingly started copying as many Quirks as he could. “Son of a bitch.”

They could hear the villain laugh to himself as he stopped walking, staring them down in the middle of the street. “You children think you can defeat me? Then… show me what you can do!”

Shishida made the first move, leaping ahead of the group. He jumped at a dented light pole and swung on it, hurling himself towards the villain’s left side. “Spinning Cannonball!”

“Useless!” the villain jeered. He raised his free arm and blocked the attack with ease. “And while I look away, you’ll try and rescue your classmate. Isn’t that right.” He swung his arm, sending Shishida flying backwards into a building, and turned to see a cluster of vines rushing towards his hostage. The villain swerved his hostage away and grabbed the vines with his left hand, yanking them back. Shiozaki went flying forwards with a yelp, but she detached them quickly and crashed further down the street.

The villain cackled to himself as Yui approached him while growing in size. She had reached her upper limit of 20 feet when she attacked, bringing her fist down on the villain. Despite the amazing size and strength of the attack, it was blocked once again. “Useless, Useless!” Running up to the villain was Kendo who had enlarged her fist. She threw a giant-sized punch into his stomach, but it had little effect. The villain brought his knee up into Kendo’s stomach, sending her flying into Yui’s chin. This staggered the giant girl, letting the villain use his arm again. He threw a lightning-quick punch, using the air pressure to knock Yui and Kendo down the street. Yui was sent into a building, crushing through the wall, but she still reached up and caught Kendo. “Is that all, children?” the villain asked.

“Not even close!” Tetsutetsu yelled as he and Shoda jumped towards the villain with their arms cocked. He raised his arm to block, but felt a metallic fist dig into his lower back.

“Watch yourself next time,” he heard Monoma say. “Remember, you’re outnumbered.” Tetsutetsu slammed his fist across the villain’s cheek while Shoda struck his chest. The villain stumbled, but recovered quickly and craned his neck back to see Monoma. “Bye now,” he said as he phased into
the ground with Yanagi’s Quirk.

“Cocky little…” The villain swung his arm out at the retreating Tetsutetsu and Shoda, sending both boys flying with the attack’s air pressure.

“Holy crap, we’re gonna die!” Shoda yelled as his Quirk activated and a clump of hair spiked up. As the two boys flew back, they felt vines wrap around their waist and slow them down.

“Hey, it’s Shiozaki!” Tetsutetsu gratefully exclaimed as he and Shoda landed. They could see their vine-haired classmate not far away. “Thanks for the catch!”

“Of course,” she said. “I don’t think I can get close enough to grab Honenuki, nor could I pry him from that villain if I did—”

“WAIT!” Tetsutetsu suddenly yelled. “I have an idea!”

Kendo left Yui’s side and rushed at the villain again, this time with both hands enlarged. “Let go of my friend, you bastard!” she yelled. Kendo threw her hands forward for a double palm strike, but the villain held back the attack with his left arm.

“You all keep throwing yourselves at me,” the villain said. “You have no hope of defeating me like that.”

“Defeating you isn’t my priority.” At that moment, the villain felt a strong pull on his right arm. Honenuki was in the pull of Kuroiro’s suction.

“Let him go!” Kuroiro yelled. The villain grunted and threw his left arm back, knocking Kendo to the ground. She fell hard on her back and clenched her eyes from the impact. When she opened them again, the villain was throwing a punch towards her. The moment before it landed, however, Kendo was out of harm’s way and the punch hit the ground. After a moment of confusion, she realized she was on Pony’s back.

“Pony!” Kendo happily greeted.

“We came at good time, it looks like,” the blonde girl said as they galloped away.

“We?” Kendo asked. She looked back to the villain and saw the Kaibara jumping towards the villain from behind, landing a spinning punch to the back of his head. He still had an iron grip on Honenuki, but his right arm was now being clamped by Kamakiri’s mandibles.

“Cavalry’s here,” Pony said as Kendo dismounted.

“Good, now we can really start the fight,” Kendo said.

“If you’re heading back into the fray,” she heard Shiozaki say behind her, “then allow me to assist you.” Kendo turned around to see that her friend had wrapped her vines around Tetsutetsu and Shoda’s waist. “Once you land a hit, I’ll pull you out of harm’s way.”

“Alright, then hook me up.” As the vine tied around Kendo, she rushed to towards the villain with Tetsutetsu and Shoda by her side. Another vine was snaking its way towards Kaibara, who joined up with his attacking classmates.

“You think pitiful tricks like that will be enough?!” the villain yelled, still struggling against Kuroiro’s suction and Kamakiri’s grip. “That won’t be— UGH!” He was cut off by an orange ball of hair crashing into his left shoulder.
“SPINNING CANNONBALL!”

“That… won’t be… GRRK!” He pitched forward when a spinning punch suddenly rammed into his stomach. He looked and saw Monoma smirking at him before he phased back into the ground.

“LET HIM HAVE IT!” Kendo yelled. Her giant fist plowed into the villain’s head, while the iron fist and spinning arm went up into his chest and an enhanced palm strike slammed his stomach. The villain was nearly knocked off his feet, but at the last second, he stabilized.

“Little bastards think you’re tough?” he panted as he ground his foot into the pavement. The four attacking students were being reeled back by Shiozaki’s vines, along with Shishida, who leapt backwards by their side. “Let me show you true power!” He swept his free arm in front of him, creating a wall of air pressure that swept towards them, but it was blocked off by a barricade of Solid Air walls. “Crap. More of them have arrived.” He looked off to the side and saw Tsuburaba riding Pony and creating a series of barriers around him.

“Sorry to keep you waiting,” he said to his classmates.

“T ook you long enough,” Monoma said as he floated at his side. “Good job, Pony. You’re doing great, sweetie.”

“A useless tactic,” the villain said as he cocked his fist. “With a swing of my arm, I’ll destroy them all!”

“BOOOOOM!” The villain’s attack was halted by an explosion going off on his back. He dropped to one knee, but only for a second, and looked back to see Fukidashi. “You seem to think that I’d let you do something like that. Now that I’ve arrived, I won’t let you win. B)”

“Puny, insignificant— ARRG!” The villain suddenly felt a sharp pain in his left side. Looking down, he saw Rin had sunken in his scaly, draconic fingers deep into his ribs. He pulled them out again, only to launch an assault of sharp jabs.

“ATATATATATATATA!” the dragon boy yelled as he attacked. The villain swung his arm towards the martial artist, but he ducked at the last second. As the villain’s arm slowed to a stop, Setsuna dove out from behind Rin and grabbed it, scratching at it with her mechanical claws.

“Get off of me!” the villain yelled as he swung his arm around. Setsuna held on until the swinging stopped as Rin continued his attacks.

“This arm is causing all sorts of problems for my buddies,” Setsuna said as she scratched, ripping up the sleeve and drawing blood from the villain’s arm. “Let’s put it out of commission, Rin!” She jumped back from the arm as Rin grabbed the villain’s wrist. He shot his free palm up into the villain’s elbow, making him groan in pain.

“Fukidashi, hit him again!” Rin called out as he jumped back.

“BOOM!” A second explosion came, this time on the villain’s arm. “Now you, Komori!” The mushroom girl dove out from hiding and grabbed onto the villain’s arm, spreading her spores all over. The villain swung his arm, now weaker from the damage, and Komori flew off, but Yanagi phased out from the ground and caught her. In an instant, a layer of soft mushrooms covered the villain’s damage arm.

“You think this will stop me?!” the villain yelled. “I’ll still kill you all!” He turned away from his attackers, now focused on the two boys keeping his right arm occupied – Kuroiro and Kamakiri. “Starting with you two—”
“AWASE, MONOMA, NOW!” Kamakiri called out. The villain looked behind him and saw the copycat and welder crouched behind his legs. They both grabbed his boots, fusing the bottoms to the concrete.

“Why you little — huh?” The villain’s attention went to his right shoulder as he felt something heavy flowing onto it. He looked and saw Bondo behind him, shooting a stream of glue that hardened almost immediately, locking the villain’s right arm in place. “My feet are stuck to the ground… my left arm is damaged and has a cushioning layer of mushrooms on it… my right arm has been stuck in one position… but I won’t stop until you kids are dead by my hand! AND I’LL BEGIN WITH MY HOSTAGE!”

“EVERYONE, STOP HIM NOW!” Kendo called out. In an instant, the entire class swarmed the villain. He felt each of his fingers being individually pried away from Honenuki – Kendo on his thumb, Tetsutetsu on his pointer finger, Awase on his middle finger, Kaibara on his ring finger, and Shishida on his pinkie. Kuroiro had run up to Honenuki and placed his hand portals on the boy, giving him an air-tight grip. He was pulling with all his might, backed up by Shoda, Komori, and Fukidashi. Kamakiri’s mandibles clamped down even harder, breaking the villain’s skin and drawing blood. Bondo had wrapped his gigantic arms around the villain’s right elbow and squeezed tight, while Yanagi and Monoma were floating behind the villain and punching the back of his head. Shiozaki had wrapped her vines around Honenuki, trying to pull him free. Yui ran to the villain’s left arm and grew in size, using her giant strength to keep the arm straight. Tsuburaba created an air barrier that went around his shoulder and elbow, making sure the left arm was immobile. Pony was repeatedly ramming her horns into the villain’s stomach as Rin jabbed into his ribs and Setsuna clawed his back. “WE’RE ALMOST THERE!” Kendo yelled. “KEEP GOING EVERYONE!”

“JUST LET GO ALREADY!” Kuroiro shouted in frustration. The attacks from all 19 students were taking their toll on the villain and he began to falter. His knees locked and his breath was erratic.

“I… won’t… looooose!” he roared as the attacks kept coming. “All of you… WILL DIIIIIE!” That’s when his grip finally loosened. His fingers were pulled open and Honenuki popped out from his hand into the waiting arms of his friends.

“We… we got him!” Kuroiro yelled joyously.

“Everybody back!” Kendo ordered. The class all retreated from the villain, grouping up down the street. The villain raised his head and saw 1-B staring him down. They may have been injured and short of breath, but in that moment, he was at their mercy. “It’s over,” Kendo told him. “You’ve lost.”

“You really think that?” the villain asked. “It’s far from over.” With a single flex of his muscles, the Solid Air barrier covering his left arm broke. He clenched his right fist and began to curl his arm, cracking and breaking apart the hardened glue over his shoulder. With his right arm freed, he quickly scraped the mushrooms off his left one.

“You’re kidding me,” Setsuna said.

“Is he… Is he even weakened?” Fukidashi asked.

“I’ll end this now,” the villain said as he raised his fists over his head, “with my full strength.”

“RETREEEEEEAAAT!” Shishida ordered. Most of the class turned and began running for their lives. Tsuburaba quickly began creating a one last air barrier.
“Tsuburaba, come on!” Kaibara yelled as he grabbed the boy’s jacket and pulled him away. Kuroiro opened his chest portal and shoved Honenuki inside before sucking in Shoda, Bondo, Rin, and Shishida. Tetsutetsu saw that Shiozaki had fallen in the chaos, so he transformed his back into metal and dove on top of her. Yui immediately grew to full size and surrounded Kendo, Monoma, and Pony with her body.

“WAIT! YUI, STOP!” Kendo yelled with teary eyes as Yui gave her a small smile.

“I’ll protect you… Kendo.” Kendo had no time to argue. At that moment, the villain slammed the ground with his fists, creating a shockwave powerful enough to obliterate the ground beneath him and send Class 1-B flying away.

“Now, it’s over.”
What... what just... happened? Kendo’s mind was foggy and half-conscious. We were... fighting... As her senses returned, she felt the cracked concrete on her back and creaking pain in her bones. Fighting... a villain... and he... Her eyes shot open and she sat up, ignoring her pain. “Yui?” she called out. “...Anyone?”

“I thought you were out for the count,” she heard Monoma say behind her. Kendo turned and gasped, seeing a fallen Yui on Monoma’s lap. “Don’t worry, she’s just unconscious.”

“She... she got hurt protecting us,” Kendo said with a cracking voice. “I thought we won—”

“This isn’t the time for tears,” Monoma said. “We have to regroup with anyone else that’s still up.”

“You’re right,” Kendo said. She looked around and realized they were near the edge of an enormous crater. In the center was the villain, who was sitting and looking over his injuries.

“We should go check now while he’s preoccupied,” Monoma said. “I sent Pony ahead.” Kendo took Yui in her arms as she and Monoma quietly retreated from the crater. Just over the rubble of an overturned building, they found a small grouping of conscious students — Shoda, Bondo, Shishida, Rin, and Honenuki – who all looked relatively uninjured.

“Finally awake, Honenuki?” Monoma asked.

“Awake and alive... thanks to him.” Honenuki motioned behind him to a passed-out Kuroiro leaning on some rubble. “Apparently, any damage Kuroiro takes doesn’t hit people inside of his void, but if he falls unconscious, everything’s expelled.”

“It was his quick thinking that saved us,” Shishida said as Kendo laid Yui down near Kuroiro.

“If you wanna complement someone, how ’bout throwing some my way?” Everyone turned to see Tsuburaba approaching them while leaning on Kaibara. “Those air walls I made absorbed a lot of the initial force, y’know? Especially that last one I made.”

“You’re right. Good thinking,” Shoda said.

“We were blown further back with the others,” Kaibara said. “We all survived, but us two were the only conscious ones.”

“Everyone else is down?” Bondo asked.

“Does that mean we 10 are the only ones left to fight that guy?” Rin asked. Just then, some moving debris caught everyone’s attention. They saw a cluster of vines pushing away fallen wreckage and they rushed to the source. There, they saw Shiozaki cradling a bloodied, battered Tetsutetsu in her arms.

“You reckless fool,” she scolded, barely holding back her tears. “Why didn’t you ignore me and run?”

“Shiozaki,” Monoma began, “we both know he’s not that type of guy.” The vine-haired girl bit her
lip and held the fallen iron boy closer.

“Just once… you should think of yourself,” she whispered.

“Look who’s talking…” Shiozaki gasped when she heard Tetsutetsu mumbling something. His hand pulled hers away and he began to sit up. “That whole fight, you only thought of others.” His voice was raspy and pained, but everyone could hear his words. “You were the first to try grabbing Honenuki… You made sure whoever was attacking could get away… You never even fight directly… because the thought of hurting even a villain sickens you.” Tetsutetsu leaned forward into a crouch, nearly falling forward. After a moment, he stood up and offered his hand to Shiozaki. “I’ll protect the person… who protects everyone else… until I’m strong enough to do it. Deal?” Shiozaki wiped her tears and took the hand, rising to her feet.

“Deal,” she said with a small smile.

“So… what’s the plan?” Tetsutetsu asked as he turned to Kendo and Monoma. “Fight or run?”

“Let’s brainstorm while we still have time,” Monoma said. He looked over his remaining classmates, thinking about each of their Quirks. “I’m sure there’s something here. I just have to think.” The copycat ran his hand through his hair as he wracked his brain. Come on and think, dumbass, he told himself. Thinking with other people’s Quirks in mind is your specialty.

“I have an idea,” Kendo said, somewhat quietly. She was looking down at her feet, not at her classmates. “There’s 11 of you and 8 unconscious people. If some of you double up on carrying people, you could even grab the teachers too… I’ll hold off that villain while you all escape.” Everyone was stunned silent by Kendo’s plan, but they could tell she was absolutely serious.

“That’s not gonna happen,” Monoma said. “We’re not leaving you.”

“This is the only way everyone can escape alive—”

“It’s not everyone if you stay behind to die!” Monoma suddenly yelled. He grabbed Kendo’s shoulders and forced her to look in his eyes. “You’re not going out there alone, and I’m not leaving you behind. I’ve had enough of you getting hurt for my sake while I sit back and watch. If we’re dying today, we go together!”

“Please, don’t do this,” Kendo said as she began choking up. “If nothing’s done, then all of us…”

Monoma hung his head and let his feelings of powerlessness wash over him. How could this all happen? he wondered. It was just rescue training, but now… we keep sinking deeper into this horrible situation. What can we… wait… sinking.

“Uh, guys?” Honenuki began. “I, uh—”

“I’ve got it!” Monoma suddenly said. “Honenuki, can you soften the ground up to the middle of that crater from its edge?”

“Probably, but—”

“Then I think we can win.” Those words stirred some hope in Monoma’s classmates and they listened intently.

“Whatever it is, I’m in,” Tetsutetsu said as he hardened his fists.

“I figured, you sturdy bastard,” Monoma said as his confident smirk slowly returned. “We all need
to work together for this…”

It looks like they’re not coming back, the villain thought to himself. Should I go to them? Or… His train of thought was stopped when he noticed the ground changing. From the rubble where class 1-B had landed, the concrete was softening into quicksand in a straight line towards him. “Trying to trap me so that they can escape, eh? A fair plan, but now that I see it coming, I can avoid it.” He watched as the softened ground made it half-way through the crater, but he then felt himself sinking. “What?” He looked down and saw the ground had softened under his feet. “But it’s not even close to me! How could—” The villain looked behind himself and saw another trail of softened ground had come up behind him. He traced its path back to Honenuki, who retreated from his position at the opposite edge of the crater. The ground hardened, but the villain had already sunk up the bottoms of his knees. “If he was behind me, then the ground I was watching came from…”

“I can see why Honenuki was recommended,” Monoma said as he returned the ground to normal. “This Quirk is pretty damn useful.” He turned to see Shoda, who’s hair was standing up with two spikes, was climbing onto Pony. “Your turn, you two.”

“Let’s rock!” Pony yelled. She tore off in a high-speed gallop towards the villain.

“Don’t think you’ve won just because my legs are stuck,” the villain said. He threw a massive right hook, sending a blast of air pressure towards the duo, but with all the damage he had taken, it came out much slower. Pony had no trouble dodging as she barreled towards him.

“That’s my girl!” Monoma cheered as Tsuburaba, Bondo, and Shiozaki stepped forward. “Now, you guys.”

“Got it,” Tsuburaba said. He took a deep breath and started blowing towards the ground as he ran. His Solid Air started making a platform under his feet that steadily rose up. Shiozaki and Bondo were right behind, keeping their eyes on Pony and Shoda as they approached the villain.

“Looks like the air platform is a success,” Kendo noted as her fist grew.

“Let’s move out!” Monoma yelled. He sprinted down the crater, spinning his arm like Kaibara, who ran on his left. To Kaibara’s left was Shishida, who ran on all fours like an animal, and Rin, who’s entire body had scaled over. On Monoma’s right was Kendo and Tetsutetsu.

“What’re our odds?” Kendo asked.

“With this group… we can’t lose!” Monoma yelled. Kendo took in his excited smile and newfound vigor, thinking back to their childhood together.

Looks like you really belong here, she thought. You and me both… we’ve found our place with these people. That’s when a glint of light caught Kendo’s eye. She saw Monoma’s arm was still spinning using Kaibara’s Quirk, but was also becoming metallic. Am I seeing things?

“Ready, Shoda?” Pony asked.

“Ready!” As the pair reached the villain, he punched down towards them. Pony sidestepped the attack and bucked Shoda off her back. The villain’s right arm was Shoda’s first target as he unloaded a kinetic palm strike into it. The villain groaned in pain as Shoda jumped up, landing another hit on his left arm.
“Good hits!” Pony said she caught Shida on her back. “Leaving it to you guys!” Pony yelled while looking up. The villain looked above himself and saw Tsuburaba, Shiozaki, and Bondo standing on an air platform. Shiozaki’s vines raced down and encircled the villain, holding his injured arms to his sides. Bondo’s glue then rained down on him, hardening into a glue cast that kept his arms pinned.

“Crap,” the villain said. “Those kids got me.” He watched helplessly as the remaining six students pounced at him. Monoma drove his spinning metallic punch into his head while Kaibara and Kendo attacked his chest. Rin and Tetsutetsu slammed the villain’s ribs while Shishida shoulder-checked his stomach. “Well… played.” As he fell backwards, Bondo sprayed one last layer of glue at the ground, making sure that once the villain went down, he’d stay down. Monoma landed in a tumble after his attack. He picked himself back up quickly and looked back, seeing the villain was completely immobilized.

“WOOOO!” Tetsutetsu yelled. “WOOOOO! THAT’S CALLED TEAMWOOOOORK! IT MAKES THE DREAM WOOOOORK!” Monoma couldn’t help but laugh at his friend’s goofy celebration.

“Good job everyone,” Tsuburaba said as he hopped off his air platform. “Y’know, let’s just not come in tomorrow, yeah? Call in sick or something?”

“I second that,” Rin said.

“We should go and check on the others now,” Shiozaki said.

“Shouldn’t we unmask him first?” Shida suggested. “That’s what people do on TV when they catch a masked criminal.”

“Oh, that’s okay,” the villain said. “You don’t have to.”

“Well, that’s not suspicious,” Kendo sarcastically said. “Rin, help me pull it off.”

“Wait, hold on!” the villain said as the two students grabbed the cracked gas mask. “I don’t—I—I—” As they pulled it off, a pair of familiar blonde hair bangs perked up. “I AM HERE!”

“All Might!?” the students yelled in unison.

“HA HA HA! THAT’S RIGHT! IT WAS ME THE WHOLE TIME! I wanted to give you some experience like 1-A had in fighting villains, so I posed as one! I hope I didn’t hurt you all too bad. I made sure to hold back a little.”

“So… we weren’t in any mortal peril?” Shiozaki asked.

“That’s right,” the students heard behind them. Walking up was Kan, along with Snipe, Midnight, and 13. “All Might and I planned this little exercise so you could feel what fighting a real villain would be like. I’m proud to say that you all went beyond my expectations—”

“LITTLE EXERCISE?” Kendo yelled. “Wh-What about Honenuki being taken captive.”

“Yeah, sorry about that,” Honenuki said. “All Might said he wanted to take me out of the fight because of how strong my Quirk is. Plus, he said having one of your friends be the hostage would make you fight harder. I was about to tell you before Monoma said he had a strategy to win.”

“…And you stopped because…?” Kendo asked.

“I wanted to win,” the skeletal-faced boy said while rubbing his head sheepishly.
“But Yanagi said all the teachers were defeated,” Monoma said.

“She was in on it too,” Kan explained. “If she flew up and saw us, she would know something’s up, so we had her fool you.”

“Recovery Girl is here taking care of everyone else,” 13 said. “Head up around the rubble and she’ll heal you up.”

“Honenuki, could you soften the glue around All Might?” Kan asked. Honenuki nodded and went to help All Might. “Are you all ready to head back to class?” No one answered as they all absorbed the information. Monoma and Kendo had matching thousand-yard stares. Shishida had seemingly lost his mind, manically giggling and repeating the explanation over and over. Pony fell to her knees and was softly crying. Shoda passed out. All the color drained from Rin’s face. Kaibara was punching himself in the head and mumbling something about waking up. Tsuburaba was flailing his arms angrily and mumbling obscenities. Bondo walked off in frustration. Tetsutetsu was frozen in shock, not even blinking. Shiozaki had her head in her hands and was quietly saying a prayer. “I’ll take that as a no.”

“That’s the last of ‘em,” Snipe said as he exited the bus. Most of Class 1-B was unconscious, either from the fight or from Recovery Girl’s healing, so the teachers were forced to load the mostly-asleep class onto the bus themselves.

“They didn’t need much healing,” Recovery Girl said to Kan. “You can wake them up once you’ve gotten back to U.A.”

“Thanks again, ma’am,” Kan said, “and thank you, All Might.”

“Of course,” All Might said with a thumbs up. “Your students are quite tenacious and have excellent potential. Let’s train them well.”

“I’m glad you think so. In that case, we’ll get going.” As the bus pulled away, steam began to pour from All Might’s body and he shrunk down into his skinny, emaciated form. “Man, those kids…”

“Tough battle?” Midnight asked.

“Oh yeah. They were so in sync, even though they’ve known each other for less than a month. I may not have been at full power, but it was difficult nonetheless.”

“Is that so?” 13 said. “Now that we’ve seen 1-A and 1-B in action against a villainous force, how would you compare them, All Might?”

“Tough to say. Both are powerful, but I can tell that they’ll grow in different ways.”

“How d’ya mean?” Snipe asked.

“Class 1-A is built on rivalries. They’ll grow because they aim to surpass one another. Not to say they aren’t close, but they push themselves to go beyond each other. 1-B, on the other hand, is a cohesive unit already. They’ll grow by bringing each other up and work together to surpass anyone else.”

“Think so?” Midnight said. “We’ll have to keep a close eye on both classes. The way they turn out will be quite interesting.”
“Alright everyone,” Kan said. “I know it’s been a long day and you want to get home, but I still have some announcements to make.” The student had all regained consciousness and were in their seats, glaring at their teacher. “You can stop pouting. There wasn’t any real danger, so stop being bitter about it.”

“You made me feel emotions again,” Monoma hissed. “How dare you.”

“In any case,” Kan continued. “Your fight isn’t over. A new challenge is approaching that will push you even further.”

It’ll be tougher than facing All Might? the class thought. What could that be?

“In two weeks, you’ll be participating in the U.A. Sports Festival.”

That doesn’t sound tougher at all!

“The principal decided to push it up in the schedule to show U.A. is persevering after the villain’s break-in at the USJ,” Kan explained. “The U.A. Sports Festival is one of Japan’s biggest sporting events, having overtaken the Olympics in popularity. Not only will the whole country be watching, but many pro-heroes will be there scouting for new talent. You’ll have this opportunity to show off your skills once a year, but this is your first time. You must come out strong and show the world your grit. Are we clear?”

“Yes, sir,” the class said together. Even after their tiring day, the thought of the upcoming challenge stirred excitement within them.

“Good. Once you’ve rested up from today’s battle, then start training until you drop. Dismissed!” As Kan left the room and the students began packing up, Tetsutetsu rushed to the door.

“I’m gonna go scout 1-A!” he announced. “Try and intimidate ‘em a bit!”

“You sure, man?” Monoma asked. “You took a big beating and Recovery Girl’s healing makes you tired—”

“It’s cool!” the iron boy said as he ran off.

“Shiozaki?” Kendo said. “Can you go with him and make sure he doesn’t start a fight or pass out in the hall?”

“Of course,” Shiozaki said as she walked off. As more of the class left, Kendo stayed in a contemplative silence until it was only her and Monoma in the classroom.

“Ready to go?” the boy said.

“Yeah,” Kendo replied. “…Actually, before we go… I just wanted to say that you really surprised me today.”

“How so?” Monoma asked.

“Well… I could only think of sacrificing myself to help everyone get away, but you were able to think of a winning strategy so quickly. You were a much better leader than me,” Kendo said with an embarrassed blush.

“Nah,” Monoma said. “You’re the real leader, class rep. I may have been the quick thinker today,
but you’re just as smart. Plus, you go out of your way to help everyone and look out for them. I was just lucky today. I could never do what you do.” He began walking to the door, followed by Kendo.

“If you say so,” she said. “I’ll have to real pick up my game if I’m gonna rally everyone for the Sports Festival.”

“Just two weeks away,” Monoma mused. “We gotta step up our game if we’re gonna win.”

“Sounds like a plan.”

Chapter End Notes

First Hatsume, then the BIg 3, then Bakugo, and now All MIGHT? Can someone not traumatize these kids? A few things:
First, I'm going on vacation, so don't expect any new chapters until next week
Second, I won't be covering the Sports Festival. The most I'll do is a chapter about its before and after.
third, After the Sports Festival, you'll see more interactions between 1-A and 1-B
fourth, I'm working on follow-ups to the DND chapter featuring other groups of students, and I'll also make more covering the first group we saw.
fifth, y'all cute. Peace.
“Alright, I’m almost done setting up,” Fukidashi announced. “Thanks again for letting us use your apartment, Pony.”

“Sure thing!” Pony said with her mouth full of apple. She was sat on Fukidashi’s left along with Shiozaki, who was rereading the handbook confusedly. Sitting opposite of Fukidashi was Awase and Rin, who were both looking through the mini-figure collection for their pieces. On the remaining side of the table was Shishida and Kamakiri, who had been fleshing out their character sheets.

“Is everyone ready to start?”

“This game still confuses me,” Shiozaki said with a little embarrassment. “I can never remember what I can and can’t do.”

“You’ll get it as you go,” Rin assured her. “Just speak up or check the handbook if you’re lost.”

“This game is stupid,” Kamakiri said flippantly.

“They quit playing,” Awase fired back.

“Never!”

“…We’re all ready,” Shishida said.

“Then I’ll begin the recap,” Fukidashi said. “Previously, in the adventures of the newly-named Pegasus Hooves, the original four members had been hired to investigate Millsy Village, for rumors have started to spread about its dead rising from the grave. Once you had arrived and collected some information, you were forced to intervene as another group of adventurers were making trouble for the village. As you fought, two more travelers helped you – a sorcerer from the Tabaxi race of animalistic cat people, and an assassin from the Thri-kreen race of humanoid mantis. Once the fight ended and you learned of their shared goal in investigating the rumors, you grouped up and headed for the graveyard. Now…”

The midday sun hung high overhead, putting the Pegasus Hooves at ease. They had almost reached the graveyard and the sun wasn’t even close to setting. “We makin’ good time! Let’s pick up the pace!” Leading the group of hardened travelers was Annie Mustang, a young blonde girl with an extremely chipper demeanor. Annie was a Tiefling with peachy, human-like skin, but she had the obvious racial traits of hooves, a tail, and two tall horns. She wore leather armor with a bow and
“Is this little girl really your leader?” a voice in the trees asked. Hopping down to join the group was T’rali Marrowblade, the Thri-kreen assassin. He was wearing a leather tabard, kept open at the sides to free up his four insect-like arms, and forest green pants. His head was fairly human-like, an oddity among his race, but it still featured long antennae and curved mandibles alongside his green Mohawk. “I’m still not convinced about this little alliance if she’s the one making your decisions.”

“What’re you sayin’?” Annie asked. “I’m a good leader! Besides, I won Rock-Paper-Scissors.”

“That’s how you decided?” T’rali asked. He shot his original companion an annoyed look before hopping back into the treetops.

“I apologize for his behavior,” said T’rali’s companion, the Tabaxi sorcerer Verdant McCoy. Despite looking very animalistic, Verdant was the more sociable and well-spoken of the duo. He wore green robes with chainmail armor and a horned helmet. “While our alliance is in effect, we’ll be sure to follow your leadership, Miss Mustang.”

“Alrighty!”

“If I’m being honest,” the sorcerer continued, “I do have an ulterior motive in joining you all.” He looked behind him to the adventurer who walked at the back of the group. “I’m interested in that strange device at your hip.”

“Who? Me?” The person Verdant was speaking to was Guile Thompson, a man with spiky black hair held up by a blue headband. He wore metal armor with large shoulder pads over a black overcoat and blue clothing. On his back was a Greatsword, while at his hip was a metal pistol in a holster. “You mean this thing?” he asked while pulling out the weapon. “It’s just a little gadget I learned to make. It’s called a gun.”

“Fascinating,” Verdant said, looking closely at the device. “I’d like to inspect it at some point, if you’d allow me.”

“Maybe some other time,” Guile said as he quickly holstered his weapon. “This baby is one of a kind and handmade. I’m not letting it leave my hands unless I completely trust the person.”

“Fair enough,” Verdant said with a shrug. “I wonder how far this graveyard is. It feels like we should have arrived by now.”

“Rin— I mean, Lin!” Annie began. “Check our map! Are we there yet.” Pulling out their map was Lin Fei Long, the half-draconic monk. Lin had come from another continent, made obvious by his foreign red clothing.

“We’ve been following along the river, so we’re going the right way,” Lin said as he flipped his braid back. “It shouldn’t be long now. We’ll definitely arrive before sundown if we keep this pace.”

“I can only hope we do,” the last member of the group said. To Annie’s right was Maria Pleasance, a cleric of the healing church of Sarenrae. The elf woman was clad in delicate white robes with an emerald scarf held around her arms. Over her green hair was a turquoise veil held by a gold circlet.

“I cannot bear the thought of departed souls watching their bodies torment the living.” She clasped her hands dramatically and looked to the sky, a white light shining down on her. “I can only pray that we may cleanse the evil of this land quickly. Oh, Sarenrae! Impart upon us the strength to carry out this mission!”
“You must be fun at parties,” T’rali said from the treetops.

“Look who’s talking, grasshopper,” Guile said dismissively.

“That’s our word,” T’rali fired back, lobbing an acorn at Guile’s head.

“Hey, Guys?” Lin said. “W—”

“Stop fighting, you two,” Maria begged as a single tear went down her cheek. “Please, do not dispute on my behalf.”

“It’s just a little spat, miss,” Verdant assured her.

“Guys—”

“No infighting!” Annie declared. “Your fearless leader says that fighting’s bad!”

“Guys!” Lin shouted. “…We’re here.” The group looked to their right and saw the graveyard just downhill. It was in complete ruin with most of the gravestones and tombs in shambles.

“Sweet!” Annie said as she walked closer to the hill’s edge. “Let’s go investiga— woah!” The Tiefling girl fell forward and tumbled down the hill, crashing into the rubble headfirst.

“Annie!” Maria and Guile called out.

“I see a stairway just around the hillside,” Verdant pointed out. “We should go and check on her.” The five adventurers ran down the stairs and weaved through the broken-down gravestones, eager to check on their leader. Once they reached their fallen comrade, they realized her skirt had flipped up in her tumble.

“Oh, uh, A-Annie…” Lin stammered as he looked away. As T’rali approached the fallen Tiefling to assist her, Maria jumped between them and blocked everyone’s view of Annie.

“Avert your eyes from this pure maiden!” she commanded.

"Fine,” the mantis man said with an exasperated sigh.

“Annie, are you alright? Do you need healing?” Maria helped her leader pull her head from the rubble and lay her down more comfortably.

“I’ll be fine,” Annie assured her. “Landing was pretty soft, actually. Just need a minute.” As Annie sat up, Maria’s face became twisted in fear and she backed away. “What’s wrong?” Annie shifted her hands around to stand, feeling another hand under hers. “Huh? What’s—” She froze up once she realized what had broken her fall – a decaying corpse. No one moved. Everyone was silent. Annie just looked down at the corpse for a good 10 seconds. “…KYAAAAAAAAA!” She bolted from the corpse and leapt into Mari’s embrace, burying her face in the cleric’s chest.

“Doing alright, fearless leader,” T’rali asked.

“I guess the zombies don’t bother getting back in their graves,” Lin noted with an uncomfortable chuckle. Now that they had a better look at the graveyard, the group could see other corpses dotting the area. “Time to investigate, right?”

“Don’t wanna,” Annie whimpered from Maria’s chest.

“Let’s just get started,” Guile said as he stepped around the rubble, watching carefully for bodies.
The group paired off and began pouring over the graveyard for any clues. Eventually, Annie and Maria happened upon a tomb that was mostly intact.

“Found something!” she called out. The rest of the group joined their leader at the tomb, looking it over closely. It was the largest structure in the area, sitting at the very back of the graveyard and overcome with moss and vines.

“If I had to guess,” Lin began, “this tomb was the first structure here and belonged to someone important. All these other graves came later, turning this place into a graveyard over time.”

“Sounds likely,” Guile added, “but it looks untouched. The stone door looks like it hasn’t moved in ages. If all of the dead are rising at night, why is this structure the only one not affected?”

“I can think of three possible explanations,” Verdant said. “Theory one: there are no bodies inside of the tomb to rise. It could be because the tomb was never used for the intended person for whatever reason, or the body is so old and broken down that it cannot become a zombie. Theory two: there are zombies inside, but they cannot get out at night because they’re either too weak or the tomb is too strong. Lastly, theory three… the cause of these nightly zombie attacks is inside this tomb.”

“Why do I have a feeling that it’s the third option?” Guile groaned.

“Only one way to finding out,” Annie said. “Let’s open up this door.”

“Are any of actually strong enough to bust it down?” Kamakiri asked. “No one here has a really great strength stat or blunt weapons.”

“We could push together,” Pony suggested. “Don’t have to break. Just push.”

“Will that be enough?” Shiozaki asked.

“Let’s find out,” Fukidashi said. “Roll a strength check, everyone.”

“Put your back into it!” Annie ordered.

“Push harder, Guile,” Lin groaned.

“I am pushing harder! I’m doing most of the work!”

“Why aren’t you helping, cleric?” T’rali asked.

“I’m afraid my strength would make little difference,” Maria said. “I shall pray for your success.”

“Lazy-ass cleric.”

“Quiet complaining,” Verdant scolded. “We’ve almost got it. One last push, everyone.” The group heaved forward, finally forcing the door open.

“We got it!” Annie cheered. “Good job, everyone!”

“I think I pulled my everything,” Lin complained.
“Man, it’s dark in here,” Guile noted. “Anyone have a torch?”

“Allow me,” Verdant said as he lit his torch. With the room illuminated, they could see that no coffins or bodies were present. Instead, a staircase downward was before them.

“Looks like this place has a real ass to it,” T’rali said. “Should we head down?”

“One second,” Annie said. She took the torch and held it to the wall, revealing sculpted pictures and strange hieroglyphics. “Can anyone read these?”

“It seems to be Elvish,” Maria said as she approached the wall. “The walls tell of a Queen from a long time ago… the person in this tomb is named Queen Adelia. The first part of this claims she died of a heart attack, but further down, an addendum was added. It turns out her brother had poisoned her to seize power.”

“How far back was all this?” Verdant asked.

“200 years ago exactly.”

“200, eh?” Guile said as he grasped his pistol. “Sounds like it’s Curse O’clock.”

“We should head further in before it gets dark,” Maria suggested. “If we don’t stop the zombies’ source of life, they overrun us and we won’t survive the night.”

“You want me to scout ahead, fearless leader?” T’rali snickered as he readied his sickle. Before he could head down the stairs, Annie walked in front of him.

“Leader should go first,” she said without a hint of fear in her voice. “Everyone, let’s head down and see if the zombie problem is from here.”

“Right behind you,” Guile said as he ran after her. Lin and Maria joined them soon after as Verdant came up to T’rali.

“Coming?” he asked.

“Looks like she has a backbone after all,” T’rali noted. The six travelers felt a chill in the air as they continued downstairs. Once they reached the bottom, an ethereal fog began to pool at their feet.

“Looks like we have our answer,” Maria said. “I promise in the name of Sarenrae that this fiend shall no longer taint the departed with her wickedness.”

“What she said,” Guile added as he cocked his pistol. As they continued on, they saw that candles lined the wall, giving them enough light to put out their torch. Further into the tomb, the Pegasus Hooves finally found their target – a pristine coffin decorated with jewels and gold. As they approached, a rumbling in the ground halted them and the coffin began to move. It’s top swung open and a figure sat up. Staring them down was Queen Adelia, wrapped in bandages and a generous layer of jewels.

“Be wary, all,” Verdant said. “I feel a tremendous amount of malevolent magic from her.” The sorcerer clenched his fist and focused his innate magic energy, forcing it into his hand.

“Magic or not, I won’t be defeated,” Lin stated as he cracked his knuckles. The mummified queen looked over the intruders in her tomb. Though her wrappings hid her expression, it was obvious she was amused.
“Have you come to die?” she said slowly.

The group looked to their leader for her signal to attack. Annie grabbed her bow and pulled an arrow from her quiver, smirking all the while. “I say thee… neigh.”

“You heard the lady,” T’rali snickered while grabbing his sickle. “What’re your orders, boss?”

“…Forward assault! Destroy the evil, Pegasus Hooves!”

“Yes, ma’am!”

Chapter End Notes

Have I run this concept into the ground yet? Doesn't matter. I'm making more. Also, shoutout if you caught the PurpleEyesWTF reference
Flower in the Dark

Chapter Notes

Welcome to Real Feels Hour with your host, Planthair McWhatsherface

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

In becoming the default big sister for Class 1-B, Kendo had picked up on the different personality traits of her class, especially with her close friends. That’s why she was a little shocked when Shiozaki had asked her, Tetsutetsu, Monoma, and Setsuna if they’d want to come visit her home. Shiozaki was a very polite, gentle, and friendly person, but Kendo knew she was also introverted and somewhat shy, which made the offer surprising. On the other hand, Kendo could tell that her friend had something weighing on her mind. Once Saturday came, the four students had arrived in Kanagawa, the home prefecture of their friend, after a quick train ride.

“Y’know, it’s kinda weird we’re going to hang out at Shiozaki’s place before anyone else’s,” Setsuna noted. She wore ripped jeans, red and white sneakers, a dinosaur-tooth necklace, and a black T-shirt with a bearded dragon image that read “drawn to scale.”

“Think so?” Tetsutetsu asked with his mouth full. “I’m surprised she didn’t ask us before. She’s super friendly.” The iron boy was wearing a black shirt with the Kanji for “Iron” on the front, gray and blue track pants, and white sneakers.

“What are you even eating?” Monoma asked. He was wearing a white shirt with the top two buttons undone, tan shorts, and brown sandals.

“Lug nuts.”

“Is that a brand name or something?”

“Nope.” Tetsutetsu pulled a few metal bolts from his bag and showed them off to his friends before popping them in his mouth. “It’s how I power up my Quirk.” The squeaking and crunching of his chewing made the others cover their ears and groan.

“Maybe put those away for now,” Kendo suggested. She wore a short blue dress with a red blazer, a wide leather belt, and dark blue shoes.

“Kay. Are we there yet?”

“We’re on the right street,” Monoma said. “It should be just up ahead.” They continued up the street, following the building numbers until they reached a small flower shop.

“Is this it?” Setsuna questioned. “This isn’t an apartment building.”

“Look again,” Monoma said as he pointed up. “There’s an apartment above the store.”

“I guess her family owns this place,” Kendo said. The store had huge windows showing off the colorful plants, and the wooden sign hanging above the door that read “Tower Flowers.” The four entered the shop, immediately smelling the delightful mix of scents.
“Wooooow,” Kendo said, admiring the plants and breathing in their aromas. “What a beautiful shop.”

“Flowers are super manly!” Tetsutetsu announced without a hint of irony.

“I’m glad you all like it,” they heard from further inside the shop. They turned to see Shiozaki coming up to them, wearing a floral apron over a long-sleeved, ankle-length green dress along with a turquoise shawl, a silver cross necklace, and light green boots. “Thank you for coming.”

“Of course,” Kendo said. “Thanks for having us.”

“Owning a flower shop seems pretty appropriate for you,” Monoma noted as he played with a rose. “Anyway, why the sudden invitation?”

“Don’t be rude, man,” Setsuna said, throwing a package of seeds at the copycat’s head.

“It’s fine,” Shiozaki said. “I realize my invitation was a little out of the blue. Why don’t we go upstairs?”

“Yeah, let’s go!” Tetsutetsu said with his usual cheeriness, making Shiozaki smile.

“Mother, my friends are here,” she called back. “We’ll be upstairs.”

“Alright, dear,” they heard Mrs. Shiozaki say from the back of the store. They’re vine-haired friend led them to a staircase at the side of the store that went up to her apartment. As Shiozaki unlocked the front door, both Kendo and Monoma noticed it had a few different locks on it.

“Make yourselves at home,” Shiozaki offered as they entered her apartment. “I’ll make us some tea.” Her home was average sized, but had very cozy and soft decorations and furniture.

“Dang, this place looks comfy,” Setsuna noted as she flopped onto the couch. Kendo walked by the kitchen door to a wooden dresser, looking at some family photos. Shiozaki’s mother looked almost exactly like her while her father looked like a normal Japanese business man, albeit a little overweight. Also on the dresser were incense candles and a set of rosary beads.

“These are pretty,” Kendo said as she fiddled with the beads.

“Hey, look at this,” Monoma said as he held up a pillow with “live, laugh, love” embroidered on the front. “You owe me five bucks, Setsuna.”

“Hehehehe, whatever,” she giggled.

“Is this the bathroom?” Tetsutetsu asked as he opened a door in the hallway. “Nope. Closet. Good thing I noticed this time.”

“It’s at the end of the hall,” Shiozaki said as she brought out a tray with five tea cups. She set it down on a coffee table in front of the couch and sat in a nearby wicker chair, setting aside her apron. Kendo and Monoma sat on the couch with Setsuna, leaving the remaining chair for Tetsutetsu.

“Hey, question,” Setsuna began as she took some tea. “What’ve you guys been doing to train for the festival? I’ve just been popping off my limbs and growing them back like normal.”

“Weight training mostly,” Kendo answered.

“I’m trying to switch between Quirks quicker,” Monoma added.
“I’ve been jumping off buildings in the training areas!” Tetsutetsu announced as he returned from the bathroom. “I saw this other guy doing it and thought ‘yeah, I can do that.’”

“How dangerous,” Shiozaki said with some worry. “I’ve been working on stretching and shortening my vines so that I wouldn’t have to detach them as often. I’ve also been improving their strength by burrowing them through the ground.”

“Badass,” Tetsutetsu complimented as he took some tea and sat in a chair. “So, what’s on your mind?”

“Well, um…” Shiozaki’s hands twitched a little before she took some tea for herself. “I still feel remorseful about what happened Monday… so I wanted to give you all a more proper explanation for my actions that day. Especially you, Kendo.”

“Monday?” Kendo asked. “You mean the when the villains attacked the USJ?”

“That’s right.” Shiozaki was avoiding eye contact and seemed to be holding onto her tea more for support than to drink it. “I acted inappropriately that day and I’m afraid my choice of words may have seemed a bit self-righteous.”

“I didn’t think that,” Kendo assured her friend. “I know you and the others just wanted to help. I don’t even remember what you said exactly.”

“I remember,” Monoma claimed as he sipped his tea. “She said that she ‘cannot ignore someone in distress.’”

“Oh yeah, I remember that,” Tetsutetsu said.

“Why would that seem self-righteous?” Setsuna asked. Shiozaki set her tea down and began twirling a vine around her finger.

“I feared my wording implied that you all wouldn’t do the same. I realize that you were trying to protect us from making a rash mistake, but at the time… I just couldn’t bear the thought of our peers being attacked.”

“Oh, don’t be silly,” Kendo said with a small chuckle, trying to lighten the mood a bit. “I get why you’re feeling a little guilty, but no one’s thinking that way but you.”

“Yeah, girl,” Setsuna added. “It was a stressful time and you wanted to help. That’s nothin’ to get upset about.”

“That’s not the end of this, is it?” Monoma suddenly asked. All eyes went to him as he finished his tea. “You’re not afraid of giving a public apology, so if that was all, you would’ve said so in class. You’ve also been very uncomfortable since we arrived and that hasn’t changed since you stated your guilt.”

“Monoma, shut up,” Kendo chided with a chop to her friend’s shoulder. “We’re guests here, so—”

“He’s right,” Shiozaki said. “He’s right in saying that I have more on my mind. I asked you all to come today because… I think I can trust you all with my feelings.”

“What about?” Tetsutetsu asked, now leaning in more inquisitively.

“I haven’t always wanted to be a hero,” Shiozaki explained somewhat quickly, as if she wanted to get it out before she could convince herself not to. “My ambition is somewhat newfound, but there’s
a reason that I can’t ignore someone in need.”

“You OK?” Setsuna asked. “You don’t have to tell us if you’re upsetting yourself.”

“I agree with Setsuna,” Kendo said, “but if there’s something you really want to share, then we’ll listen.” Shiozaki smiled gratefully at her friends on the couch, then turned to see Tetsutetsu giving her a thumbs-up and his normal toothy grin. This calmed her down greatly and she took a deep breath.

“Two years ago, I had no interest in being a hero. I dislike fighting, and back then, I thought that was the only job heroes did. My plan in life was to run this flower shop like my parents. I also had very little practice with my Quirk at that point. I could barely move my vines in precise or powerful ways, nor could I grow more at will.” She took her tea and sipped it, calming her nerves again. “It was a Saturday night at around eight—our usually closing time that day. My father was away on a business trip for that weekend, so my mother minded the shop while I was in my room. I heard her enter and went to greet her, but she… wasn’t alone. A man and a woman were with her…and they were both holding guns.” Shiozaki paused, leaving the room both silent and still. None of her friends knew how to react, so they simply waited for her to continue. “The woman pointed her gun at me and said to lay face down on the couch. I complied as the man took my mom into her room. I could hear him question her about any valuables in the house that were hidden. Then, the woman…she began to tie and gag me. I was…too afraid to resist or even react. After she finished, she picked me up, placed me in the hall closet, and locked it. I didn’t know it at the time, but the man was doing the same to my mother at the time after drugging her, and she was locked in her bedroom closet. The criminals were only in our house for about 5 minutes after that, but once they were done…they left us alone.” The vine-haired girl gripped onto her dress and looked down at her trembling hands. “I was…trapped in that closet…for 22 hours.”

“22 hours?” Tetsutetsu repeated without his usual loudness.

“I-I couldn’t do anything,” Shiozaki shakily whispered. “I couldn’t move. I couldn’t use my Quirk well enough to free myself. All I could do was cry and pray for rescue to come.” As a tear slowly ran down her cheek, Shiozaki felt a hand softly fall her own. She looked and saw Tetsutetsu leaning in close and with a very serious expression.

“We’ve heard enough,” he said. “Don’t cry just so we can hear your story. None of us want to see you upset.”

“I really don’t know what to say,” Kendo said. After a moment, she stood up and marched over to Shiozaki, wrapping her in a tight hug. “We’re right here for you.” Shiozaki’s breath hitched, but her smile returned as she hugged back.

“Thank you.” Kendo eventually released her grip, but instead of returning to the couch, she stood next to her friend. “As I was saying, I was in there almost a full day. Eventually, my mother regained consciousness and, despite being bound like me, she was able to escape and signal for help from the window…”

Shiozaki couldn’t tell if she was asleep or awake. She had been in the pitch-black closet for so long that it was impossible to tell. She had given up on struggling against the ropes or crying through her gag long ago. The most she could muster was the occasional whimper. That’s when a series of quick footsteps roused her from her dazed state. Her energy returned and she began kicking at the door and yelling for help. “Hmmph! Hlmmph!” The footsteps rushed to the closet door and flung it open, nearly blinding Shiozaki as the light hit her eyes. She instinctively clenched them shut and looked away. In an instant, a pair of hands began untangling her bonds.
“Don’t worry, miss,” an unfamiliar voice said. “I’m a pro-hero. I’ll have you untied quickly.” The ropes gave away and Shiozaki could move again, though not without some soreness. As the hero untied her gag, she rubbed her eyes and slowly opened them, trying to adjust to the light. She didn’t recognize the hero kneeling before her. His costume seemed to be made mostly of wood, including the mask and helmet, with a dark blue bodysuit underneath. “You and your mother are safe now,” he said in a gentle voice. The lingering feeling of hopelessness that had built up over the last 22 hours vanished and Shiozaki burst into tears, diving into the hero’s embrace. “It’s alright. I’ve got you.”

“Kamui Woods,” Setsuna said. “That was him, right”

“That’s correct,” Shiozaki said. Her face no longer looked upset, but became a nostalgic smile. “He was the hero who rescued me… and he’s my inspiration for becoming a hero myself. For anyone who feels hopeless or endangered in this world, I want to do what he did for me. I want to hold them close and say ‘It’s alright. I’ve got you.’”

“I’d expect such a noble goal from you,” Monoma said.

“Shiozaki… that must’ve been hard for you,” Kendo began, “but… thank you for telling us. I’m flattered you’d share something so personal.”

“That was… so manly,” Tetsutetsu said while tears rushed down his face. “Holding out for so long… and then bouncing back with so much resolve… YOU’RE A PINNACLE OF MANLINESS, SHIOZAKI!” the iron boy wailed. Shiozaki was confused for a moment, but giggled with a slight blush on her face.

“Thank you all for listening,” she said with a curt bow. “I’m sorry for springing all this on you.”

“It’s cool,” Setsuna said. “Now that we’ve got all that out in the open, I vote we go and do something fun. It’s Saturday, we’re dumb teenagers, and we’re all together, so let’s go out.”

“OH! OH!” Tetsutetsu yelled with his hand up. “I saw an arcade on the way here! Let’s go there!”

“I like where your head’s at,” Setsuna said. “How’s that sound?”

“An arcade?” Shiozaki questioned.

“Not digging the idea?” Tetsutetsu asked, a little dejected.

“Oh, no. If everyone on board, then I’m all for it.”

“Then it’s settled,” Kendo announced. “We’re heading to the arcade!”

Chapter End Notes

Quick sidenote: if anyone thinks I should go back and add a trigger warning to this chapter for any reason, please tell me. I think it’ll be fine, but if you feel it’s warranted, tell me. This goes for any other chapters too BTW
“What a place!” Tetsutetsu said in awe. The five students had arrived at Wonderworld Arcade, a giant plaza of different gaming machines. “I wish I had something like this near my house!"

“Dude, this looks kickass!” Setsuna agreed. “They better have that Jurassic Park game.” She and Tetsutetsu raced inside while Monoma and Kendo hung back with Shiozaki.

“So, what’s with the wardrobe change?” Monoma asked. Before they left her apartment, Shiozaki had wrapped her head in a light blue scarf with a floral border, completely hiding her vines. “Don’t plants need air and the sun?"

“I’m just protecting them,” Shiozaki said defensively. “I’ve been training every day, so I’m just resting my vines and protecting them from harm… and my headscarf is quite breathable, thank you.”

“Touchy,” Monoma said. “Let’s head inside before those two fully regress into middle schoolers.”

“We’re probably too late, in that case,” Kendo noted as they entered. They looked through the rows of machines and quickly found their friends at the Jurassic Park game.

“You gotta shoot the dinosaurs!” Tetsutetsu yelled. “You’re just shooting the humans! They’re helping us!”

“I can’t do it!” Setsuna cried. “I can’t hurt my babies like that.”

“They’re eating you!”

“Then I accept my fate,” she said with a calm smile and joyful tears. “I will become nourishment for my beloved raptors.”

“You are way too happy about— shit, I died!” Tetsutetsu hung up his toy gun and shot a glare at the reptile girl, who was serenely drying her tears. “Ok, what’s nex— Terminator!” he shouted with an emphatic point.

“Oh, hell yeah,” Kendo said. She and the iron boy raced to the Terminator game and put in their money.

“See anything you’re interested in, Shiozaki?” Monoma asked.

“I’m not much of a gamer,” she answered sheepishly, “but I’m enjoying myself just being here with all of you.”

“I’ll find you something,” Setsuna said. “I don’t want you to be the mom at an amusement park. Like ‘Oh, I don’t want to go on any rides. I’ll just sit on this bench and hold everyone’s phones.’ Like that. Depressing.”

“Get the one on the side!” Tetsutetsu yelled.

“You get it!” Kendo yelled back. “I’m up to my ass in robots!”

“Shoot her!” Setsuna cheered. “Shoooot heeeer!"
“And you’re dead,” Monoma said. Kendo and Tetsutetsu hung up their guns and looked around the arcade for something new to play.

“I’m not seeing any fighting games,” Tetsutetsu said. “Seems like a weird thing to be missing.”

“Uh, take a look over there,” Monoma pointed out. In the corner of the arcade hung a neon sign that read “Brawler Pit” with a wide array of fighting games underneath. “That do anything for you?”

“I love this place!” the iron boy said as he bolted towards the games. Setsuna and Kendo followed suit, and even Monoma seemed excited by the find. Shiozaki, on the other hand, seemed oddly uncomfortable.

“There’s so many!” Setsuna said. “Which one are we doing first?”

“Looks like they have the newest Street Fighter,” Kendo pointed out. “We could—”

“WAIT!” Tetsutetsu exclaimed. He slowly pointed across to an old machine sat in the corner. “That one.”

“I’m game,” Monoma said as they approached the machine.

“Good find,” Kendo complimented as she popped a coin inside. The screen instantly lit up and the music blared out at them.

_Gonna take you for a ride~_

“Marvel vs. Capcom 2,” Tetsutetsu slowly said, almost with reverence. “One of the greatest fighting games ever.” He inserted his own money into the machine and leaned in next to Kendo.

“It’s definitely a good one,” Setsuna agreed. “I kinda suck at games like this though.”

“I’m not great either,” Monoma added.

“After they go, let’s play and see who sucks less,” she suggested. “You wanna play a round, Shiozaki?”

“Oh, I’m fine, thank you—”

“C’mon, you keep blowing off games!” Setsuna moaned. “One round. Just watch closely and you’ll pick it up quick.”

“If you insist,” she sighed as Kendo and Tetsutetsu’s match began. Kendo’s team was Charlie, Chun Li, and Rogue while her opponent had chosen Zangief, Juggernaut, and Colossus. It was a close match, but once they were down to their last character, Tetsutetsu clinched the victory.

“Oh yeah!” he cheered. “Who’s the man? That’s me! Good game.”

“You too,” Kendo said while shaking her friend’s hand. “You guys wanna play?

“You bet!” Setsuna said as she and Monoma payed the machine. “Let’s see who’s better at not being terrible.” She picked out her team of Morrigan, Venom, and War Machine while Monoma played with Iceman, Jill Valentine, and Silver Samurai. Their match wasn’t as close as the previous one, with Monoma winning with two characters remaining. “Alright, good game, good game, little bastard, good game,” Setsuna said quickly. “You’re turn, Shiozaki.”

“Um… it looks a little complicated for my tastes—”
“Nah, you’re not getting out of this,” Setsuna ordered as she put more coins in the game. “The money’s in the machine, so get up here, girl.”

“A-Alright then,” Shiozaki said as she grabbed the joystick. It took a little time, but she eventually picked out a team of Sakura, Marrow, and Tron Bonne.

“The buttons are labelled, so you should pick it up quick,” the lizard girl told her friend. “I’m not gonna hold back though.”

The match lasted only 25 seconds.


“Oh no,” Shiozaki mumbled to herself. “I couldn’t hold back enough.”

“What do you mean hold back?” Kendo asked.

“I-I, um, that’s not what…” Shiozaki stammered out. “B-Beginner’s luck?”

“That looked more like muscle memory to me,” Monoma remarked. “You’ve played this before, haven’t you?” Shiozaki fiddled her hands around and looked away from her friends.

“Maybe a little.”

“Me next!” Tetsutetsu called out. “If you’re so good, then I want a crack at you! And don’t hold back, y’hear?”

“But if I don’t hold back—”

“Fight me at your best, Shiozaki,” he said with absolute seriousness.

“This feels more dramatic than it should be,” Kendo noted.

“At least it’s entertaining,” Monoma added. Tetsutetsu paid for another round and Shiozaki reluctantly took the controls again.

“If you insist, then I’ll use my regular team,” she said. Tetsutetsu used the same team from his match against Kendo while Shiozaki selected B.B. Hood, Sonson, and Storm.

This round took 20 seconds.

“A-A perfect victory,” Monoma said in shock.

“I couldn’t even follow it,” Kendo claimed. “Her moves were too fast.”

“How much have you played this game,” Tetsutetsu asked. Shiozaki looked away, trying to hide her reddening face.

“Back in middle school… I had a bit of a reputation here,” she explained. “My hero training takes up most of my free time now, so I haven’t been here in a long while, but… most of the older games in this area most likely still have my high score.”

“That’s wild,” Setsuna giggled. “You’re a lot of things, Shiozaki, but I didn’t expect ‘fighting game savant’ to be one of them.”

“P-Please, keep your voice down,” Shiozaki nervously requested. “I don’t want to be recognized by
anyone."

“That explains the scarf,” Kendo said.

“You’re incognito?” Setsuna asked before breaking into a giggle fit. “That’s adorable.”

“If you’re so good, then let’s play more!” Tetsutetsu practically begged.

“I don’t know,” Shiozaki said while covering her cheeks. “It’s such an embarrassing hobby.”

“No, it’s not!” the iron boy promised. “I think it’s badass!”

“R-Really?”

“I’m gonna find a game that I can win against you at! ‘Kay?” Shiozaki couldn’t help but smile at Tetsutetsu’s excitement.

“I suppose,” she said as her blush faded a little, but not all the way.

“HAHAHAHAH! I didn’t win a single time!” Tetsutetsu loudly laughed.

“Geez, I blew through a lotta cash today,” Setsuna said as they left the arcade.

“Same here,” Kendo said. She looked up at the setting sun and checked her watch. “I told my mom I’d be home soon, so me and Monoma are gonna head out.”

“You guys really are joined at the hip,” Setsuna joked. “Guess I’ll bail too. See you around, Shiozaki.”

“Goodbye,” she said as her friends walked off to the train station. “Aren’t you going with them, Tetsutetsu?”

“I don’t have anywhere to be, so I thought I’d walk you home,” he explained. “Is that cool with you?”

“Oh, of course. Thank you.” As they walked off from the arcade, Shiozaki loosened her headscarf to fall around her neck. “The setting sun always feels nice on my roots.”

“That reminds me. I was wonderin’ about something,” the iron boy said. “Are those thorns on your vines sharp?”

“No, they’re blunt,” she explained. “They hurt a little bit if I lay down on them, but they’re harmless otherw—” As she explained, Tetsutetsu snatched a vine in his fingers and was fiddling around with it.

“Hey, you’re right. They are blunt.”

“P-Please don’t touch those,” she whimpered as he face erupted into a blush.

“OH, SORRY!” Tetsutetsu yelled while leaping away from her. “I forgot that was hair for a second! I’m super sorry!”

“It’s f-fine,” Shiozaki said as she held onto the vine. “You just caught me off guard.” They resumed their walk, this time in silence. Shiozaki was now twirling the vine around her finger while her silver-haired companion was still upset with himself. “…Tetsutetsu?”
“What’s up?” he answered, now comfortable enough to return to her side.

“Why did you decide to walk me home?” The boy stayed quiet for a while, almost as if he was piecing together the words in his mind like a puzzle.

“…I was thinking about what you told us at your house,” he said in a subdued tone. “If that happened to me, I don’t think I’d ever feel totally safe, especially alone. I wanted to walk with you so you could feel comfortable.” Shiozaki was a little stunned, but the more she thought about it, it wasn’t a surprising thing for him to do. He was always a helpful and selfless person. The surprise was more from hearing him put it into words.

“How… thoughtful,” she slowly said.

“That was a real manly move telling us, y’know?” he said with his usual gusto returning.

“That’s another thing I’m curious about.”

“Huh?”

“You always speak of ‘manliness’ and say almost everything is ‘manly.’ Why is that?”

“That’s just ‘cause I’ve seen lots of manly people and stuff since I came to U.A.,” he explained. “To me, manliness means that you’re putting yourself out there with passion. You’re just you and no one can change that. You stick to your guns and your open about what your deal is. You just say ‘hey, world! People! I’m me, and that’s not changing anytime soon! I don’t care if you don’t like me because I like me!’ Y’know?”

“I see,” Shiozaki said. “You’re not speaking of masculinity per se, but what an ideal way of living is —”

“Oh my god, look at that dog! He’s so tiny! Hi, puppy!” Shiozaki was a little taken aback, but couldn’t help but giggle at the boy’s futile attempts of getting a dog’s attention. She looked further down the road and realized they had already arrived at her flower shop.

“We’ve arrived. Thank you again for keeping me company.”

“Sure thing!” Tetsutetsu walked off towards the train station, giving Shiozaki a wave as he went. “See you at school!”

“Safe trip!” she called out. As she watched him go, and attempt again to get the dog’s attention, Shiozaki felt a small twinge in her chest. What a sweet goofball he is.

Chapter End Notes

Here’s some heartwarming fluff between that sad backstory chapter and the quick Sports Festival chapter.
After the Battle

Tetsutetsu slammed the door to Class 1-B open and shuffled inside. The rest of the class followed suit without a word. The Sports Festival was over and none of them felt satisfied. Some students went to their seat while most mingled at the front of the room. Eventually, Kuroiro broke the silence. “Soooo… that was shitty.”

“Yeah,” Rin said.

“Agreed,” Fukidashi added.

“C’mon guys,” Kendo began, “It wasn’t so bad. Let’s just stay positive. I’m sure we all made an impression on the audience.”

“By doing what?” Kaibara asked. “I don’t think I used my Quirk once.”

“There were 16 spots in the finals,” Monoma said. “Class 1-A took 12 of them, a student from both the support course and general studies made it… we had two.”

“If that tail guy didn’t forfeit, it would’ve been 1,” Tsuburaba noted.

“Not a good time, man,” Kaibara said.

“It doesn’t matter now,” Kendo said, trying to reign in the conversation. “It’s all in the past. We have one next year and the year after, so let’s all just think about those. We just have to think positively, guys.” Kendo forced a smile to her face, but she knew her words weren’t doing much. She couldn’t even get herself to think on the bright side, no matter how hard she was trying.

“I feel like shit,” Tetsutetsu said. “So many people gave up their chance to fight in the finals to get me there… I wasted it! I didn’t win a single round!”

“Don’t blame yourself, man,” Setsuna said. “I would’ve done way worse than you.”

“Same here,” Yanagi added.

“I would’ve lost too,” Komori claimed.

Tetsutetsu knew what they meant, but his mind wasn’t changed. “You too, Shoda,” he continued. “You shouldn’t have dropped out. You probably could’ve won it all.”

“I think you’re overestimating me,” Shoda said sheepishly. “Someone as strong as Todoroki would’ve destroyed me—”

“He’s not that strong!” Honenuki suddenly snapped. Everyone looked and saw his face twisted in anger, though it slowly shifted back to normal. “No one’s that strong with no weakness. If he was so perfect, he would’ve won.”

“He could’ve won,” Yanagi said. “If he had used his fire in the final round, he might’ve beaten Bakugo.”

“Maybe,” Honenuki grumbled.

“Let’s change the subject,” Kendo suggested. “Um… How about Shiozaki? She made it the furthest of all of us! Let’s give her some praise, huh?” She looked to Shiozaki, but realized how
saddened she seemed.

“I deserve nothing of the sort,” Shiozaki said with her head down. “I wasted the opportunity given to me.” She stood from her desk and bowed deeply at her classmates. “Please forgive me, everyone. I was defeated in such an embarrassing way and couldn’t make a name for our class as planned.”

“You don’t have to apologize,” Awase assured her. “I don’t regret anything that happened out there today.”

“That’s the spirit!” Kendo quickly said. “We shouldn’t be regretting what happened. We just have to look towards the future.”

“What future?” Monoma said as he sulked.

“Well, aren’t you a ray of sunshine today?” Kamakiri quipped.

“Cheer up, Monoma!” Pony said. “We get ‘em next year, yeah?” Monoma looked down at Pony and smiled a bit at her positivity.

“Of course, we will,” the copycat said while patting Pony’s head. “Those 1-A bastards only got lucky.”

“What’s gotten into you with them?” Kendo asked. “I know you’re frustrated, but we know that not everyone in 1-A is some jerk like that Bakugo guy.”

“Maybe not outwardly,” he continued, “but they all think they’re better than us.”

“Kirishima doesn’t!” Tetsutetsu said. “He’s a good sport and a true man.”

“You’ll all see soon enough,” Monoma proclaimed. “They’re all nothing but egocentric, attention-grabbing lowlifes—”

“That’s enough!” Kendo chopped her friend over the neck before he could go any further. He didn’t fall unconscious, but he was dazed enough to stop. “We’re all frustrated, I know… but we shouldn’t blame 1-A. It was just a competition—”

“Yeah, one that the whole country saw and apparently decides our futures,” Kuroiro said. Kendo was getting more frustrated with each comment and had even begun turning red in the face. Everyone could tell her patience and optimism was running short.

“If I may,” Shishida said, “I’ll continue what Kendo is saying. Any regrets we may have are our own and shouldn’t be taken out on our sister class. If anything, we should be fostering a friendly atmosphere with them.”

“Exactly, Shishida,” Kendo said as she calmed down. “Don’t listen to what Monoma’s saying about them being egocentric or whatever. I’m not saying they’re all nice – I think Bakugo’s proven that – but most of them are friendly like us. Give them a chance and be friendly if you talk to them, alright?” Each of the classmates looked unsure at best, but Kendo decided this was enough for now. It was good timing too, as the door slid open and Mr. Kan walked inside. As everyone returned to their seats, they all felt guilty for his sake.

He must be so disappointed in us, they all thought. He stepped to the podium and cleared his throat.

“I’ll be frank,” he began, “that wasn’t an amazing showing on our part.” The class’s hearts sank as
more shame weighed down on them. “Before we end the day, I’d like to share an anecdote with you all. Many years ago, during my first year attending U.A., I personally had a lot riding on the Sports Festival. I didn’t have the best showing earlier in the year and my grades were nothing to gawk at. That Sports Festival was my big chance to show the world what I was made of. The first event was a game similar to Capture the Flag – there were 50 flags and whoever had one at the end of the time limit moved on… I lost in that first round.” The class went wide-eyed in surprise, but before anyone could interrupt, Kan continued. “I was the only student in the hero course to be eliminated that round. As I watched my peers continue on, I kept thinking ‘I’m such a disappointment. I blew my chances. My hero career is over.’ But, as is plainly obvious, that wasn’t the case. I became a hero, and now, I’ve been entrusted with the next generation at my alma mater. Do you all understand what I’m saying? While the Sports Festival is important, it doesn’t decide your future. You do.”

“We promise to do better next time!” Tetsutetsu suddenly shouted. “Thank you for not giving up on us!”

“We’re all grateful that you support us, sir,” Shiozaki added.

“We have 3 years together,” Kan said. “I’ll support you all the way until you become the strongest class to ever graduate from this school. Are we clear?”

“Yes, sir!” they all shouted.

“Now, what else did I have to say?” he asked himself. “Oh right, the internships. You’ll have tomorrow and Friday off, but once you return on Monday, we’ll have scouting reports from pros ready. You’ll be interning with them for a week later this month. Even if you get no requests, you’ll all be interning with someone. Until then, think about how you can improve yourself. Class dismissed.” As their teacher left, Class 1-B slowly began packing up.

“I can’t believe he’s not mad at us,” Komori said.

“He’s not the type to get mad over something like this,” Shishida assured her. “We truly have an excellent teacher.”

“He sure is manly,” Tetsutetsu said. “I’m gonna go to the gym and keep training. You wanna come, little buddy?”

“Me?” Shoda asked. “Sure. I wanna test a new move I was saving for the finals.”

“A new move?” the iron boy asked as they left. “Kickass!”

“Kuroiro,” Honenuki began. “Can you help me with something?”

“What is it?”

“I need you to shoot me with a flamethrower.”

“…Yeah, sure.”

“Wait, why the hell are you gonna set yourself on fire?!” Awase asked.

“That Todoroki guy has fire and ice,” Honenuki said. “I gotta start training if I’m ever gonna fight him.” He walked to the door with Kuroiro, but then turned back to his classmates. “And when I do fight him, I’m gonna win. All of you can count on that.”

The rest of the class slowly left, but instead of sulking, they were talking about how they can train
harder or offering each other advice. “We may not have done great,” Kendo said to herself, “but we can at least bounce back quickly.”

“Is that really a good thing?” Monoma asked. “Getting used to failure?”

“Don’t be such a pessimist,” Kendo said. “Think about what Mr. Kan said. Today didn’t decide our whole future, so quit sulking.”

“Fine, moooom.”

“That’s right, I’m the mom,” she said as they left the classroom, “and you’re the little toddler I have to keep a leash on. Oh, that reminds me. I don’t want you acting like such an ass around 1-A again, got it?”

“…No promises.”
Chapter Notes

Switching out some names. From here on out, Shiozaki, Komori, and Yanagi will be called Ibara, Kinoko, and Reiko in the descriptions and between each other. I honestly can't think of Kendo as being called anything other than Kendo, so that's staying the same.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

After being given an extra-long weekend after the Sports Festival, most students were spending it by themselves. Kendo had other plans and instead spent Friday preparing her apartment for the arrival of her six guests. *Man, I haven’t had a sleepover since I was a little kid,* she thought as she laid out snacks. She checked her phone again and saw it was almost 8:30. *They should be here soon.* As if on cue, there was a knock at the door. “Coming!” Flipping open the door, she saw her first guest was Yui.

“Hi, Kendo.”

“Hey, come on in!” Yui stepped inside and handed off a box to Kendo.

“I brought cookies.”

“Thanks so much.” As Yui took off her coat, Kendo noticed she was already wearing her plain blue nightgown. “Did you wear that here?”

“You said girls wear their pajamas at sleepovers.”

“The idea is that you change here, Yui.”

“…Oh.” Another knock interrupted their conversation and Kendo opened the door again.

“Yo,” Setsuna greeted. She strode inside, followed by Kinoko and Pony.

“Thank you for having us,” Kinoko said as she handed off a bottle of soda to her host.

“I brought movies!” Pony announced. “Got musicals, got anime, got comedy, got romance, got action – all the good stuff.”

“Sounds good,” Kendo said. “We have almost everyone now, so— oh, those’re tits.” Setsuna had begun changing in the middle of the living room and had her shirt and bra off already.

“What? It’s just us girls here.” She flipped her hair proudly and puffed out her chest before zipping up her dinosaur-themed onesie. “Better?”

“You two can change in my room,” Kendo told her other guests. Pony trotted off to put on her pajamas while Kendo dragged Setsuna off to the hallway closet.

“You’re just jealous of my ‘talent,’ girl,” Setsuna claimed.
“Shut up and help me get the comforter,” Kendo said with a playful chop on her friend’s head. She reached up and grabbed a massive blue comforter from the top shelf, handing part of it off to Setsuna.

“We doin’ this old school?” Setsuna asked with excitement as the comforter unfurled in their arms. “Nice. Gonna cuddle with my gals tonight.”

“Hold onto that so I can move the furniture,” Kendo instructed. She grew her hands to giant size and picked up the couch easily, moving it against the wall. She did the same with the coffee table, leaving the living room wide open.

“Need me to do anythin’?” Pony asked as she returned, now wearing a white T-shirt and yellow sleep pants with an apple pattern.

“Yeah, grab an edge of this,” Setsuna requested. “You too, Yui. Let’s spread this baby out.” While Kinoko went to change, the other four girls spread the king-sized comforter out over the floor.

“Looks good,” Kendo said. “That’ll fit everyone, yeah?”

“Totally! And if it’s not, we can just get closer~,” she said with a flick of her slightly forked tongue.

“What’s up with you tonight?” Kendo asked with a giggle. “You’re sillier than usual.”

“Dude, I’m in my dinosaur jammies and I’m gonna be cuddling with my six cute girlfriends. Tonight’s a good night.”

“Don’t you have a boyfriend?”

“He knows what I’m about,” Setsuna said. “He trusts me to not sweep one of you off your feet… or hooves, in Pony’s case.”

“Hey Kendo?” Kinoko asked as she entered the living room, now wearing a light green pajama set with a mushroom pattern. “What time do you want us to leave by?”

“Dunno. We’ll figure that out when we wake up,” Kendo said before a knock at the door caught her attention. “Coming!” She went and opened the door, letting Reiko and Ibara enter.


“Yes, it was very generous of you,” Ibara added while handing Kendo a small bouquet. “Please accept these.”

“Oh, thanks. They’re so pretty. I’ll go put them in water.”

“That’s everyone,” Setsuna announced. “Party’s officially begun.”

“You two can change in my room,” Kendo said from the kitchen.

“I wore mine under my clothes,” Reiko said as she began to disrobe. Once her street clothes were off, she was left wearing a pure white, floor length nightgown with long sleeves.

“What’s with the old-fashioned PJs?” Setsuna asked while looking over her friend. “I didn’t expect that from you, but I did think Ibara would.”

“I got it last year for my Ring cosplay,” Reiko explained. “It’s cute, so I kept it.”
"It sure is," Setsuna said as she pinched the nightgown’s hem and lifted it up. “What’s goin’ on under here?"

“Nothing you need to see,” Reiko said while smacking the hand away. “What do we have planned, Kendo?”

“Whatever we want. Pony brought movies, I’ve got a PlayStation, we have the internet – we can do anything we want.”

“What if we wanna start a witch coven?” Setsuna asked. “You said ‘anything we want.’ We can, like, do blood magic or sacrifice a virgin.”

“In that case, Monoma lives a floor down.” While Kendo set up her PlayStation and Setsuna spent a while laughing her ass off, Pony picked out one of her movies.

“I vote this first!” she said.

“Labyrinth?” Kendo read off the box. “Never heard of it. Is this from America?”

“Yup! It’s reeeeaaaally good.”

“Fine by me,” Reiko and Kinoko said.

“I trust Pony’s recommendation,” Ibara said, returning to the living room wearing a turquoise nightgown with a rose pattern.

“Cool with me,” Setsuna added. “Any opinions, Yui?”

“No.”

“Didn’t think so.”

“Labyrinth it is,” Kendo announced while putting the disc in. “Everyone grab a spot on the comforter.”

“Kendo, you’re not in your pajamas yet,” Yui pointed out.

“Oh, you’re right. Guess I forgot. Be right back.”

“David Bowie’s in this movie,” Pony pointed out while huddling up with Kinoko under a blanket.

“Is he the villain in this?” Setsuna asked. “I think I’ve heard of this movie.” She slid up next to Ibara and stealthily tried pulling up her nightgown before a vine batted her hand away.

“I hope you can keep your hands to yourself while we’re asleep,” Ibara told her.

“Oh, of course,” Setsuna innocently said with her hands up. “It’s no fun pervin’ on your friends if there’s no reaction. I’ll stop for n— uh oh. Where’s this hand goin’?” she coyly said while reaching towards Reiko.

“You’re handsy when we’re not at school,” Reiko said while mummifying herself with a blanket.

“Fitting that I’m gettin’ handsy at Kendo’s house, eh?”

“Do we have to kick you off the comforter?”
“But it’s so comfyyyyyy! Anything but that.”

“Anything?” Reiko pondered. “Ibara, how many blankets do we have?”

“Plenty…”

“Alright, I’m ready,” Kendo said as she returned, now wearing a blue T-shirt and pink shorts with her hair down. “I’ll order the pizza soon…” She trailed off after noticing Reiko and Ibara finishing up a tight blanket cocoon on Setsuna. “What’d I miss?”

“Nothing she wasn’t doing before,” Reiko explained.

“A necessary precaution, I assure you,” Ibara said while braiding Pony’s hair.

“You good, Setsuna?” Kendo asked.

“Mmmnf! Mmmrmffrm,” the lizard girl whined while wriggling around.

“You sound fine. Movie time.”

“Uuuugh, I’m stuffed. Too much pizza,” Pony moaned

“There’s no such thing as too much pizza,” Setsuna said. “Good movie choice, by the way.”

“What’s next?” Yui asked. “I’m having fun.”

“I’m glad,” Kendo said. “Right now, let’s just digest our food babies for a little bit.”

“We could tell scary stories,” Reiko suggested. “I know some good ones.”

“That sounds fun!” Pony said excitably.

“Is that fine with everyone?” Kendo asked. The rest of the girls nodded in approval, but didn’t move. “Alright, once we can move around without feeling gross, we’ll do scary stories.”

“...The creaking in the attic got louder as the girl climbed up the ladder,” Reiko dramatically recounted. The lights were all off, leaving the apartment pitch-black aside from the flashlight pointed up at Reiko’s face. Most of the girls had instinctively huddled close, aside for Pony, who was oddly absent. “She ascended further and pointed her flashlight towards the noise, but didn’t see anything. ‘Hello?’ she shakily called out. No answer. She crawled into the attic and stood up, walking towards the creaking noise. It seemed to be above her, so she looked up. There, tied to a support beam, was a noose that swung and creaked as if there was a body hanging from it. She wanted to scream, but an otherworldly finger pressed against her lips. ‘Shhhh,’ a voice said. ‘Don’t be hasty... you’ll get your turn soon enough.’ As soon as Reiko turned to flashlight off, one of Ibara’s vines shot to the light switch and flipped it on. “So, what’d you guys think? I’ve been working on it for a while now.”

“Scary,” Yui said while hiding behind Kendo.
“I agree with Yui,” Ibara said. “It was a little too much for me.”

“U-U-Um, where’s P-Pony?” Kinoko stuttered out. Setsuna pointed to the couch, where they saw a pair of horns sticking up from behind it.

“Pony? You OK?” Kendo asked. Pony slowly lifted her head from behind the couch, whining with tears forming in her eyes.

“Not scary,” she whimpered.

“Oh geez. I think that was a little too much, Reiko,” Kendo said. She looked and saw Reiko was also close to crying.

“I’m sorry, Pony!” she wailed while jumping to the centaur girl and wrapping her in a hug. “I didn’t mean to scare you so much.”

“Not scared,” Pony insisted while holding Reiko closely.

“Lots of emotions tonight,” Setsuna noted while sliding her hand near Kendo’s shorts.

“Hehe, you’ve got a point. Let’s pick a lighter activity ne— HEY!”


“Ibara can you wrap her up in blankets again?” Kendo requested while pulling her shorts back up.

“Of course. Would you assist me again when you have a moment, Reiko?”

“Sure,” Reiko said while patting Pony on the back. “Do you want to do anything, Pony? Any other movies or shows you want to watch.”

“Well… I brought something like that, yeah.” Pony crawled over to her bag and dug through it for a moment. “I’ve been rewatching JoJo’s Bizarre Adventure. Brought it with me just in case. I’m at the final story of Part 3.” She paused for a moment before hiding her face bashfully behind the case. “It’s fine if you don’t wanna.”

“No, that sounds good,” Kendo assured her.

“I’ve never seen it,” Yui said while pinning Setsuna’s arms to her sides.

“It’s about buff dudes punching with ghosts,” Setsuna explained. “I’m so peeking under your nightie when we’re watching, Yui,” she snickered before Reiko wrapped a blanket tightly around her mouth.

“Another word and you’re banished to the couch,” Reiko threatened.

“Mmmgrmmffmmnn,” the lizard girl grumbled.

“I’ll set up the episode,” Kendo said. “Why don’t you give us a little recap, Pony?”

“OK! Um, once, there was this stone mask…”

“Five seconds have passed.”
The one thing I know, DIO, is that the next time I see your face, I’m probably going to bust a vein.

“Six seconds have passed.”

Bring it on, DIO.

“For such a ridiculous-sounding story, it’s quite gripping,” Ibara said.

“Shh! This the best part!” Pony said.

“ROOOOOOOOAAAAAD ROOOOOOOOLLLLEEEEEEERRR!”

“He’s dropping a steam roller on him?” Kinoko said in disbelief. “That seems excessive.”

“That basically sums up the show,” Kendo noted. They watched intently as the show came to a close and Pony retrieved her disc.

“Cool, yeah!?"

“Very cool,” Reiko said with a thumbs-up. “Even better since Setsuna wasn’t talking through it this time. Isn’t that ri—” The ghost girl paused from shock and disappointment when she saw Setsuna had rolled over to Yui and maneuvered her head under the girl’s pajamas. “Uh, Yui?”

“Hm?”

“Any problems over there?” Yui looked over herself confusedly before finally noticing Setsuna.

“Oh.” She pushed away the lizard girl, who was giggling and blushing under her blanket gag.

“Pl pink,” she mumbled.

“Well, you seem proud of yourself,” Kendo said while grabbing a half-eaten tub of ice cream. “I think I’ll finish this off for you.”

“Nnnmmm!” Setsuna cried. She wormed her way over to Kendo while shaking the blanket off her face. “Gimme a bite! Pleeexxeeease?” Kendo looked down at her sternly, but relented and fed her a spoonful.

“What should we do next?” Kendo wondered.

“I have a suggestion,” Kinoko said. “I was looking online at really obscure world records. It could be fun trying to break a few.”

“That’s a great idea!” Kendo said. “Text me the link and we can look through them.”

“Are you filming yet, Ibara?” Kendo asked while putting Yui’s hair in pigtails.

“Just a moment… alright… go.”

“Hi! I’m Pony Tsunotori!”

“I’m Reiko Yanagi. We’ll be breaking the world record for…” she leaned of camera to read off Kendo’s phone. “Most lemons caught while blindfolded.”
“I only have three lemons in the house,” Kendo said. “So, we’ll be reusing them. Setsuna, you hand them back to Reiko. Kinoko, get the timer ready.” Pony tied off her blindfold and Reiko had the lemons ready.

“Ready?” Kinoko asked. “…Go!”

Pony missed every single throw. “Got i— nope. Got— Go—”

“You’re blowin’ it!” Setsuna yelled.

“Thanks for the faith,” Reiko said.

“Oh, got one!” Pony cheered.

“Time,” Kinoko called out. “We got one.”

“What’s the record?” Pony asked.

“34,” Kendo told them.

“…We close.”

“Hey, I got an idea,” Setsuna said. “Another record we could do.”

“What?” Reiko asked. She immediately regretted asking as Setsuna reached down and threw her nightgown up.

“Best skirt flip!” Setsuna announced. “White panties. A classic.” Reiko shoved down her nightgown and blushed, losing her calm stoicism for a moment.

“Ibara, Kendo… get the blankets… and any long clothing you have.”

“I think I have some scarves lying around,” Kendo sighed.

“C’mon guys, it’s just a joke!” the lizard girl said innocently. “…Guys?”

At around 1:30, Kendo decided to end the festivities and prepare for bed. Everyone grabbed a blanket and took a spot on the comforter.

“Good night, everyone,” Kinoko said.


“I’ll be good!”

“Do you want to sleep near each other just in case?”

“Kay!” Pony flopped down next to Rieko and nuzzled into her chest while the ghost girl draped a blanket over them.

“How nice,” Ibara commented while putting her vines in two Odango-style buns. “Sweet dreams, all.”

“Night,” Yui said while laying down next to Kendo.

“How you doin’ up there, Setsuna?” Kendo asked.
“MRRRGG!” Every spare blanket and a few of Kendo’s scarves had been used to restrain the squirming Setsuna. "MRRMR FRRMRRFF!"

“I told you we’d banish you to the couch,” Reiko said.

“She’s right. We warned you,” Kendo told the lizard girl. Ibara flipped the light switch with her vines, turning the room almost completely black. It was silent for a moment, but Setsuna’s whining stopped that quickly. Kendo turned her head to Ibara, who looked a little guilty.

“Can she really do much like that?” Kendo tried to stay strong, but relented and grabbed Setsuna with her enlarged fist, placing her between the two of them.

“You’re still on thin ice,” she was told. The lizard girl didn’t mind and happily giggled while snuggling into her friend’s chest.

Chapter End Notes

Fluuuuuuuffy
Choose and be Chosen

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I can’t believe the train was so late!” Kendo worriedly yelled as she ran through U.A.'s halls with Monoma behind her. “We’re so busted!”

“I’m sure Mr. Kan will understand,” Monoma calmly said as they reached the classroom. Kendo stopped to catch her breath while Monoma fixed his hair.

“I hope your right,” Kendo said as she slowly opened the door.

“Sorry we’re late, Mr. Kan. The train—” Once they were inside, they realized their teacher was also late, despite everyone else being present. “Oh, uh… Morning, everyone!” Kendo greeted.

After the mixed bag of emotions the Sports Festival brought on the class, Kendo turned up the cheerfulness to gauge how the class was doing. To her delight, everyone seemed to be back to normal already. Kuroiro and Honenuki were joking around as usual, having brought up Hatsume to Awase again. Tsuburaba and Pony were having a conversation as Kaibara snuck a few glances at the Solid Air user. Kinoko and Ibara were talking with Reiko, Shishida slept at his desk, Fukidashi was scribbling in his sketchbook – things looked to be ordinary. “I guess Mr. Kan is late too.”

“Looks that way,” Monoma said as they sat down. “He might be busy. You remember what comes today, yeah?”

“You mean the internship drafts? Yes, I remember.”

“Think we got any?”

“It doesn’t matter if we got any or not,” Kendo said. “Mr. Kan said we’ll all be taking internships no matter what, so don’t sulk like you did last week.” As Monoma huffed and turned away, they heard the classroom door slide open and Mr. Kan entered. Everyone immediately noticed how tired he looked – his hair was disheveled and his face looked scruffy as if he forgot to shave. He had also forgotten his mask, putting the dark bags under his eyes on display.

“Good morning, class,” he half-yawned. “I assume your extended weekend was restful.”

Yours obviously wasn’t, they all thought.

“We’ll be having a special hero informatics class today, but first… yawn… let’s talk about your internships.” From under the podium, Kan brought up a stack of folders onto the podium. “I won’t bother showing you the request numbers, so come up and take the folder with your name on it. You’ll find your requests inside. Midnight will be here in a little while after she finishes up with 1-A.” With that, he slowly trudged back to the door. “If you need me beforehand, I’ll be in the teacher’s lounge.”

Once he left, the class slowly began taking their folders. “What’s up with him?” Setsuna wondered.

“Maybe he’s hung over?” Kamakiri suggested.

“I doubt that,” Shishida said.

“HOLY SHIT!” Awase suddenly yelled from his desk. He was looking down at his folder with
extreme shock on his face. “Remember how we were talking about not making an impression on people and not using our Quirks during the festival?”

“Yes?” Shishida said. “Why?”

“I only got three requests, which is more than I expected. I didn’t use my Quirk once in the festival or show off my fighting, so I expected no requests at all. So, how did I get a one from Rock Lock?” Awase pulled a paper from his folder and showed it off to his classmates.

“Woah. He’s a pretty high-up pro,” Tsuburaba noted.

“Our Quirks and fighting styles are pretty similar, but how could he have known that?” Awase wondered.

“How peculiar,” Shishida said as he inspected the paper. “It may just be a coincidence, but whatever the reason, I’d just be glad you got such a good request.”

“I don’t think it’s a coincidence,” Shoda added. “I got two requests and one of them is from Fatgum. We have similar Quirks too, but I didn’t show mine off at the festival.”

“Oh, I love Fatgum!” Pony said. “He so round and funny. Good job, Shoda!”

“At what?” he asked. “I didn’t do anything.”

“ Weird,” Rin said. “Two requests in a row have been very fitting.” He looked down at his folder and suddenly seemed anxious. “Should I even hope for…” He shakily reached down and began opening the folder. “No way. It’s too much of a stretch. There’s no way she’d—” Once it opened, Rin froze as he looked at the only request in the folder.

“What is it?” Setsuna asked as she looked over the boy’s shoulder. “Only one, huh? …WHAT?! WHAAAAAAT?!?”

“What is it?” Kendo asked.

“RYUKYU!” she shrieked. “Rin got a request from Ryukyu!”

“THE NUMBER NINE HERO?!?” the whole class yelled. “How did you get that?!?”

“I don’t know,” Rin said with tears in his eyes. “Ryukyu’s my favorite hero ever. I’m not gonna question this. It’s too good to be true, but I’m just glad it happened!”

“I can’t believe it!” Setsuna yelled. “I’m so jealous! Ryukyu’s my favorite hero too.” She bounced back to her own desk and grabbed her folder. “If you got someone that big, then who did I… AAAAAAAAAAH!” Setsuna fell backwards and screamed in delight, making a few students cover their ears. “I GOT ONE TOO! RYUKYU WANTS ME TOOOOO!” she bawled.

“They both got a request from the number nine hero in Japan,” Monoma said as she picked up Setsuna’s folder, which she dropped in her crying fit. “Moreover, it was their only request.”

“I’ll admit, it’s pretty strange,” Kendo said as she held Setsuna. “Could this just be because we’re U.A. students?”

“If that were the case, the Sports Festival wouldn’t have been such a big deal,” Monoma pointed out. “Before we get to the bottom of this, I’m curious…” He turned to looked at Reiko and Honenuki, who were both checking their folders. “If Rin and Setsuna could get a request from such
a high-up pro, then what did our recommended students get?” Everyone looked to their classmates, who both pulled out a single sheet of paper.

“THEY BOTH GOT A HERO EVEN HIGHER IN THE TOP TEN?!” the class yelled in disbelief.

“The number 7 hero, Crust,” Honenuki said. “He can manipulate the earth with his Quirk like I can.”

“Mine fits too,” Reiko said. “The number 5 hero, Edgeshot. We’re both stealth-based heroes.”

“I know we keep saying to not question this because it’s too good,” Kaibara began, “but how did we get such good requests?”

“I can answer that,” a voice said as the classroom door opened up. “To your seats, students!”

“Yes, Miss Midnight!” The 18+ heroine sauntered to the podium and pulled out a stack of dry erase boards and markers.

“Class reps, pass these out to your classmates.” As Kendo and Shishida took the boards and markers, Midnight looked them over and saw the delight in some of their faces. “You kids are lucky to have such a good teacher.”

“What you mean?” Pony asked.

“You were all wondering why your requests are so good despite how little you could do in the Sports Festival. It’s because of Vlad.”

“Huh?”

“Vlad spent the past four days networking on your behalf,” Midnight revealed. “Day and night, he was calling every hero he knew, using up every favor or connection he had, and asking his fellow teachers for help in getting you all great internships. He even asked some of the older students here to connect him with pros they’ve interned with.

“Seriously?” Kuroiro said.

“Of course, a couple of you made enough of an impression that he didn’t need to market you, but for the most part, he was sending other pros footage of your training exercises and talking you up. The Heroes vs Villains training, the rescue training, you fight with All Might – he was dead set on showing you off to everyone he could. In the end, it payed off, and you all have some great internships lined up.”

“He really did that for us?” Kendo asked.

“I knew he was manly,” Tetsutetsu began as tears ran down his cheeks, “but he really outdid himself.”

“We must think of a way of thanking him properly,” Shiozaki said.

“Silence!” Midnight demanded with a crack of her whip. Everyone instantly stopped talking and sat at attention. “Vlad doesn’t care for big gestures or heartfelt thanks. He’d much prefer if you didn’t bring this up at all and just focus on your internships. I’m not saying you can’t be grateful, but there’s some advice for you. Now, let’s move on to your Hero Informatics class. Today’s special lesson… picking hero names!”
“Woah, really!!” Awase yelled excitedly.

“Kickass!” Setsuna cheered.

“I know you’re all excited and have probably thought about this before,” Midnight continued, “but make sure you give this some serious consideration. You can change your name in the future, but ideally, this will be your handle for your entire career. Pick a name you won’t regret when you’re older. Something sensible and rolls off the tongue. Most importantly, your name is an indication of what you want to present yourself as. Think of All Might, for instance. He’s a pillar a strength, so his name tells you that his strength is what you should think of. Take some time and think carefully.” Most of the class took her advice and began thinking about their names, but surprisingly, Monoma and Kendo were frantically writing theirs already. In fact, they seem to be racing each other.

“Me first!” Monoma called out as he jumped from his desk.

“No, me!” Kendo said as she grabbed Monoma’s jacket and pulled him back. The two of them stumbled their way towards the podium and were still wrestling once they made it there. It eventually stopped when Kendo grabbed Monoma’s board and threw it to the back of the class. “OK, here’s mine,” she said as she fixed her hair and uniform. “The combat hero: Battle Fist!”

“I like it,” Midnight said. “It seems like you’ve had this name planned for a while.”

“Yup. I thought of it when I was little.”

“Approved! Monoma, you can go ahead.” Kendo playfully stuck her tongue Monoma as he walked past her to the podium.

“The copying hero,” he announced as he presented his board. “Phantom Thief.”

“Creative and very sleek. Approved!”

“Thank you,” he said with a prideful smirk.

“These first two names are good examples of two different naming styles,” Midnight explained. “A hero name can be representative of your Quirk and fighting style, like Battle Fist, or it could relate to the image you’re trying to cultivate, like Phantom Thief. Once you have a name in mind, just come on up.”

“Me next!” Pony called out, happily scampering to the front of the class. “The Riding Hero: Bronco!”

“Very nice, Pony,” Midnight complimented. The class applauded the centaur girl, causing her to blush and hide her face behind her board.

“C’mon, you don’t gotta clap,” she said with a satisfied smile. Pony trotted back to her seat, leading to Kuroiro standing up and taking her place at the podium.

“The Ebony Hero,” he said while posing dramatically. “Endless Void of Absolute Darkness!”

“…Waaaaay too long,” the whole class responded with Midnight nodding in agreement. Kuroiro sighed and started scribbling out words on his board.

“Void.”
“That works. Approved.” Kuroiro shuffled disappointedly to his seat, but felt a hand hit his shoulder.

“I liked your first one,” Honenuki said while going to the podium.

“At least someone had good taste.”

“Just your name?” Midnight questioned while looking over Honenuki’s board.

"Yup. I’ll be the Softening Hero: Juzo."

“If you insist. It’s at least short and easy to remember. Approved.”

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“The Bestial Hero. My hero name shall be Beastman.”

“Fitting and catchy, Shishida.”

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“The Razor Hero: Mandiblade.”

“Excellent portmanteau.”

“Huh?”

“Combination of words, Kamakiri. I’m saying it’s approved.”

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“The Reptile Hero: Indominus!”

“A name meaning ‘fierce and untamable.’ How fitting, Tokage.”

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“The Draconic Hero: Shenlong.”

“Oh, god of dragons,” Midnight moaned sensually. “Perfect.”

Why did she moan like that? Rin wondered nervously.

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“The Peaceful Hero: Maria.”

“How nice, Shiozaki. I take it you’d like to display your pacifism first and foremost. A great name choice.”

“Thank you, ma’am,” Ibara said with a bow.

“GOT ONE!” Tetsutetsu suddenly yelled before hastily scribbling down a name. Once Ibara left the podium, Tetsutetsu ran up and slammed his board down to show his classmates. “Metal Hero: Real Steel!”

“Very catchy, Tetsutetsu. Approved,” Midnight said. “Now, who’s next?”
“The Ghost Hero: Onryo.”
“How clever, Yanagi.”

“The Shifting Hero: Minmax.”
“It’s adorable!” Midnight cooed. “Lovely work, Kodai!”

“Glue Gun Hero: Trapper.”
“Very nice, Bondo. Approved,” Midnight said. I didn’t realize he could talk.

“The Sound Effect Hero: Echoes!” Fukidashi announced while posing with Pony mirroring him in her seat.
“Approved!”

“The Welding Hero: Fuse.”
“Short, sweet, and to the point. Excellent, Awase.”

“Th-The Mushroom Hero: Mycelium.”
“Very nice work, Komori. It’s definitely difficult to make mushrooms sound cool, but you’ve pulled it off. Approved.”

“Um, I’ll be the Kinetic Hero: Impact.”
“Approved! Well done, Shoda”

“The Protection Hero! My name is Barricade.”
“It’s perfect, Tsuburaba!”

“Drilling Hero: Spiral.”
“Nice work, Kaibara. Approved!” Midnight said. “With that, you’ve all picked out a hero name. I’d say that went very smoothly, wouldn’t you?”
Once their morning classes were finished, Class 1-B hung around in their classroom to look over their requests again. “I can’t believe I got a request from Ryukyu,” Setsuna said. “It feels like a dream.”

“I’m happy for you, Setsuna,” Kendo said. “I think I may go with Uwabami.”

“The snake heroine?! You have to get me an autograph!”

“I’ll see what I can do.” Kendo put her folder away and looked over Tetsutetsu’s shoulder at his requests. “How’d you do, Mr. Top 16?”

“I got, like, 25!” the iron boy announced. “That’s way more than I thought I’d get.”

“Any idea who you’ll pick?” Monoma asked.

“Hell yeah. I’m interning with Fourth Kind.”

“Is he that hero with the business suit and four arms?” Kendo asked.

“Yup! He’s a real manly hero. I’m super happy he noticed me!”


“I have about 40,” she said while looking through her folder.

“Wow! I think that’s the most in the class. Nice job,” Kendo complimented. “How’re you gonna decide?”

“I’ve already decided, actually,” she said with a small smile. She opened her folder and pulled out the top request – Kamui Woods.

“Dang, girl,” Setsuna said. “That’s gotta be fate. You gonna tell him about, y’know…”

“I don’t know if I’ll tell him that specifically,” she said while twirling a vine around her finger, “but I would like to let him know that he inspired me at the very least.”

“Good on you,” Monoma told her. “I got a couple requests, but it isn’t anyone notable.”

“You’ll get good experience anyone,” Kendo said. “C’mon, let’s go get some lunch.”

“Sounds good.” The students left their seats and went to the door, but before they could leave, it opened from the other side.

“I AM HERE! AND GLAD YOU ALL HAVEN’T LEFT YET!”

“A-All Might?” Kendo said. “What can we do for you?”

“I’ve come with a very special opportunity! Specifically, for young Monoma!”

“Me? Why meEEAH!” Monoma was yanked down the hall by All Might, who brought him to a stairwell.

“Sorry about that! I didn’t want your classmates to get jealous, so I wanted to tell you in private!”

“They already heard you say the special thing is for me,” Monoma pointed out while rubbing his shoulder. “Why wouldn’t they be jealous already.”
“…Good point! That’s your acute mind at work again, and that’s exactly why Vlad and I set up a special internship for you.”

“For me?”

“That’s right! We both know your mind is your greatest strength, so this internship would help you adjust that to the world of crime, although it’s a bit unorthodox. Interested?”

“…I… Of course, I am.” Monoma felt awestruck that All Might himself would go out of his way to set him up with a special internship. He smiled, not smirked, and bowed to his teacher. “Thank you so much for this opportunity, sir!”

“Of course, my boy,” All Might said with a hand on Monoma’s shoulder. “I know you must feel frustrated after last week, but I promise that I haven’t forgotten about you or any of your classmates. You’ll all be great heroes. I can tell.” Monoma’s eyes flooded with tears, but he wiped them away quickly and raised his head.

“So, what kind of internship is it?”

“I can’t believe how much I slept,” Kan said to himself as he walked down the hall. “The sun’s already going down. I’ll have to thank All Might for covering their afternoon hero courses tomorrow.” He rolled his shoulders and let out a big yawn as he reached Class 1-B. *Midnight probably told them all about what I did.* He peeked inside and was relieved to see the lights were off. *Good. None of them stuck around to thank me,* he thought as he walked inside and flipped the light switch. “Now, where’s my lesson planner?” That’s when the chalkboard caught his eye and he walked to the center of the room to get a better look. On the board was 20 different messages for him in multicolored chalk.

Thank you so much for all you’ve done – Kendo

We promise to beat 1-A next time! – Monoma

You’re a true man! Thank you X 1,000,000! – Tetsutetsu

You’ve done so much for us and we can’t thank you enough. Bless you – Shiozaki

You the bestest! – Pony

Kan read through each one of them before cracking a smile. “Heh… Those kids…”

Chapter End Notes

I've got two fluff chapters coming up, this time co-starring 1-A, then we go diving into the internships. Obviously I can't cover the Hosu incident, but I've got something special planned...

In case you want a more condensed list of their names:

Itsuka Kendo - Battle Fist
Neito Monoma - Phantom Thief
Ibara Shiozaki - Maria
Tetsutetsu Tetsutetsu - Real Steel
Pony Tsunotori - Bronco
Juzo Honenuki - Juzo
Hiryu Rin - Shenlong
Reiko Yanagi - Onryo
Yui Kodai - Minmax
Kinoko Komori - Mycelium
Nirengeki Shoda - Impact
Yosetsu Awase - Fuse
Shihai Kuroiro - Void
Manga Fukidashi - Echoes
Sen Kaibara - Spiral
Jurota Shishida - Beastman
Kosei Tsuburaba - Barricade
Setsuna Tokage - Indominus
Togaru Kamakiri - Mandiblade
Kojiro Bondo - Trapper
Another day, another batch of insane ramblings by Monoma. Kendo thought as she rubbed her temples. After interrupting her friend’s latest tirade against 1-A, she made her way to the cafeteria and bought lunch before arriving at her usual table with the rest of the 1-B girls. Well, most of them…

“That’s weird,” Kendo said. “Reiko’s not here again?”

“She hasn’t sat with us all week,” Kinoko noted.

“I asked about it, but she didn’t give a clear answer,” Pony said. “Hope she’s alright.”

“Could it be us?” Yui wondered.

“I doubt it,” Ibara said. “If one of us were the problem, she would confront the person.”

“Y’know what I think?” Setsuna interjected. “I think our little groovy ghoulie has been meeting someone.”

“A boyfriend?” Pony excitedly asked. “Think that’s where she’s been going for lunch?”

“Not only that,” the lizard girl continued, “but she’s been sneaking around after school too.”

“It’s none of our business if that’s the case,” Ibara said. “If she’d rather keep it to herself, then we should respect her privacy.”

“Or, or,” Setsuna quickly said, “hear me out… we could check up on this dude or lady and make sure they’re good enough for her.”

“You just want an excuse to pry into her business,” Kendo accused.

“C’mon, I’m curious!” Setsuna whined. “Don’t tell me you’re not.”

“How would we even find out?”

“I have a little theory that may lead us in the right direction,” the lizard girl began. “This started the day after our Sports Festival break, so I think someone from 1-A may have stolen her heart.”

“Ya think?” Pony asked. “Monoma’s gonna get upset if that’s case.”

“He can be upset all he wants, but we gotta find out,” Setsuna declared. “Kendo, you said you wanted us to be friendly with 1-A, right? Let’s take this opportunity to meet them and see if anyone in that class has been sneaking around too.”

“…This could be a good opportunity to build our relationship,” Kendo told herself. “I could meet their class rep.”

“I don’t want to get involved if Reiko will get angry,” Kinoko said. “I’ll pass on the spying, if that’s alright.” Yui looked at Kinoko and then nodded in agreement.
“That’s fine,” Setsuna told them. “The four of us will investigate 1-A and see if she’s seeing someone in that class.”

Once afternoon classes had ended, the girl’s plan went into motion. The four of them arrived outside of Class 1-A and Kendo huddled them up. “We may have seen each other at the Sports Festival, but this is our first formal meeting,” Kendo explained. “Let’s play this carefully and put out best foot forward… where’s Setsuna?” The vein on her forehead popped up when she heard 1-A’s door slide open.

“Square up, THOTs!” Setsuna yelled. “The Class B bitches are here and— EEP!” Setsuna was quickly pulled away by a few of Ibara’s vines, which also slid the door closed. “Whaaaat?”

“That is not our best foot forward,” Kendo lectured.

“I disagree.” While Kendo gave her a chop on the head, someone exited the class – a tall boy with dark blue hair and glasses.

“Is there something I can help you all with?” he asked.

“Oh, uh, yes,” Kendo said. “I’m Itsuka Kendo, the class rep for 1-B.”

“Hello, Miss Kendo. I am Tenya Iida, the Class 1-A representative,” the boy said with many hand gestures. “It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

“You too, Iida,” Kendo said while shaking his hand.

“Anyway, what brings you all here?”

“Well, it’s not something that important. One of our classmates has been… well, she’s kind of—”

“She’s been sneaking around and I said she may be dating someone from this class so we wanted to investigate,” Setsuna speedily explained. “Sorry, but you were going nowhere fast.”

“I see,” Iida said with more hand gestures. “You’d like to know if anyone in our class has been acting similarly?”

“Basically, yeah. Sorry about this,” Kendo said sheepishly. “It’s kinda weird to meet for this reason.”

“Not at all,” Iida assured her. “I understand that tensions may be seem high between us after the Sports Festival, but I’d like nothing more than to improve our classes’ relationship. Please step inside, ladies.” Iida led the girls inside the classroom, which was still pretty full for the end of the day. The 1-B girls recognized most of the students there from the Sports Festival – aside from Iida, there was Uraraka, Tsuyu, Sero, Kaminari, Mina, and Hagakure.

“Hey, check it out,” Sero said. “It’s Class 1-B.”

“Not only that,” Kaminari added. “It’s the ladies~.” He left his seat and confidently approached the group. “Have you warmed up to my offer, angel?” he said to Ibara.


“She already forgot me,” he moaned into Sero’s shoulder.
“I don’t think it’s him,” Pony pointed out.

“Listen up,” Setsuna said. “Which one of you 1-A dudes or ladies is gettin’ friendly with our friendly ghost?”

“Could you start over, ribbit?”

“I’ll do the talking, Sets,” Kendo said. “It’s a long story, but we think our classmate, Yanagi, is dating someone from this class. We were wondering if any of you have noticed one of your classmates skipping out of lunch and sneaking around after school, at least since the Sports Festival.”

“What does Yanagi look like again?” Uraraka asked.

“Gray hair that covers her left eye, puckered lips, leaves her arms hanging kinda like that,” Setsuna explained, pointing to Tsuyu for her last example.

“I think I remember her, ribbit,” Tsuyu said, “but I haven’t seen her around.”

“I can’t really think of anyone acting strangely,” Uraraka added.

“Wait, hold on!” Mina suddenly said. “If she’s been sneaking around after school, then why don’t we just follow her and go see for ourselves?”

“You mean spy on her?” Kendo asked. “I don’t know. It seems like we’re invading her privacy too much. Besides, how could we even do that without her noticing?”

“I can do it!” Hagakure offered. “I can peek around corners with no one noticing.”

“They have a good point, Kendo,” Setsuna told her. “C’mon, let’s go check up on Reiko. I know you’re curious.”

“Yeah, c’mon, c’mon!” Mina and Hagakure prodded.

“Wait, why are you two so invested now?” Kendo asked the lively 1-A girls.

“Nothing like this happens here! It’s boorong,” Mina whined. “We wanna tag along, so let’s go spy on her.”

“…Fine, but as soon as we see who it is, we’re gone,” Kendo instructed. “We won’t ask Reiko anything and we won’t confront the guy. Are we clear?”

“Fine by me,” Setsuna said. “Ibara, Pony, you still in?”

“I suppose.”

“Sure!”

“Kay, let’s go!” Mina said while she and Hagakure ran outside. “Where is she?”

“I know the general direction she goes,” Setsuna explained. “We’ll find her eventually if we look around.”

“I think we’ll tag along, ribbit,” Tsuyu said as she and Uraraka joined the rest of the girls. “Mina and Hagakure can get a little overexcited, so we’ll keep things from getting out of control.”

“Thank you, Asui, Uraraka,” Kendo said gratefully.
“Call me Tsu.”

After formally introducing themselves, the girls of the hero course followed Setsuna’s lead to where Reiko should be.

“I saw her heading down this hallway the other day,” the lizard girl explained. “It’s kind of out of the way, but that’s all the more reason it’s probably a secret relationship.”

“I honestly can’t picture any of the guys in our class doing something like this,” Hagakure said. “Maybe it’s someone quiet and shy like Kouda or Midoriya.”

“You think it’s Deku?” Uraraka asked somewhat nervously.

“It was just an example. Chill,” Mina said. “Maybe someone antisocial and cool like Todoroki.”

“She’s kind of a goth if that narrows your search,” Setsuna noted.

“Then It might be Tokoyami, ribbit,” Tsuyu suggested.

“Right here,” Setsuna said as the group stopped. “This is the furthest I’ve followed her, so from now on, we take this slow. Hagakure, you take point. Peek around the corners and try to spot Reiko.”

“I’m on it,” the invisible girl announced. “Stealth mode time! Special agent Hagakure is on the scene.” She pressed her back to the wall and slid down to the corner, peeking her clear head around to survey the area. “Not here. Let’s go further—”

“I AM HERE!”

“WAAH!” The girls all yelped in shock when All Might suddenly appeared from behind them. “ALL MIGHT, WHAT THE HECK?!” Pony yelled. “Scared me half the death!”

“Oh, Sorry! I didn’t mean to startle you like that!”

“I-It’s fine,” Kendo assured him. “Anyway, what can we do for you, sir?”

“Nothing, really! I just wanted to say that I’m so glad our two hero course students are hanging out together! It warms my heart to see—”

“She’s coming!” Hagakure loudly whispered. “Act natural!”

“Crap!” Setsuna said.

“Wait, who?” All Might asked. “Who’s co—”

“I said ‘act natural!’” Hagakure insisted. The girls and All Might all pressed against the walls and struck ‘normal’ poses. Kendo and Ibara pretended they were having a conversation, but had horribly uncomfortable faces. Mina and Setsuna were pretending to fight by punching in slow motion. Tsuyu and Pony posed like the animal their powers resembled, with Tsuyu crouched down and Pony on all fours, pretending to graze. All Might flexed his arms and stood like a statue while Uraraka and Hagakure hung on his biceps like monkey bars. Eventually, someone did come around the corner, but it wasn’t Reiko.

“Just a few more modifications and my Hover Soles will be even better!” Hatsume told herself, not noticing the other girls as she walked down the hall.
“Hagakure, that wasn’t her,” Pony pointed out.

“Sorry! I only caught a glimpse and panicked,” the invisible girl explained.

“What’s going on here?” All Might asked. “Are you spying on someone?” Kendo looked to Setsuna to explain, but the lizard girl whistled innocently and looked away.

“Kinda,’ Kendo sighed. “We think Reiko’s dating someone from 1-A and our curiosity got the better of us.”

“We only wanted to make sure she was alright. Promise,” Pony said.

“I was against it from the start,” Setsuna claimed. “It was all their idea. Uuuuh, they forced me to come— OW! Why with the chopping, Kendo?” she asked while holding her arm.

“I see now,” All Might said. “I’m sure you have good intentions, but Yanagi is a smart girl. She wouldn’t be seeing someone if they didn’t make her happy. I’m sure she’ll tell you when the time is right.”

“You’re probably right, sir,” Ibara said.

“Wait, I see her,” Hagakure whispered. “I’m sure of it.”

“Is she with anyone?” Uraraka asked.

“Not yet, but she has our back to us, so you can look too.” The girls and All Might all grouped up at the corner and peeked around to see Reiko.

“Why are you spying too, ribbit?”

“You got me curious,” All Might whispered.

“She’s definitely waiting for someone,” Mina said. After a few moments, they saw a boy walking down the hall, finally causing Reiko to react. They locked eyes and approached one another.

“Is that him?” Uraraka asked. “He’s not in our class.”

“He’s not from ours either,” Setsuna said.

“Wait, I remember,” Mina said. “He was that General Studies kid from the Sports Festival. What was his name?”

“Hitoshi Shinso,” All Might clarified.

“Hey,” Shinso greeted.

“Hey,” Reiko said back. Neither of them said anything for a while.

“This is harder without coffee or cats,” Shinso claimed.

“Agreed. Wanna just go?”

“Yeah.”

“Meet me outside then. I gotta take care of something.”
“Are you gonna use your Quirk?”

“Yeah, why?” Shinso didn’t answer, but smirked and took out his phone. “This again?” Reiko groaned. The purple-haired boy was undeterred by her complaint and turned up the volume on his phone, blasting an old theme song.

*Young Danny Fenton, he was just 14*

Reiko tried to stay aloof, but started to chuckle when she saw Shinso’s shit-eating grin. “You still think that’s funny?”

“You’re the one laughing,” he pointed out.

“Dumbass,” she said while phasing through the wall.

“What happened?” Mina asked. “She disappeared?”

“Her Quirk is phasing,” Pony explained. “Wonder where she went?”

“Behind you.” The girls and All Might flinched and turned around to see an unamused Reiko. “What you doing? And why is 1-A here? …And All Might?”

“Uh, anyway, girls!” All Might began. “That’s why spying on your friends is bad… BYE!” He dashed off in his normal fashion, leaving the girls to fend for themselves.

“Reiko—“

“Me first,” Reiko insisted with her hand up. “I know you’ve been wondering about what I’ve been doing. I was going to tell you, but I wasn’t sure when. I didn’t want to seem like an idiot if this fell apart quickly. In the future, I’ll be more open, but only to avoid any of you acting foolish like this. Now, you go.”

“We’re sorry, Reiko,” Kendo said. “All of us.”

“We promise to respect your privacy in the future,” Ibara added.

“Does that include you four?” she asked the 1-A girls.

“Yeah, sorry about this,” Uraraka apologized with her friends nodding in agreement.

“Now that we’ve got all that out of the way, give us details, girl,” Setsuna said.

“Yeah, c’mon! Tell us!” Mina demanded with Hagakure parroting her swinging arms.

“Not much to say,” Reiko said while looking at her feet. “We already knew each other before the Sports Festival, though just in passing. We both go to a cat café with a goth theme pretty frequently.”

“Nekonomicon?” Pony asked.

“That’s the place. On Thursday, we were there at the same time, so I decided to congratulate him on his performance at the games.” She blushed a light pink and swiveled her foot around the floor. “Things just sort of… went from there… and he gave me his number.”

“You sure are seeing a lot of each other if this just started,” Kendo noted.
“You think?” she asked worriedly.

“N-No! That was— Forget I said anything!” Kendo backtracked. “If you’re both happy to see each other, then that’s a good thing.”

“You make a cute couple, ribbit,” Tsuyu complimented.

“Thanks. I should get going.”

“Have fun on your daaate~”

“Shut up, lizard,” Reiko snarked as she walked off to her date. Oh well. Friends that care too much are better than none at all.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry if this seems a little rushed even though it took a while. I was splitting my focus between this and a special thing I'm working on. This special thing will hopefully be out sometime next week.
With the relationship between 1-A and 1-B officially starting, Kendo had high hopes. It was true that people like Bakugo and Monoma were lost causes when it came to the classes cooperating, but for the most part, their interactions had been mostly friendly. It helped that Kirishima and Tetsutetsu had become fast friends since the Sports Festival. It seemed like things would be going smoothly, but something still stuck out in Kendo’s mind – Ibara seemed very anxious and nervous around them. She had been fine the first time they visited, but since then, she would sometimes go out of her way to avoid that room or a group of their students. I wonder what’s on her mind, Kendo thought. Class had just ended and people were packing up to go, so this was Kendo’s chance to ask.


“Yes, Kendo?”

“I don’t mean to pry if it’s something personal, but I feel like you’re trying to avoid 1-A or at least someone in that class. Is something wrong?”

“Oh, um…” Ibara looked away from her friend and held tightly to her bag.

“Don’t try and guilt trip her, Kendo,” Monoma said as he approached the girls. “If she doesn’t want to be buddies with those egocentric 1-A fools, then why force her?”

“Monoma, name-calling like that isn’t gonna help anything,” Kendo lectured. She chopped at his neck, but Monoma had planned ahead and protected his neck with Tetsutetsu’s Quirk. “Besides, you’re the one trying to guilt people into going against 1-A with you.”

“When did this become about me? Ibara, neither I nor Kendo will judge you, so just tell us what’s wrong.” The vine-haired girl looked across the room and made eye contact with Reiko before sighing.

“I agree with Kendo that we should foster a peaceful relationship with our sister class…” Kendo smirked at Monoma, who pretended not to notice. “…But only after I’ve exorcised the demon dwelling inside Bakugo.” Both Kendo and Monoma were frozen in shock, letting Ibara slip by them and walk outside with Reiko.

“W-Wait, Ibara!” Kendo called out.

“This is gonna be good,” Monoma told himself. They ran out of the classroom and caught up to the two girls.

“What makes you think he’s is possessed?” Kendo asked, internally pleading for this to a dream.

“It was at the Sports Festival,” Ibara explained with absolute seriousness. “The awards ceremony, to be specific. Katsuki Bakugo has a demon inside of him that nearly swallowed his soul that day. You saw it’s animalistic and bloodthirsty behavior. That boy is possessed, but I will save his soul!”

“Oh, god,” Kendo moaned while rubbing her temples. “Reiko, do you believe he’s possessed too?”

“Not sure,” the ghost girl said, “but I’ve never seen an exorcism in person before. Might be fun.”
“I think it’ll be very fun,” Monoma added. “Ibara, you’re doing the right thing in helping this poor, troubled boy.”

You can just leave, Kendo told herself. You don’t have to get involved, Itsuka. You can just go… leaving Monoma unattended… Why me? They arrived at Class 1-A quickly and stood before it’s giant door. “This is your last chance, Ibara. You can turn back… please turn back.”

“I cannot,” Ibara said. “It is my duty to save wayward souls and let them feel the light. I promise to save his soul.” She took a deep breath and handed her bag to Reiko. “Would you be so kind as to hold my tools?”

“Sure.”

“Ooo, she brought tools,” Monoma excitedly said.

“When did I lose control?” Kendo wondered. Ibara slid open the door and the four students walked inside. At the head of the class was Iida, Uraraka, and Midoriya, who looked ready to leave. Mingling in at their desks were Kaminari, Kirishima, Sero, Mina, and Sato. Packing up on their own was Tokoyami, Todoroki, and Bakugo.

“Hey, it’s 1-B again,” Uraraka noted.

“Ah, welcome,” Iida said. “It’s good to see you all again.”

“Hi,” Kendo said with little energy.

“I don’t believe we’ve met,” Iida said while extending his hand to Monoma. “My name is Tenya Iida, class representative.”

“Nice to meet you,” Monoma said with less spite than usual as he returned the handshake.

At least his mood’s good enough to behave right now, Kendo thought. Bright side, Itsuka, bright side.

“What brings you here today?” Iida asked.

“I have business with one of your classmates,” Ibara politely explained. “Is Katsuki Bakugo here, by any chance?”

“Why him?” Uraraka asked.

“I have business with one of your classmates,” Ibara politely explained. “Is Katsuki Bakugo here, by any chance?”

“Why him?” Uraraka asked.

“Bakugo, you have a visitor,” Iida announced while turning and gesturing to his blonde classmate.

“Who the hell is it?” he asked before looking. “Why the hell are those extras here?”

“Please be polite!” Iida lectured. Ibara walked briskly to Bakugo and stared into his eyes.

“What the hell are you lookin’ at?!” he yelled

“Geez, Kaminari. You’re lower on that girl’s list than Bakugo?” Mina said. “That’s gotta suck.”

“Reiko, my tools please?” Reiko came to Ibara’s side, positioning herself out of Bakugo’s line of sight, and opened the bag. “Thank you. Katsuki Bakugo… I promise to exorcise the demon that consumes your soul!”

The entire class went silent and stared at Ibara. The first move was made by Mina and Sero, who

“What the hell are you talking about?” Bakugo growled while clenching his fists.

“Easy, man,” Kirishima said as he came to Bakugo’s side. “Let’s not start a fight.”

“Um, excuse me,” Tokoyami said as he approached Ibara. “I believe you may be confused. My Quirk, Dark Shadow, might be what you’re thinking of.” From Tokoyami’s body came the small black form of Dark Shadow, who looked up at Ibara with sad eyes.

“I promise that I’m not a demon,” Dark Shadow said. Ibara stared blankly at it before patting it on the head.

“No, I’m quite sure that Bakugo is the possessed one,” she said. “I know this is just your Quirk.”

“I don’t think Kacchan isn’t possessed, Shiozaki,” Midoriya said. “He’s always been, well…”

“A douche?” Sato suggested.

“A turd?” Kaminari added.

“A psychopath?” Todoroki included as he joined the crowd.

“A psychopathic doucheturd?” Monoma proposed.

“Why did I bother coming?” Kendo questioned as she sulked in the corner.

“Whatever the case, I shall exorcise it,” Ibara declared.

“You lookin’ to die, Giving Tree?” Bakugo growled. Ibara backed up a step and pulled her cross necklace out from her bag, holding it out defensively.

“The beast shows itself,” she said.

“OK, we’ve got the cross,” Monoma noted while recording the situation on his phone. “What’s next?”

“Garlic?” Dark Shadow suggested.

“That’s for vampires,” Tokoyami corrected.

“Neither of you are helping!” Iida yelled while furiously chopping his hand.

“This is the dumbest bullshit I’ve ever seen,” Bakugo claimed. “I’m out of here.” He tried to walk forward, but felt his shoulders and right arm being grabbed.

“As your bro, I can’t let you go yet,” Kaminari said with a mischievous smirk while holding his left arm back. “Right, Sato?”

“Yeah, man,” Sato added with his hands clamped on Bakugo’s shoulders. “You’ve gotta get this thing removed, right?”

“Get off me, dipshits!” he yelled before Kirishima grabbed his right arm.

“They’ve got a point, bro,” Kirishima snickered. “Demons are no good.”
“You traitor! I’ll kill all you shitbags!” While Bakugo’s classmates turned on him, Ibara had taken out an incense candle and lit it, placing it on Bakugo’s desk.

“This should help weaken the wicked spirit.”

“It smells like ass!”

“Then it’s working.” Ibara bowed her head slightly and began saying a prayer, ignoring Bakugo’s many threats. At this point, Kendo had moved on from sulking to rhythmically banging her head on the wall. Monoma was wishing he had brought popcorn. Reiko was noting the procedure in her head. Midoriya was convinced he was dreaming. Tokoyami and Dark Shadow both seemed intrigued. Sero, Mina, and Uraraka were still laughing.

“No fire in the classroom!” Iida instructed.

“…Should I leave?” Todoroki asked.

“OH! Todoroki!” Mina called out between her laughter. She ran up to him and whispered something in his ear.

“Why would I—”

“Pleeeeeease!” Mina begged. Todoroki sighed and leaned in towards Ibara.

“What part does this play?” he asked while poking her metal cross. No one could see, but there was a small flame between his finger and the cross.

“She presses that to his head near the end,” Reiko explained. “At least, I think.”

“…who prowl throughout the world, seeking the ruin of souls, Amen,” Ibara mumbled as she finished her prayer. “It’s finally time.”

“This can’t end well,” Midoriya said.

“Keep that shit away from me!” Bakugo yelled. He lurched forward, but Mina and Sero grabbed his sides and held him in place.

“The demon is lashing out,” Ibara noted. “In the name of God, begone from this child!” She pushed the cross out onto Bakugo’s forward, which singed his skin on contact.

“AAAGH! WHY IS IT SO HOT!?!” he screamed. In his laughter, Kaminari leaked some electricity from his hands, making Bakugo shake and sputter.

“It’s working!” Ibara said joyously. “BEGONE, DEMON!” Monoma lost control and broke down into laughter at the sight, but made sure to keep filming. Reiko shared a confused look with Tokoyami and Dark Shadow. The group holding Bakugo fell away in hysterics. Midoriya and Iida were wide-eyed in shock with agape mouths. Uraraka had a similar expression, but was also laughing nervously. Todoroki had no reaction, but still seemed pleased with himself. Once Ibara pulled her cross away, Bakugo slumped onto the floor. In his confusion, his rage had done a complete 180, leaving him almost catatonic. “Are you alright, Bakugo?” Ibara asked with sincere worry. She looked in his eyes and moved around, making sure his pupils were following her. “He’s responsive. It seems like we succeeded.”

“I feel like I learned a lot,” Reiko said with Tokoyami and Dark Shadow nodding in agreement.
“I’m disappointed in you, Todoroki,” Iida said, having caught onto why the cross burned Bakugo.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Are you alright, Kacchan?” Midoriya asked.

“He should be fine now,” Shiozaki told him as she gathered her tools and took her bag back. “I’m just glad I could help him.” She walked to the door before turning around and bowing. “Thank you for having me. Have a blessed day,” she said before leaving.

“Kendo, it’s time to go,” Reiko told her friend.

“Kay,” she said flatly. She turned around and bowed deeply to Iida. “I’m sorry for… sorry.”

“I-It’s fine,” Iida assured her. “Trust me, I know this wasn’t your fault. Being a class representative can be a demanding job.”

“I’m the single mother to 19 toddlers,” she moaned. “How’d this happen?”

“I’d just like to point out,” Monoma interjected, “I behaved myself the whole time.” Kendo’s face immediately twisted in anger – the kind of anger only a mother of a troublesome child could have – and she grabbed him by the jacket.

“You di— you m— you— yooouuu,” she growled while yanking Monoma out of the classroom. “Yooooouuuuu!”

“Later,” Reiko said as she followed her classmates. Walking down the hall, she felt the floor shake as an enormous explosion went off in Class 1-A. “I guess we left at the right time.”

Chapter End Notes

Fun fact: this is one of the ideas that got me to start this whole fic. Also, real-life exorcisms have a lot more rules and steps, but the person doing it in this story has plant hair, so fuck realism.
After two weeks of anticipation, the time had come for 1-B to begin their internships. Mr. Kan led them to the train station Monday morning where the class parted ways. Monoma had taken a train to Tokyo for his special internship. This is the place. He took a deep breath and walked with confidence into the Tokyo Police Headquarters. Once inside the sizeable lobby, he was approached by a police officer with an orange cat head.

“Neito Monoma?” the cat officer asked.

“That’s me.”

“I’m Tamakawa Sansa. I’ll be overseeing your internship along with Detective Tsukauchi. Please come this way, meow.”

Meow? Monoma followed as Sansa led him deeper inside the station, passing other officers and a few heroes. “I saw you at the Sports Festival. You were the one copying people’s Quirks, right?”

“Oh, yeah.”

“That’s real interesting Quirk, meow.”

“Thanks.” Why is he wearing a bell around his neck? Monoma was led to a large office near the back of the station. He entered and saw a man with black hair pouring over papers at his desk. “Detective Tsukauchi?”

“Yes, come in,” the man said. “It’s nice to meet you, Neito Monoma. Or should I say Phantom Thief?”

“Monoma’s fine, sir. Thank you for hiring me for the week,” Monoma gratefully said while shaking his hand.

“Well, after what I was told, it seemed like you’d be a good fit.”

“That’s very kind of you to say… but honestly, I’m not completely sure why I’m here,’ Monoma explained while taking a seat.

“Vlad King and All Might thought of sending you to me because you have a gifted mind and think that’s what you should focus on honing. In law enforcement, Heroes tend to be the brawn while Police are the brains. We gather intel, strategize on important missions, and handle villains once they’re subdued. You, Monoma, might be the perfect mix of those two groups.”

“You really think so?” Monoma was blown away, but fought to keep his cool. “I’m… really touched that someone would think this way of me, especially All Might himself. So, what will we be doing this week?”

“Hopefully, what you learn this week will help you start thinking with a bigger picture. You’ve shown talent in gathering intelligence, strategizing, and thinking with other Quirks in mind, but there’s only so much experience you can get in a simulated environment. Hopefully, once you’ve seen how the real world of heroics works, your talents will mature and your field of vision will
greatly expand.” The detective stood up and grabbed his tan overcoat and hat from the nearby rack. “I’ll also try and give you some normal hero experiences. Put on your costume. We’re going on patrol.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Welcome to your workplace for the next week!” Togata announced.

“Thanks again for this,” Kamakiri said.

“Sure thing! I’m always happy to help some hot-blooded newbies get good experience.”

“Um, I-I have a question,” Kinoko said.

“Shoot!”

“What are our employers like?”

“Super nice!” Togata assured them. “Centipeder and Bubble Girl are awesome! You’ll definitely get along! Sir Nighteye is a little more rigid, but I doubt you’ll see much of him.” Togata flung the doors open and entered the office with the juniors behind him. Waiting for them in the lobby were a pair of Heroes – a dark-skinned woman in a blue and black costume that exposed her stomach, as well as a man with a centipede for a head wearing a fancy suit.

“Welcome!” the woman said cheerfully. “I’m Bubble Girl.”

“And I’m Centipeder,” the man said. “Thank you for accepting our offers despite us being just sidekicks to Sir Nighteye.”

“W-We’re just glad you offered,” Kinoko said while bowing deeply. “Thank you very much for having us.”

“Of course,” Bubble Girl said. “Mirio said you were up to it, so why not?” She walked forward to Kinoko and held her hands between her own. “I hope that I can help you come out of your shell this week, Komori.”

“H-Huh?”

“When I was shown footage of you in action, I was impressed, but more than that, I saw how unsure and nervous you were,” Bubble Girl said. “It reminded me of myself in school, so I’m gonna help you gain some confidence. By the end of the week, you’ll feel like a totally new person!”

“U-Um, a-are you s-sure? I thought w-we would j-just be doing h-hero stuff.”

“Being confident is important for being a hero. Right, Centipeder?”

“Quite right,” the bug-themed hero said as he approached Kamakiri. “As for you, I also intend to help shift your demeanor to something more acceptable for heroics.”

“What’re you talkin’ about?” Kamakiri asked with a glare.

“I noticed a very rough and uncultured conduct in the footage presented to me,” Centipeder explained. “Your teacher agrees, in fact. Such unscrupulous behavior is unbecoming of a hero.”

“Mind sayin’ that in a language I understand?” Kamakiri asked.
“I’ll be working on fixing your bad attitude this week,” Centipeder said while taking out a comb. “We’ll begin with your inappropriate hairstyle.”

“WHAT!?” Kamakiri yelled while protecting his Mohawk with his arms.

“I’ll turn you into a proper gentleman even if it kills me.”

“Hahahaha!” Togata laughed. “Sounds like you guys are gonna have an interesting week.”

“Mirio,” another voice said. Approaching them was a green-haired man in a light gray business suit. He was holding a document and had a sour expression.

“Mornin’, Sir Nighteye! These are the first years I told you about.”

“Good morning,” he said while looking them up and down. “I was looking over your mission report, Mirio. You seemed to forget my rule of putting jokes in your reports yet again.”

“Well, it was pretty short, and I couldn’t really think of any,” Mirio casually explained. “Sorry about that.”

“It looks like someone needs more time in Tickle Hell,” Nighteye said while dragging Togata into his office.

“Aw, darn it,” Togata said with a laugh. Kamakiri and Kinoko watched in confusion and fear before giving each other a look. They didn’t realize it, but they were having the exact same thought.

_We’ve made a terrible mistake._

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“Yanagi? Hey, Yanagi!” Reiko was content with waiting in silence, but it seemed that wasn’t going to last. She had arrived early and was waiting in a small, dark office for her employer when a familiar non-face showed up. “It’s me, Hagakure!”

“Hey,” the ghost girl greeted. “You got an internship here too?”

“Yup! I couldn’t believe it, but it’s really happening! Edgeshot wanted me!” Hagakure set her briefcase down and sat down next to Reiko. “Soooo, how’s things with Shinso?”

“Fine.”

“Don’t be shy~. I want details.”

“Not many details to share,” Reiko flatly stated. _She’s awfully perky this early in the morning._

“Sorry to interrupt,” a voice said, “but let’s begin.” The two girls looked around, but couldn’t locate the voice’s source. “Welcome. I am Edgeshot, the stealth hero.”

“No kidding. I have no clue where you are,” Hagakure said.

“Where I am? Girls…” In an instant, the pro-hero was in front of the girls, sitting cross-legged on his desk. “I’ve been in front of you this whole time.”

“Oooooo,” Hagakure said while clapping. “Cool trick!”

_She’s so embarrassing,_ Reiko thought.
“Thank you for accepting my offer. I’m always interested in prospective stealth-focused heroes. Gaining notoriety and stopping crimes flashily is a priority among many heroes these days, so we’re something of a dying breed. I hope to give you both good experience this week…”

“Thank you, sir!” the perky invisible girl said.

“Thanks,” Reiko said with a small bow.

“That is, if you can pass my test. You walked through my office to get here. Now, I want you to exit and meet me outside, but do it without anyone noticing. You have 5 minutes. If you pass, I’ll employ you for the week.”

“5 minutes?!” Hagakure asked in disbelief. “W-What happens if we fail?”

“You’ll be asked to leave and never return. Good luck.” Before either girl could ask another question, Edgeshot disappeared once again.

“What a pain,” Reiko groaned.

“How mean!” Hagakure whined. “Giving us a task like that so soon.”

“No point in complaining now,” Reiko said. “I’ll try and scout the area while you get ready.”

“Thanks, Yanagi,” Hagakure said while disrobing. “If we work together, we can clear this in no time!”

“Right.” Reiko floated up and phased her head through the ceiling and scanned the rooftop. *Looks like I can recharge up here when my 30 seconds of intangibility are up.* She floated onto and the roof and dropped down before crawling forward. She phased her head downward and peeked into the office below. *There’s a lot of people here, so Hagakure may have to take this slow. I wonder if we’ll pass in time.* Reiko pulled her head back and sat on the roof, looking in the direction of the entrance. *I could just go to Edgeshot now and ensure I pass…* She thought over her options for a moment before sighing and returning to the office. “Hagakure? You still here?”

“Yeah, I’m right here,” Hagakure said from above her clothing pile. “What’s it look like?”

“Normal hero office, I guess, but there’s a lot of people walking around. I’m positive they’re all in on this, so if you brush up against them, that’ll mean failing.”

“Don’t worry. I’ll be as quiet as a mouse.”

“We still have another problem,” Reiko said while motioning to the door. “You can’t just walk out or everyone will notice the door opening and closing.”

“I’ll need a favor in that case,” Hagakure began. “Can you cause some distraction. I just need a second to slip out. Please?”

“I’ll see what I can do. Once I leave, count to 20 and then slip out. We’ve got one shot.”

“Thanks. After that, feel free to go to Edgeshot. I can handle myself from there. Promise.”

“Right. Good luck.” Reiko phased up into the ceiling passed into the office, careful to remain out of sight. *Let’s see. What’s distracting here?* Her eyes drifted to an office lady leaning against the wall near a bookshelf. *I don’t have enough time to find another target. As much as I hate it, I’ll have to pull a Setsuna.* Reiko internally groaned as she floated down the wall, hiding her face behind the
bookshelf. As her time counted down, she grabbed the hem of the woman’s skirt and pulled it down, causing her to shriek. All eyes went to the woman, letting Hagakure open and close the door with no one noticing. *What a weird way to start my internship,* Reiko thought as she floated out to the city block. In front of the entrance was Edgeshot, who was signing autographs for a couple of middle-schoolers.

“Done already, Yanagi? Is Hagakure with you?”

“We split up, but she should be here soon.” Edgeshot’s phone buzzed and he took it out, giving Yanagi a confused look after reading the message. “Did one of you… pants my assistant?”

“I… needed a distraction so Hagakure could sneak out of your office without being noticed.”

 “…Well, it worked. Points for creativity, but you should apologize later.” Their attention was drawn to the office entrance when it was opened by an unseen force.

“Nailed it!” Hagakure said. “Do we pass?”

“You do.”

“Alright!” Hagakure cheered while wrapping her see-through arms around Reiko. “We did it, Yanagi!”

“Yeah. Good job,” Reiko said while subtly returning the embrace.

“If you two are ready, I’ll brief you on what we’ll be doing this week,” Edgeshot explained. “I expect great things, Onryo and Invisible Girl.”

Chapter End Notes

In case you didn't see, this has become part of a series. The other story int he series? The Heart of a Hero - USJ Side Story
A mini-series about the USJ arc if 1-B was there instead of 1-A. This was the special thing I talked about a couple chapters back and I was originally gonna upload it all at once, but fuck it. Chapter 1 of that is up now and the rest I’ll post once they’re done. Check it out.
On Patrol

Holy crap! 2000 hits?! Thank you all so much for reading, leaving kudos, commenting, bookmarking, and supporting the story so far and be prepared for more to come


“Huh?” Shoda had been lost in his thoughts until that point, but came back to his senses quickly. He was on patrol with his upperclassman, Amajiki, and their employer, Fatgum. “Sorry, sir. I guess I’m not used to being called that yet.”

“I gotcha,” Fatgum said while shoving candy in his mouth. “You looked a little off. Thinkin’ hard about somethin’?”

“No, it’s nothing, sir.” As they came to a corner and waited for the light to change, Shoda noticed an electronics store with display TVs on. It was showing a hero gossip show talking about Best Jeanist and his “volatile intern.” Shoda could see a picture of Bakugo with Best Jeanist and audibly sighed without realizing.

“That didn’t sound like nothing,” Fatgum said. Shoda wanted to say he was fine, but he knew Fatgum had already figured him out.

“Have you ever felt like… like you missed out on something… just because of your own stupid pride?”

“You’re talking about the Sports Festival?” Fatgum asked. “I didn’t go to U.A., so I don’t know how much I can relate… but I know what you’re talking about. You feel like you should’ve stayed in the finals, right?”

“A little. Everyone in my class regrets how poorly we did. I may have been able to get farther than the others if I had stayed, so I guess I’m a little guilty.” Fatgum thought hard, but couldn’t think of anything, so he settled for a hard pat on the back.

“Cheer up,” he said. “Want some candy?”

“I’m good, sir.”

“…Shoda,” Amajiki quietly said. Shoda looked to him, which almost made him shrink away, but Amajiki forced himself to keep talking. “You said to Midnight that… you didn’t feel like you earned your place in the finals… You’d feel worse if you stayed… so don’t think about what could’ve happened… if things were different.” Amajiki immediately turned away and pulled his hood lower to avoid looking at his junior.

“…You’re right,” Shoda said. “Thanks.” Shoda’s gratitude only made Amajiki shy away even more, but Fatgum grabbed his two interns and pulled them close.

“Glad we got that all settled,” he said with a smile. “C’mon, let’s go get some lunch. I’m hungry.”
“You’re always hungry,” Amajiki mumbled, making Fatgum laugh.

“You bet I am!”

_Think of something to say_, Awase told himself. He was coming to the end of his morning patrol with his employer, Rock Lock, who had barely spoken. _Does he hate me already?_

“Listen,” Rock Lock finally said, “I may have taken you as an intern, but don’t think I’ll be letting you get in my way. I owe Vlad a favor, that’s all. I still have work to do, so I won’t put up with any bullshit. Got it?”

“Yes, sir!” Awase stiffened up and stood at attention, trying to act as serious as possible. “I won’t give you any bullshit, sir!

“‘You better not,’” the pro grumbled. “I don’t want some rookie getting in my way. Just ‘cause you came from U.A. doesn’t make you hot shit. Got it?”

“Got it, sir!” Awase had tensed up so much that he was walking like a robot. _Yup. Hates me_, he internally moaned. His attention shifted when he heard screaming from further down the road.

“Trouble?”

“Sounds like it,” Rock Lock said. “Follow me, kid.” They ran up the street towards the commotion before seeing a car driving wildly towards them. “It’s out of control. Stay back, kid.” Rock Lock ran into the street towards the car, which began to collide with other cars and make them spin out of control. He leapt into the middle of many collisions and threw his hands towards the ground.

“Deadbolt!” he called out as he spun his hand into the ground. In a flash, almost every car around him stopped, but one of them escaped his radius and rocketed towards the sidewalk. “Look out!”

“I’ve got it!” Awase yelled. He dove in the car’s path and rammed it’s front, skidding his boots into the ground. He reached down to the right tire and fused it to the ground before doing the same to the left one. “…I’m OK,” he announced as the car fully stopped, more to assure himself than anyone else. As he unfused the tires from the ground, he heard a voice behind him.

“Are you alright?” Awase turned to see a woman with a baby carriage looking at him.

“Yeah… I’m pretty sturdy,” he clumsily said.

“Well, thank you,” she gratefully said. “You saved me and my baby.”

“…Uuuh… you’re welcome.” As Awase awkwardly waved the woman off, Rock Lock returned to his side. “I know you said to stay back, but—”

“I’m impressed,” the pro said. Awase was stunned silent. “Maybe I can teach you a few things.”

“I… Yes, sir! Thank you, sir!”

In the bustling cityscape of Musutafu, Ibara looked out over the traffic-filled streets from the roof of an office building. To her right was her fellow intern and peer from Class 1-A, Hanta Sero. “What a view,” Sero said.

“It’s quite lovely,” Ibara agreed. “Looking down from such a height makes one feel like a hero,
“Wouldn’t you say?”

“Totally.”

“Cellophane, Maria, front and center,” they heard behind them. The voice came from their employer for the week, Kamui Woods. “Let’s get in one more exercise before we break for lunch.”

“Alrighty.”

“Yes, sir.” The two students went to the west side of the building, which gave them a view of Kamui’s agency down the street.

“I want you two to swing over to the roof of the office. I’ll go first to give you a demonstration.” Kamui’s wooden gauntlet started to shift around and formed a tendril that he shot out. “Watch carefully now.” He grabbed the corner of a higher building before jumping from the rooftop, swinging fluidly over the city and landing on his rooftop.

“Easier said than done,” Sero noted while stretching his arms. “Guess I’ll give it a shot.” He shot his tape up and leapt forward, swinging over to the agency. His landing was a little rougher, but Kamui looked pleased with Sero and gave him a pat on the back.

Calm yourself, Ibara told herself while taking deep breaths. Just do as he explained... and don’t look down. She grabbed her vines and threw them at the building like a lasso. They hooked onto the corner and Ibara jumped, holding tightly to her vines. Her dress billowed and blustered in the wind, making her thankful she added tights to her ensemble. As she approached the agency, her vines stretched and lowered her down for a graceful landing.

“Perfect,” Kamui complimented. “You’re both getting the hang of this quickly.”

“Thank you, sir,” Ibara said while blushing slightly. “I didn’t even look down this time.”

“Really? That’s a hard habit to break,” Kamui said. “I’m impressed.” Ibara wanted to thank him again, but before she could, his phone started ringing. “Excuse me,” he said while taking it out. “Give me a minute to take this, then we’ll go get something to eat.” Kamui walked off to take his call privately, leaving Ibara and Sero on their own.

You should tell him soon, Ibara told herself. You can’t keep putting this off. There may not be a better time.

“Swinging like that is hard on my arms,” Sero said. “It must hurt your head like crazy.”

“Hmm? Oh, not really. I make sure to hang on with my hands when I swing.”

“Oh, like Tarzan or something. I gotcha.”

“Yes... Um, Sero?”

“Sup?”

“I need to... talk privately with Mr. Kamui. Would you mind if...”

“Give you a minute?” Sero finished. “Sure thing. Tell Kamui I went to the bathroom. I’ll be back in five.”

“Thank you very much.”
“No prob,” Sero said as he walked inside and down the stairs. After a minute, Kamui ended his call and walked back to Ibara.

“Sorry about that. Where’d Cellophane go?”

“He had to use the bathroom,” Ibara explained. “He’ll return in five minutes.”

“All right.” Kamui walked to the edge and looked out over the city while Ibara tried to untangle the knot in her stomach.

*It’s now or never,* she thought. *Tell him.* Ibara gripped at her dress tightly, but took a deep breath and finally approached the pro. “Um… Mr. Kamui?”

“Yes?”

“I was… wondering something,” Ibara said slowly, without looking at Kamui as he turned to her. “D-Do you… remember… the cases you resolve?”

“I try to,” Kamui said. “The smaller ones tend to slip the mind, unfortunately.”

“I see.” Ibara gulped and started twirling a vine around her finger. “Do you remember… an incident at a… flower shop in Kanagawa?”

“Flower Shop…” Kamui pondered. “That doesn’t ring a bell.” Ibara’s heart sank a little, but she had come too far to stop.

“I-It was two years ago,” she quickly continued, trying to jog his memory. She still avoided looking at him even though looked at her. “It was robbed… as was the apartment above. The woman who owned the store… and her daughter… they were both restrained… for almost a full day… you were the one who finally rescued them.” Ibara didn’t notice she was crying until she felt tears flowing down her cheeks. She gripped at her costume like a lifeline and finally looked Kamui in the eyes. “Do you remember?” she finally asked with a cracking voice. Kamui was still as a statue. It took him a moment, but he finally moved when he placed his hand on Ibara’s head.

“I do remember that,” he said warmly. “I went to through the apartment window, so the ‘flower shop’ part confused me. That was you, wasn’t it?” The words got caught in her throat, but Ibara nodded. “It’s been in the back of my mind since the Sports Festival. I wanted to ask you, but… well, I couldn’t find a good time.” Ibara finally broke down and buried her face in Kamui’s shoulder.

“Y-You’re the reason I’m here,” she told him. “You’re the reason I want to be a hero… thank you… thank you so much.”

“I’m so glad to hear that,” Kamui said as he gently hugged the girl. “The thought of inspiring someone like you… I’m moved. Thank you for telling me.”
“Sooo… advice, advice,” Mt. Lady pondered while knocking her head. She was in her office, sat on a couch and scarfing down cookies as one of her interns, Yui, filed her paperwork. “I dunno what to say about stealth or nothin’ for when you get small, sooo… Oh, I know! When you get really big, you have to be really mindful about your butt. It’s pretty easy to cause property damage by accidently backing into stuff.”

“OK,” Yui said.

“Uuuuuuh… did you see my win against that villain with the Shark Quirk? Totally boosted my ratings, yeah?”

“Mhm.”

“This is nice,” Mt. Lady mentioned. “You’re way cooler than that grape kid.”

“Thanks.”

“Come sit here with me,” she invited. “Want a cookie?” Yui stared blankly at her employer before joining her on the couch and taking a cookie. “So Kodai – can I call you Kodai?”

“Mhm.”

“Kodai, you and I are a real pair. Us size-shifters gotta stick together. People will always say ‘oh, you cause to much damage to be a city-based hero’ or ‘you stepped on my apartment.’ The best advice I can give you is to not listen to the haters.”

“Alright,” Yui said with cookie crumbs around her mouth.

“You are so freakin’ cute,” Mt. Lady complimented. “You should totally come be my sidekick after you graduate.”

“OK.”

“Yui – can I call you Yui?”

“Sure.”

“Yui, you should stay late and we can hang out and stuff. Ooo, we could paint each other’s nails. Violet’s your color, girl. I’m more of an aqua, y’see…”

“Mhm,” Yui nodded. *I wonder if everyone’s internships are like this...*
“Holy shit!” Tsuburaba yelled as a fist larger than his body flew towards him. He clung tighter to Air Jet as the Buster Hero flew them out of the way.

“Barricade, we need more air walls!” Air Jet instructed. He flew up and surveyed the building-sized, boar-like villain he and his intern fought as another air wall was broken. “We need to protect the civilians and keep this villain here until backup arrives.”

“F-Fine!” Tsuburaba nervously said. “Just keep us from getting smashed, OK?”

“That’s the plan.” Air Jet aimed his arm cannon and fired a wind blast at the villain’s face, stopping his assault for a moment. “Now!” Tsuburaba took a huge breath and started making a barrier as Air Jet flew them around the villain. With his added mobility, the barrier twisted round the villain and constricted his movement.

“How’s that?”

“Great job. Let’s go in for another layer before backup arrives.”

“It looks like they’re already here,” Tsuburaba said. The flying pair looked up and saw a set of crimson wings descending towards them from the sky. Tsuburaba immediately recognized his 1-A peer, Tokoyami, but he knew the wings didn’t belong to him. He could also tell Tokoyami was a little embarrassed by whoever was carrying him.

“Behold!” the person carrying Tokoyami said, holding the bird-headed boy in front of himself. “It is I, Whole Bird Man! With the power of being an entire bird, I have arriiiiiiived! …Nah, I’m just pulling your leg. It’s me – Hawks.”

“Woah! The number 3 hero!” Tsuburaba said in excitement as Hawks moved Tokoyami out of the way of his face.

“Thanks for coming so quickly,” Air Jet said as he readied his air gun. “Let’s take this titan down together.”

“Sounds good,” Hawks said. “Tsukoyomi, you and Air Jet hit him hard. I’ll make sure he doesn’t wreck anything on his way down.”

“Yes, sir,” Tokoyami said. “Dark Shadow, attack!”

“Aye aye!” The black figure of Dark Shadow burst from Tokoyami’s cloak and rushed towards the villain’s head. After it landed a blow to the head, Air Jet finished the job with an air blast that knocked the villain into unconsciousness and off his feet.

“I’ve got him,” Hawks casually stated as many feathers left his wings. The feathers flew behind the villain and slowed his decent onto the street. “Nice.” Hawks and Air Jet flew to the ground and set down their interns as police cars pulled up and civilians returned to the street.

“Hey, it’s Hawks!”

“Hawks and Air Jet? What a cool combo!”

“Look, it’s that shadow guy from the Sports Festival.”

“That’s right, it’s me,” Hawks announced. “It’s Hawks. I’ve got Tsukoyomi with me, and we, uh, we’re bird men – we’re birds of war. That’s us. Air Jet’s here. He did most of the work actually. Him and uuuuh… what’s your name?”
“Barricade!” Tsuburaba announced.

“Barricade, that’s him. They did most of the work so give them the credit. Uuuuh… Tsukoyomi, let’s exit in that cool way we practiced.”

“Right.” Hawks stretched out his wings and took off soaring while Dark Shadow pushed it’s user off the ground. Once Tokoyami high enough, Hawks plucked him out of the sky and they flew off together.

“Well, our work here is done,” Air Jet said before leaning in to Tsuburaba. “Let’s exit like that. Make it cool.”

“You got it, sir.” Tsuburaba ran and blew an air platform under his feet. Once he was about 12 feet up, he jumped and was caught by Air Jet, who flew them away.

“Pretty good exit, I’d say.”

“Totally,” Tsuburaba agreed.

That was crazy. I met the number three hero and helped defeat a villain. I wonder if everyone’s internships are like this…

“Juzo!”

“Yeah?”

“It’s time to train!” Honenuki got up from the rock he sat on and joined Crust in the center of the rock quarry. They had done normal hero training like patrols, but Crust was also hell-bent on imparting his wisdom to Honenuki. “As earth manipulators, we have a specific duty. Tell me what that is!”

“To honor and appreciate Mother Earth, sir!” Honenuki answered. He wasn’t used to being so emphatic, but Crust demanded he show passion.

“Correct!” Now…” Crust sat down in the dirt and closed his eyes, almost meditatively, which Honenuki copied. “We must pay our respects to the earth that has given us everything.”

“Yes, sir.” Both heroes took a deep breath and sat in silence. After a moment, they reeled back and shoved their foreheads into the dirt.

“I LOVE YOU, MOTHER EARTH!” Crust screamed.

“YOU ARE THE GREATEST PLANET EVER!” Honenuki continued.

“THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING US TO USE YOUR POWER TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT!” they yelled in unison.

“…Uh, Crust?”

“What is it, Juzo?”

“Do I have to do this every day?”

“Not this specifically. I’m just showing you my way of respecting the planet,” Crust explained. “Find your own way of thanking the earth once you finish your internship. Recycle a bottle, water a flower, pet a dog. Do what you want.”
“Alright.”

“Now, let’s get to training.” They both stood up and Honenuki took a fighting stance. “Alright, first exercise… WALL!” On Crust’s command, Honenuki exhaled and softened the ground before him. He reached down and stuck his hands inside, gripping the soft earth. With a determined shout, he pulled the ground up, making a wave of earth that he hardened with an inhale. He then stepped back and admired his handiwork – a sturdy wall of earth.

“How’s that?”

“Wonderful! You’re getting better at manipulating what you’ve softened more freely,” Crust complimented. “If your fighting style shifts to use this more, I’d recommend investing in some gloves to avoid wearing out your hands.”

“Good idea,” Honenuki said while looking at his dirty fingernails and bruised hands. This training is intense. I wonder if everyone’s internships are like this…

“I think this is the third jewelry store we’ve stopped at so far,” Rin said.

“Fourth,” Setsuna corrected. It didn’t sound like she minded, though. She had been cloud nine ever since their internship began. Being on patrol with the ninth best hero in Japan made Rin starstruck as well, but after 20 minutes of waiting outside a jewelry store as she and Nejire shopped, his excitement waned a little. “Who cares? I’m just happy to be here.”

“Oh, me too,” Rin assured her.

“She’s so amazing,” Setsuna mumbled in a smitten voice. “So powerful, but still so elegant and ladylike, and so nice too.” Rin nodded in agreement with the lizard girl. Everything she was saying was true, but the dragon hero’s oddly small attention span was something he hadn’t known about until working for her.

“Kay, we’re done,” Nejire announced as she and Ryukyu left the store.

“I’m sorry for making you two wait for so long,” the heroine said in a polite, almost motherly, voice.

“It’s cool,” Setsuna cooed. Rin could’ve sworn he saw hearts in her eyes.

“Then let’s continue on our patrol.” She and Nejire walked side by side while Rina and Setsuna trailed the pair.

“Is it usually this quiet, ma’am?” Rin asked.

“Yes, it is,” she answered while slowing down, letting her interns catch up a bit. “My office is in the area, so criminal activity is somewhat rare here. That’s why I enjoy patrolling often.” Ryukyu looked to her right as they passed by a cherry blossom tree in full bloom. She reached out and took a petal between her fingers as more blossoms fluttered by her. “When people see heroes walking amongst them, they feel at ease. They take our presence as a promise that we’ll always protect them. Heroism may bring fighting to mind, but something just as important is making the public feel safe. Do you understand, Shenlong?”

“I do,” Rin answered. “We protect their peace of mind as much as their bodies, right?”

“Correct,” Ryukyu said. “Indominus, you understand as well, yes?”
“Yes, ma’am,” Setsuna graciously replied.

“Ryukyu’s always teachin’ me things like that,” Nejire said. “That’s why she’s the best.”

“As always, you’re too kind, Nejire,” Ryukyu said with a chuckle. Suddenly, the four heroes heard a commotion further down the street.

“Oh dang,” Setsuna said. “Crime? In this neighborhood?”

“It’s more likely than you think,” Nejire said as she began floating with her power. “I’ll go on ahead.”

“Please do,” Ryukyu said before turning to her other interns. “I trust you two can take care of yourselves?”

“Yes, ma’am!” they both answered.

“Then hurry forward.” Ryukyu’s Quirk activated and she grew a set of draconic wings from her back. “A full transformation is most likely unnecessary.”

“Badass,” Setsuna said in awe. The trio rushed towards the source of the uproar – a convenience store – where Nejire was chasing down a criminal. “Two more went down the alleyway,” she reported. “No injured civilians.”

“Good,” Ryukyu said. “In that case, I’d like to see you two take the remaining criminals.”

“Really?” Rin asked.

“Don’t worry. I’ll be watching you from above.”

“Alright! We won’t let you down!” Setsuna proclaimed. She and Rin ran after the criminals down the alleyway, coming to an intersection where the perpetrators split ways. “You go right, I’ll go left,” Setsuna instructed.

“Got it.” The interns split apart and Rin continued after his target until they both reached a dead end. “Give up now,” Rin commanded. The robber stayed in the corner of the alley, hiding his face in shadow.

“I wasn’t really with those guys, y’know,” the robber said in a deep, but apathetic voice. “I just needed cash to buy food. Can you really call yourself a hero if you arrest me for that?”

“You still broke the law,” Rin pointed out. “I’ll give you one more chance to give up or I’ll have to get rough with you.”

“Oh yeah?” the robber asked with irritation on his tongue. “I bet they’ll praise you for that. Just another fake, I guess.” He raised his arm and ignited a blue flame in his palm. With the new source of light, Rin was horrified to see burnt, wrinkled purple skin around the robber’s face, held together by a series of staples.

A fire type Quirk! Rin told himself. I have to close the distance quickly! He bolted towards the target and transformed his whole body into scales. Just as he reached the robber, the blue flame exploded down the alley. Rin wailed in pain as the fire seared his scaly body and threw him backwards. The last thing he heard before he lost consciousness was Ryukyu shouting his hero name…
As his senses returned to him, the first thing Rin felt was the burning sensation all over his skin. The second was the set of hands wrapped around his own. He groaned softly and opened his eyes, realizing he was back in Ryukyu’s office. It took effort, but he turned his head to see Setsuna was holding his hand. “What happened?” Setsuna jumped a little bit in surprise, but then sighed in relief.

“I’m glad you’re up,” she said with a surprising calmness. Rin was used to bubbly and energetic Setsuna more than anything. “You got hit by a fire blast – a pretty strong one by the look of things. Me and Nejire took care of the other robbers, but that guy escaped through a storm drain.” Rin looked down at his chest and saw all the bandages he was wrapped in.

“My scales are pretty heat resistant,” Rin noted. “If I hadn’t used my Quirk all around my body…”

“Lalalalalala, I’m not listening!” Setsuna hollered childishly, making Rin laugh a bit.

“I’m glad you’re awake,” he heard behind him. It was Ryukyu, who walked to his bedside with Nejire. “You gave us quite the scare.”

“Sorry,” Rin said. “I messed up and let him get away.”

“You don’t have to apologize,” the pro heroine said with a hand on his shoulder. “I’m just happy you’re alright now. Now, get some rest. Hopefully, you will recover before your time here ends.”

“Thanks ma’am,” Rin said with a smile.

As Ryukyu and Nejire left, the senior girl had a question for her employer. “So, what was it that you saw?”

“…When I was carrying Rin from danger, Rin’s body had seized up and instinctively protected itself by maintain his transformation.”

“So?”

“His body was changing in more ways than just growing scales,” Ryukyu explained. “I saw his teeth become sharper, more… bestial. Rin’s Quirk… may not be too different from my own.”

Chapter End Notes

I think my goal in writing this besides having fun is to get popular enough to get a TvTropes page for this story. Or at least to be on their fanfic recs page for MHA

PS: Chapter 2 of the USJ side story is up too.


“Mission Start”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“You wanted to see us?” Reiko asked. She and Hagakure entered the office of Edgeshot, who was busy on his computer.

“I did,” he said with his normal stoicism. “To cut straight to the point, I’ve been contacted to aid the police in a mission and I’d like you to assist me.”


“What kind of mission?” Reiko asked.

“A simple mission, but important nonetheless,” Edgeshot cryptically explained. “Detective Tsukauchi of the Tokyo Police Department needs this done soon – tonight, in fact.

“That’s not a lot of warning,” Reiko commented.

“In the world of heroics, there never is. They need a stealth hero such as myself, along with some muscle and someone who can capture multiple people quickly. I already have two heroes in mind to fill those positions and, coincidently, they both have two interns from U.A. We’ll give you all some experience in what should be a by-the-numbers mission.”

“We’d love to come!” Hagakure said. “Right, Yanagi?”

“Of course,” Reiko said. “If you don’t mind my asking, who are the heroes and interns?”

“What’s this?” Kamui mumbled as he checked his office computer. “A request from the Hero Network? …Holy crap!”

“What is it?” Ibara asked as she sipped a cup of tea.

“Edgeshot says he needs me for a mission and wants to team up!”

“Edgeshot!?” Sero asked. “Nice!” Kamui leaned towards his monitor and opened the email, quickly reading over the request.

“A meeting at the Tokyo Police Headquarters… and the mission is tonight… he also wants our interns to tag along.”

“We’re going on a mission already? Sweet!” Sero cheered.

“How wonderful,” Ibara happily said.

“Hm? The two of us?” Kamui said. “Who else is he asking? …oh…”

“EEEEEEEEEEEEEE!” Mt Lady squealed. She rolled around on the couch and over Yui’s lap while clutching her phone. “EDGESHOT WANTS TO TEAM UP! THIS IS AMAZING!”

“Congratulations,” Yui said.
“If I impress him, he may even ask to form a teeeeeeaaaam!” the pro hero cheered. “My popularity will SKYROCKET! … Oh, hey! He wants all our interns to come too.”

“Really? Should I tell Mineta?”

“Uuuuh… Let’s… keep this to ourselves,” Mt. Lady suggested. “I don’t think Grape Juice is… ready for something like this.”

“Alright.”

“Fantastic. I’ll reply right away,” Mt. Lady said. *I also don’t want that little pervert ruining my reputation. I can’t be seen in public with him.* “The meeting is in 3 hours. Yui, get my make-up kit. We’ve got to make a great first Impression!”

As the sun finished setting and the streetlight’s flicked on, Edgeshot led his costumed interns into the Police Department. “I’m so excited,” Hagakure squeaked. “Finally, I’ll show off how cool I can be.”

“Try to be a little more serious,” Reiko requested. “We’ve gotta act professional.”

“Right!” The trio was led to a board room in the back, where Tsukauchi and Monoma were waiting. Already seated were Mt. Lady, who looked ecstatic, and Yui, who looked blasé as usual.

“Welcome,” the detective greeted. “Thank you for taking our impromptu request.”

“Of course, Detective,” Edgeshot said. “Mt. Lady?”

“That’s me,” the heroine replied in her most pleasant voice. “Thank you so much for thinking of me. Minmax and I won’t let you down.”

“Of course. I only work with competent individuals,” the stealth hero said. Mt. Lady seemed like she would pop from joy at that moment.

“Once Kamui Woods arrives, we’ll get started,” Monoma explained. “Until then, please have a seat, sir.”

“Oh hey. You’re from Class 1-B too,” Hagakure realized. “I’m Tooru Hagakure.” Monoma looked wary when she outstretched her hand, but sighed and accepted the handshake.

“Neito Monoma,” he half-grumbled.

*Looks like he doesn’t want to embarrass himself in front of the pros by going on a rant,* Reiko thought. As she and Hagakure took their seats, another trio of heroes entered.

“Sorry to keep you all waiting,” Kamui politely greeted.

“We haven’t been waiting long,” Edgeshot said as he shook Kamui’s hand. “Thank you for accepting my offer.”

“Oh, of course,” Kamui said with some excitement. “I hope we can meet your expectations, Edgeshot.”

“I’m sure you will. Let’s get this meeting underway.” The remaining heroes took their seats, with Kamui and Mt. Lady sharing a petty glare, and Tsukauchi and Monoma began their presentation.
“Thank you for coming, all. I’m Detective Naomasa Tsukauchi—”

“—and I’m his intern, Neito Monoma. Hero name: Phantom Thief.”

“We’ve called you here today for an important task,” the detective continued. “Two days ago, in Hosu, the Hero Killer: Stain was taken into custody by Endeavor. By all appearances, Stain was involved with the League of Villains, as evidenced by the multiple monsters similar to the villain Nomu that attacked the area. Since the USJ incident, the League has been quiet, but in the past two days, their activity has increased.”

“Didn’t most of the League get beat and captured at the USJ?” Mt. Lady asked. “I thought only two of them escaped.”

“That’s true, but those two were the masterminds of the attack. They’ve been waiting and watching, and now that Stain has gripped the world’s attention, they’ve begun reaching out. They’re creating ties to other names, big and small, in the underworld. Recruiting members seems to be their main goal right now, but they’re also trying to get their hands on Black Market weapons and costumes.”

“Will we be confronting the League in this mission?” Kamui asked.

“Ideally, we will not. At least, not directly,” Tsukauchi said. He clicked on the screen behind him and moved out of the way. On the screen as a picture of a middle-aged man with gray hair, round glasses, and a gap in his teeth. “This man’s name is Giran. He’s a veteran broker in the underworld that has recently allied with the League of Villains. He’s been their main recruiter and the one making deals in their leader’s stead. This mission’s target is Giran.”

“I see,” Edgeshot said. “You want to put the League’s recruitment to a halt, or at least slow it significantly.”

“That’s the idea,” Tsukauchi continued. “Thanks to our officers in the field, we’ve learned that Giran will be meeting with the leader of a small, elusive group that makes illegal items and costumes. We don’t know the group’s name or how many will show up, but we have a location and a time – 11:30 tonight in an abandoned warehouse in Eastern Yokohama. We’ll listen in on their meeting and learn all we can about both organizations. Once they’ve finished, we capture them. If everyone is in agreement, we’ll get going at 10:30 and stake out the area until the meeting time.”

“Sounds like a plan, detective,” Edgeshot said.

That night, in the Yokohama City, the trio of Pros and their interns took to the shadows to prepare for the mission. In an unmarked gray van parked in a nearby alleyway, Monoma and Tsukauchi waited and watched for anything suspicious. “So,” Monoma began, “this is the kind of stuff you do?”

“I’m usually not in the field like this,” Tsukauchi explained. “Mostly for the very important missions. Since there are so many of you interns here, I thought having a dedicated mission control would be easier. Thanks to Edgeshot and his interns, we hid small cameras in and around the warehouse, so I can keep an eye on things.” The van was outfitted with a few different screens that showed the warehouse and the area around it, as well as a console that was connected to the heroes’ earpieces. Tsukauchi leaned back and took a sip of coffee before looking at Monoma. “You’d rather be out there with them, right?”

“…What can I say? I’m trying to be a hero,” Monoma said. “I’m sure I’ll remember what you’ve taught me, but… Heroes should always be the front line of justice, right? They go out and fight.”
Tsukauchi pondered what Monoma said, then checked his watch.

“Edgeshot, it’s me,” he said into the console. “I’m sending Phantom Thief to you.”

“Sounds good,” the pro replied.

“Are you sure?” Monoma asked.

“I know you can take care of yourself,” Tsukauchi said with a confident smile. “Onryo, please return to the van so Phantom Thief can copy your Quirk.” After a moment, Reiko floated through the van door and landed next to Monoma.

“Have you seen anything yet?” Reiko asked.

“Nothing conclusive… but we may have just found something.” Tsukauchi flicked the images around the screens until the biggest one was showing the street corner near the warehouse. A man in a black hoodie was lurking around and scanning the area with his eyes.

“Pretty suspicious,” Monoma quipped. “Think that’s Giran?”

“No. A veteran like him wouldn’t be so anxious. This may be who he’s meeting with.”

“This is Invisible Girl,” they heard from the console. “Giran has just arrived and is heading for the back entrance.”

“Then the mission has officially started. Tail him and plant the bug.”

“Leave it to me.”

“You two get going,” Tsukauchi instructed. “Meet with Edgeshot and the rest.”

“Yes, sir,” they both said. The pair of interns phased into the ground and hurried to the alley way beside the warehouse, where their fellow heroes were waiting.

“This is it,’ Edgeshot declared. “Onryo, Phantom Thief, you will join me on the roof. Mt. Lady, Minmax, be ready near the back entrance. If either side has back-up waiting in the wings, you’re in charge of taking them out. Kamui, Maria, and Cellophane, you’ll sneak through the front entrance and wait for my signal to capture everyone inside.”

“Roger,” everyone said.

“The other gang is coming inside,” Tsukauchi reported. “There’s three of them. The leader seems to be a woman wearing a fancy black cloak and a jeweled broach. Backing her up is a blonde man in a black hoodie and a bald man in a suit with a massive scar on his head. I’m patching Invisible Girl’s bug to your earpieces. Edgeshot, you make the calls from now on.”

“Understood. Let’s move out.”

Chapter End Notes

If anyone reading is a Mineta fan, sorry I kinda shut him out of this arc, I wanted to stick to the canon of what he was up to and I didn't think he'd be ready for something like
this.
Who could've guess out of everyone in 1-A I could give some focus too, the first ones
would be Hagakure and Sero? Funny, right? But that's kinda what this story is all about.
Giving the spotlight to the more minor characters.
Giran leaned against a wooden crate near the center of the warehouse and took a drag from his cigarette. He watched as the front entrance opened and three figures walked in. “I was wonderin’ when you’d show,” he said in his slimy, casual voice. “I didn’t know you were bringin’ back-up. Should I be worried?” he coyly asked.

“These are dangerous streets,” the cloaked woman said. “I just wouldn’t feel safe alone.” Giran could tell instantly that her words were hollow.

_They aren’t for her protection per se_, he reasoned. _She can take care of herself easily. She’s just being smart by having people watch her back._ He flicked his cigarette into a puddle of muddy water and approached his client.

That’s far enough,” the man in the black hoodie warned. The look in his eyes was like a fearful animal’s – hostile, but nervous at the same time. “Don’t get too close to the boss all casual-like.”

“Down, boy,” the woman joked. “Sorry about him. He’s… jumpy.”

“It’s no problem,” Giran assured her. “I can talk from here.” His eyes drifted from the jumpy younger man to the scarred man. He looked quite a bit older than the other two and had the stone-faced intimidation of a veteran. Once he looked closer, he saw the man had a black backpack. “Did you bring some tech to show me, big guy?”

“We did not, and he’s not much of a talker. Let’s just talk business,” the woman said. Giran waited for her to continue, but before she did, the scarred man reacted to something behind Giran. He raised his arm and snapped, sending a blue bolt of lightning into the corner of the warehouse. It took Giran a moment to realize what just happened, but once he did, he was immediately pissed.

“What the hell?” he spat. “Nearly blew my head off!”

“Please excuse him,” the woman said. “He has a knee-jerk reaction in using his Quirk if he thinks there’s danger.” Giran looked over his shoulder and saw a puddle in the warehouse corner. “A rat must have run through that puddle, and once he saw the ripples, he attacked on instinct.”

“Is that true?” Giran asked. The scarred man nodded and bowed to Giran in apology. “Fine. Let’s get down to business.”

“That Quirk…” Edgeshot whispered to himself. He, Reiko, and Monoma were peering down from a window on the roof, making sure they were out of sight.

“An electricity type,” Monoma noted. “A strong-looking one at that.”

“…Tsukauchi, end the bug’s transmission and put me through to everyone,” Edgeshot said into his earpiece. “Tell us what’s been said once we’re done.”

“Right. Patching you through,” the detective answered.

“Invisible Girl… are you still with us?”
“I’m here, sir,” Hagakure said, making Edgeshot sigh in relief. “I wasn’t near the puddle that guy zapped.”

“Good. Everyone, come to the roof. We may have to abort this mission.”

“Seriously?” Reiko asked. “Why’s that?” Edgeshot didn’t answer and kept his eyes on the scarred man. After a few moments, they saw Kamui and his interns climbing onto the roof while helping the other three heroes up with them.

“What’s wrong?” Mt. Lady asked.

“I recognized that man with the scar. His Quirk… it may be too powerful to defeat.”

“Are you serious?” Kamui asked. “Even with all of us? And you, the number five hero?”

“Who is he, sir?” Ibara asked.

“A veteran villain. I don’t know if he still goes by the name, but when I was younger, he was known as Overdrive.”

“Overdrive?” Mt. Lady asked. “That name sounds familiar… I feel like I heard it when I was a kid.”

“Should we be worried about why he’s taking orders from someone else?” Kamui asked. “If this woman has him as a minion, then what does that say about her.”

“Just that she’s well-connected and has money to spare,” Edgeshot explained. “Overdrive was never a leader. Just hired muscle to whoever paid him.”

“Wait, I remember,” Mt. Lady said. “When I was, like, 12 or 13, I saw on the news that he was beaten by All Might.”

“You remember correctly, but that’s not the whole story,” Edgeshot continued. “Overdrive’s been in many fights in his life and his only known defeat was dealt by All Might, but he was still able to escape afterwards. He wasn’t heard from again, so it was assumed he retired.”

“If he retired, what’s he doing here?” Sero asked.

“A good question. Maybe he simply needed the money and didn’t want a flashy job that would bring him attention.” Edgeshot checked the window again and watched as the meeting continued. “Even with all of us, I believe our chances of winning are slim.”

“He may not be as strong as back then,” Kamui suggested. “If we catch him in a surprise attack, we can take him out with no fight.”

“That’s pretty hopeful thinking… but you may have a point.” Edgeshot backed away and took a meditative pose in the roof’s ledge. “I’ll think this over. Tsukauchi, did we miss anything?”

“Not much has been said,” everyone heard in their earpiece. “Just talk about different types of equipment they could make. Nothing that can help right now. I’ll patch you all back in, but it seems like they’re almost done.” There was a brief silence before the sound of Giran’s voice hit their ears.

“You drive a hard bargain, missy,” they heard him say. “I think we can work together. Once the League gets some members and is ready for another big plan, I can put in some work orders.”

“That’s very good to hear, Giran,” the woman said. “I hope our partnership is a fruitful one. We’ll be taking off now, but first… Overdrive… take care of the little bugs that have infested this place.”
“Run!” Edgeshot yelled. Before anyone could react, an explosion of electricity cracked the roof.

“Oh shit!” Reiko yelped. She grabbed onto Hagakure and floated away as the roof collapses. Monoma had a similar reaction and floated with her Quirk while holding a shrunken Yui.

“I guess the mission’s back on,” Kamui said as he fell. “I’ll grab Overdrive.”

“I’ve got Giran,” Sero announced.

“I’ll take the other two,” Ibara offered. As Edgeshot corrected his fall and grabbed Mt. Lady, he was impressed by his three comrades’ quick recovery and teamwork. You and your interns seem to be in sync already, Kamui. Once the heroes hit the ground, Kamui shot out a wooden tendril that wrapped around Overdrive from behind. Ibara landed next to him and quickly entangled the hooded man and woman.

“SHIT!” the man yelled. Across the room, Sero landed and went to shoot his tape, but saw Giran had pulled a gun and ducked behind a crate.

“Kurogiri, get us out of here!” Giran yelled into his own earpiece as he shot around Sero’s hiding spot.

“Overdrive, get them!” the woman commanded.

“No, you don’t!” Edgeshot pushed his hand forward and activated his Quirk, folding his hand into a thin string that shot towards Overdrive. ‘Ninpo: Thousand Sheet Pierce!’ The string dipped under Kamui’s wooden bindings and stuck into Overdrive’s torso. “Got you!” Overdrive roared and strained his muscles, releasing a burst of electricity around his body. Edgeshot was assaulted by the energy, burning and spasming until his was forced to remove his folded finger.

“Edgeshot!” Mt. Lady screamed. She looked back to the other villains and saw a black mist surrounding them. “Oh crap!”

“I’ve got him!” Sero yelled as he jumped from cover and shot his tape towards Giran. Just as the tape reached him, he disappeared and the mist dissipated. “Damn!”

“I won’t let you escape,” Ibara promised. The hooded woman smirked and flung a metal disk from under her cloak. It flew to Ibara’s feet and exploded, knocking the girl back and loosening her vines’ grip.

“Maria!” Kamui yelled.

“Good luck, Overdrive,” the woman said as she and her associate hastily dove through the mist portal.

“I-I’m sorry!” Ibara apologized as she got up.

“It’s fine, everyone,” Edgeshot assured them. “This was all… my fault.” His skin was red and burned and his breathing was ragged. Kamui came to his side and out his arm over his shoulder. “Mt. Lady, get the interns away.”

“Hold on!” Monoma yelled as he floated down and let go of Yui. “We can still fight. It’s nine against one.”
“You have no idea what you’re saying,” Edgeshot told him. Everyone watched as Overdrive’s already-large body was expanding, ripping Kamui’s wooden bindings to splinters. His shirt was torn to shreds as his muscles swelled to massive size. He grew about 2 feet in height and his skin gained a blue tint. With his clothes gone, the heroes could see his backpack had been hiding a compact generator that hooked into his back. It was also wired to a pair of metal knuckle guards that were alight with sparks.

“I know this looks bad, but we can still beat him,” Monoma insisted.

“You’ll die,” Edgeshot solemnly explained. “Overdrive’s only loss was against All Might. Even with all nine of us, and a decade of age on him, I don’t like our odds.”

**Torai Jindenchi AKA Overdrive. Quirk: Charge. He can absorb electricity into his body that expands his size and strength, along with shooting out his stored-up energy.**

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Once Giran felt the cold air of the warehouse be replaced by the stuffy warmth of the League’s bar, he sighed in relief. He walked out of the misty portal and took out another cigarette. “I really owe you one, Kurogiri,” he said. “A second later and my goose would’ve been cooked.”

“Of course,” the misty Kurogiri said from behind the bar. “You’re an invaluable part of our operation.”

“Hey, hey,” a scratchy voice said. Giran looked and recognized the childish Tomura Shigaraki sitting in a booth playing with a portable game console. “Who are those weirdos?”

“Huh?” Giran checked and saw the man and woman had also been teleported to the bar. “Oh. Didn’t realize you guys were sent here too.”

“What is this place?” the skittish man asked. “Your hideout? Why’s that guy have a hand on his face?”

“What’s it to you?” Shigaraki said defensively.

“I apologize for bringing them here on such short notice,” Kurogiri told his boss. “I suppose you don’t want them here?”

“Not really.”

“I’m sorry about him,” Giran said to the pair. “Shigaraki, we were just finishing our arrangement. These nice people will be making the League’s support items and costumes. Maybe you should be a little courteous.” Shigaraki groaned and glared at his broker before putting down his game.

“I’ll trust your judgement,” he began, “but I don’t like people who won’t introduce themselves or just kinda hide their face.”

“…You have a hand over yours,” Giran pointed out.

“He’s right, Giran,” the woman said while bowing to Shigaraki. “I’m sorry for not introducing myself sooner, especially after entering your establishment uninvited.” She unclipped her broach and removed her cloak, revealing her tanned skin, smoky eyes, and high black ponytail that reached past her waist. “My name is Kashiko Dokasuru, the leader of Head Games. If you’ll have us, we’d like to ally with you and sell you our support items.”

“Oh, uh…” The blonde man stammered for a moment before politely bowing with his leader. “I’m
Seijo Senbo – her bodyguard. Nice to meet you.” Shigaraki looked over the pair before returning to his game.

“They’re fine, I guess.”

Chapter End Notes

the fight next chapter is really kicking my ass for some reason, so the next chapter may take some time. We’ll get back to normal 1-B antics soon enough. Head Games is an original villain group I came up with and will be more important later, but that’s a while off.
“I’m not retreating,” Monoma declared. He turned and watched as Overdrive finished charging himself and crashed his knuckle guards into each other. “None of us are. Right?”

“Mhm,” Yui nodded.

“It would be shameful to run now,” Ibara asserted.

“I’m not leaving now after I screwed up,” Sero added.

“…I see,” Edgeshot said while looking up at the floating Reiko and Hagakure, who were floating away from the battle. “At least our noncombatants are staying back… Fine. In that case, take out the generator on his back.” Overdrive rushed towards the heroes, making everyone besides Edgeshot scatter. As the villain reached him and threw an electrified punch, the stealth hero folded his body out of the way, making the attack break the wall behind him. He sprung into the air and swung his hand out, folding his fingers into long claws. “Ninpo: Heavenly Claw Strike!” He sliced Overdrive across the back, but the villain was barely phased and fired a lightning bolt at the pro, knocking him across the warehouse.

“I’ve got him!” Sero yelled. He shot his tape around Overdrive’s arm and pulled, but he couldn’t make the villain budge. Overdrive dove towards Sero with his arm cocked, but Kamui grabbed the boy in time to avoid the attack.

“Don’t try and attack all on your own just yet,” Kamui warned. “Let’s wait until he’s worn down.”

“How long’s that gonna take?”

“Hopefully, not long,” Kamui answered. Behind Overhaul, a giant Yui and Monoma rushed him and slammed their fists in his back. Overdrive flew forward, but stopped and turned to the pair. He punched Monoma in the stomach and sent him flying upwards before backhanding Yui. She blocked the attack, but skidded backwards into a few crates. Just then, bundles of vines rushed onto the villain’s limbs and entangled them.

“Stand down,” Ibara ordered as her vines detached from her head. They restricted Overdrive, but not enough for him to stop fighting, and he dashed at Ibara. Just as he reached her, Reiko phased up from the ground and carried Ibara into the air.

“Thank you for the assistance.”

“I might as well help like this,” Reiko noted. Overdrive shot a bolt of electricity at them, but Ibara snagged a pipe with her vines and pulled them out of harm’s way. “Maybe Edgeshot was right and we should’ve left.”

“There’s no use saying these things now, Onryo.” Reiko turned around and saw Edgeshot balanced on a windowsill, observing Overdrive as he fought. “I need a clear shot at his generator. Kamui, try and hold him steady!”

“On it,” the arbor hero answered. He swung his wooden bindings towards Overdrive, but the villain dashed past his attack and drive his fist into Kamui’s stomach.

“Mr. Kamui!” Ibara yelled.
“For a big guy, he’s fast,” Reiko commented. Overdrive prepared to strike again, but was suddenly through knocked across the room. Everyone looked up to see a giant Mt. Lady standing over them, wielding a streetlight like a small golf club.

“Sorry to keep you waiting,” she said. Overdrive got up and shot a lightning bolt at the giantess, but she shrugged off the attack and swung down at him with her streetlight. Overdrive steadied himself and caught the stack, matching strength with Mt. Lady.

“Now’s my chance,” Edgeshot told himself. He reappeared behind Overdrive and slashed at the generator on his back, making sparks fly off before a small explosion blew the machine apart.

“As everyone attack! His power source is broken, so we have to wear him down!”

As Overdrive maneuvered the streetlight away, Kamui wrapped his wooden tendrils around his legs and began to squeeze. Sero compounded the bindings with his tape before Ibara joined in with her vines. Their combined might was enough to pull his legs together, putting the villain off his balance. Yui returned to the fray to uppercut overdrive, knocking him into the air.

“Nice job, Minmax!” Mt. Lady commented as she grabbed Overdrive. “Now what, little man?” The giant heroine had a pleased smirk on her face, thinking the fight was over, but to her surprise, Overdrive was strong enough to push her grip apart. As she reached with her other hand to tighten her grip, Overdrive grabbed her costume and yanked himself towards her head, rocketing into her chin.

“Mt. Lady!” Kamui called out. It seemed like she’d fall backwards, unconscious, but she regained her footing and angrily smacked Overdrive down. The villain crashed into the concrete floor, making dust and cracked stone fly everywhere.

“Quit making me look bad, asshole!” she complained with a pout. The remaining heroes looked down at the crater and the unconscious villain that made it. “If you guys are done gawking,” she continued, “now would be an awesome time to restrain him.”

“Good point, but I could do without the sass,” Kamui said. He and his two interns worked together and eventually cocooned the villain in tape, vines, and wood.

“So… that’s what pros are like in a fight,” Monoma pondered.

“Scary, huh?” Hagakure said, making the copycat flinch.

“Someone should put a bell on you,” he muttered. His gaze went to Edgeshot when he loudly cleared his throat.

“What’s up?” Mt. Lady asked as she finished shrinking down.

“I… well, I wanted to apologize to all of you,” he said. “This mission wasn’t as ‘by-the-numbers’ as I promised. I put all of our interns in danger—”

“That was more on us,” Reiko interrupted. “We wanted to stay.”

“Yeah, don’t be so hard on yourself!” Hagakure said. “We’re just happy we could come.” Edgeshot looked at the remaining interns, who seemed to agree with the girls, and smiled under his mask. Down the street, the blaring horn of a police vehicle caught the group’s attention. They watched as an armored car pull up and let out many officers, along with Tsukauchi’s surveillance van.

“That was quick,” Monoma said as the detective left his car and approached the group.
“They were on stand-by in case fight broke out,” he answered. “Nice work, everyone.”

“Thank you!” Mt. Lady said, eager for praise.

“We may have won the fight, but our target got away,” Edgeshot said. “We weren’t here to fight Overdrive, but to capture Giran and learn about this other group. We’ve failed.”

“Um, Mr. Edgeshot, sir?” Ibara quietly said. She reached into her utility belt and produced a small metal disk that she offered to the stealth hero. “When I had that woman entangled in my vines, I grabbed this from under her cloak. She threw one of these explosive discs at me to stun me and escape my grasp. I hope this aids in your investigation.” Edgeshot snatched the disc from her and looked it over before giving it to Tsukauchi.

“Sansa, get an evidence bag,” Tsukauchi called out. “This may be the lead we need.”

“We may be able to zero in on this group by learning what we can from this device. If this group is now in business with Giran, we may be able to get some useful information on the League of Villains,” Edgeshot added.

“That’s my intern for you,” Kamui said while putting and hand on Ibara’s shoulder. “Thanks to her, we’re not leaving empty-handed. Good job!”

“Th-Thank you, sir,” Ibara mumbled graciously.

Tsukauchi carefully placed the explosive in a plastic bag and handed it off to be inspected. “With that bit of evidence and a famous villain now in custody, I’d call this mission successful, at least for our heroes-in-training,” he said. “Hopefully we can get some information from Overdrive once he’s conscious. The League is gaining new contacts quickly, but this group… I don’t know why, but they worry me.”

“I’m sure you’ll get somethin’,” Sero said with confidence.

“Cellophane’s right,” Reiko added. Tsukauchi smiled at the heroes-in-training before the murmur of a crowd caught his ear.

“Looks like our fight drew a crowd,” Edgeshot noted.

“Oooh, photo op!” Mt. Lady cheered while grabbed Yui’s hand. “C’mon! I’ll show you how to pose for the cameras.”

“There she goes. Always rolling over for the media,” Kamui grumbled before noticing the jealous expressions on his interns. “…Well, we shouldn’t let her take all the credit. Come on, you two.”

“I hope they get my good side,” Sero said as the trio went to the street.

“Can we go too?” Hagakure asked.

“Well… as stealth heroes, we usually leave before the public shows up,” Edgeshot answered awkwardly. Though he couldn’t see her face, he could sense her disappointment. “…Fine.”

“Yaay!” Hagakure’s gloved hand grabbed Reiko’s and rushed to the street while Edgeshot followed slowly.

“Coming?” Monoma asked his employer.

“The media has more interest in heroes,” Tsukauchi explained. “I wouldn’t want to—”
“Nah, I’m not listening to that,” the copycat said while dragging Tsukauchi by his sleeve towards the street. “You helped out plenty, so come take some credit. I can’t stand it when talented people are overlooked.”

“…If you insist.”

“I’m glad we’ve got everything settled,” Giran began as he lit another cigarette. “Head Games will definitely be a great asset to us. Right, Shigaraki?” The League’s leader ignored the broker and continued with his game. “Uh… right, Kurogiri?”

“Of course. Would you too like to be sent back to your base of operations now, miss?”

“If it’s alright with you, I’d prefer a different address instead,” Kashiko requested while gathering her cloak and broach. Seijo nervously handed Kurogiri a slip of a paper with an address written on it and rejoined his leader. “I hope we work well together, Shigaraki.”

“Yeah, whatever,” Shigaraki spat.

“Sorry ‘bout him. Bad mood, that’s all,” Giran explained.

“Hey, boss,” Seijo quietly said. He held up his phone to show a breaking news head lone. *Hero team led by Edgeshot stop underworld deal, captures dangerous villain.* “Looks like Overdrive lost.”

“How unfortunate,” Kashiko said. “Oh well. At least we won’t have to pay him.”
Here’s quick chapter to bridge us from the internships arc to the next set of fluffy in-between chapters. Then comes Final Exams.

“I recognize that smirk,” Kendo said as she and Monoma walked to class. “Don’t get a swelled head from one successful mission you tagged along for.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about. Besides, I’m sure you did something just as exciting during your internship,” he replied with a knowing grin.

“Yeeeaah, to-totally. We… yeah.” Kendo deflated and trailed off as the pair entered the classroom. Inside, they saw a few others huddled in conversation.

“You two seriously fought that bad guy?” Pony asked. “So cool!”

“Sounds scary,” Kinoko said.

“Mhm,” Yui nodded.

“I didn’t really do much,” Reiko began. “Of all of us, Ibara probably helped the most.”

“The fact that you stayed and fought is impressive enough,” Tsuburaba added. “I fought a villain with Air Jet and I was scared as hell.”

“I saw that online,” Kendo said as she and Monoma joined the group. “That was pretty badass. Plus, you got your name out there.”


“…You could say that,” she murmured, making Monoma laugh to himself. Their attention went to the door as Setsuna and Rin entered the classroom. Rin still had some bandages around his face and hands and Setsuna seemed to be fussing over him.

“There he is,” Kendo said. “How’re you feeling, Rin?”

“I’m good,” he answered while brushing the lizard girl’s hand away. “I’ve felt fine for a while now. The rest of these bandages come off tomorrow… tomorrow,” he repeated to Setsuna.

“Buddy, I’m still gonna worry,” she replied with a pout. “You’re still all red and you have to apply that special lotion—”

“Yeah, you don’t have to keep helping me with that.”

“Well, I’m gonna,” she snapped. “That’s fun.”

“I don’t want that image in my head,” Kinoko complained.

“Oh, hey,” Setsuna said. “I think that’s the first thing you’ve said with no stuttering.”
“Um…”

“Did you get taller, Kinoko?” Kendo asked. “Or are you just standing a little straighter?”

“Maybe a little,” the mushroom girl replied while rubbing her neck. “My internship with Bubble Girl was… helpful.”

“That’s good to hear,” Reiko said. “You and Kamakiri were at the same agency, right?”

“Yes, but with different heroes. He was with Mr. Centipede.”

“Is there a reason he’s playing with his hair like that?” Monoma asked. Everyone looked to the back desks where Kamakiri was trying desperately to make his Mohawk stand.

“C’mon, you little bastard,” he grumbled while combing his hair up.

“Mr. Centipeder wanted to make him look and act gentlemanly,” Kinoko explained.

“Wish I could’ve watched that,” Tsuburaba laughed.

“…Wanna see something cool?” she offered with a small grin.

“I like new Kinoko,” Setsuna said. “Give us a show, girl.”

“Kamakiri?” she began. “What are the rules to a good handshake?”

“Firm but not crushing, two to four seconds, and eye contact,” he quickly explained without pausing his hair care. After a moment, he realized what he just said and glared at Kinoko. “Stop doing that!” Most of the class laughed while Kamakiri stood up in anger. “C’mon, that was a cheap shot! I’m still cool, guys!”

“You sure about that?” Kuroiro said as he entered the classroom with Honenuki and Awase. “I don’t know if I’m classy enough to hang out with you now.”

“Oh hey, Kamakiri, your uniform,” Kendo began. “It’s correct. You usually have your shirt untucked or your tie missing. You did it right today.” Kamakiri looked down at himself in horror before trying to mess up his clothes.

“This can’t be happening,” he moaned while Kuroiro cackled and the two boys with him snickered.

“Good morning, all,” Shishida greeted as he entered. “It’s been a while—”

“Shishida!” Kamakiri barked. “Tell me I’m cool! That I’m a rude or have no respect!”

“Why would I say that about you?” the hairy boy asked before smelling the air. “Kamakiri, are you wearing cologne?” The question drained the color from the mantis boy’s face and he fell to his knees.

“I don’t wanna wear a suuuuiiiit!” he wailed, sending a wave of laughter through the class.

“Hey guys!” Tetsutetsu yelled as he walked inside with Ibara. “What’d I miss?”

“Kamakiri became a well-mannered nerd,” Kuroiro explained.

“No, I didn’t!”
“Cool! Fourth Kind taught me that chivalry and good manners are super manly!”

“Looks like you’re in good company,” Honenuki said to Kamakiri, who was sulking in his seat.

“Hey, hey! I saw you guys online!” the iron boy continued. “You fought Overdrive, right? Monoma, Yanagi, Kodai? That’s so MANLY!”

“We certainly did,” Monoma said. “Finally, the public’s eye will be on us instead of Class 1-A.”

“I wouldn’t be so sure,” Ibara began. “Everyone is still talking about the attack on Hosu and the Hero Killer. Apparently, a few students from Class 1-A fought with Stain before Endeavor showed up.”

“Curses,” Monoma griped. “Outshined by those bastards again.”

“I guess nothing’s good enough for you, huh?” Kendo sighed while chopping Monoma on the head.

“Also, curses?” Setsuna asked. “God, you’re extra.”

“I’m not extra,” Monoma claimed.

“…Really?” Kendo asked. “You wanna say that right here, right now, in front of me?”

“…Yes?”

“OK, story time,” Kendo declared. “Ignoring the obvious evidence, like the plastic wine glass he brings to lunch, I have irrefutable proof of his extraness—”

“Not a word,” Monoma pointed out.

“Two years ago, late in 8th grade, I went over to Monoma’s apartment. His mom let me in and I went into is room. He was – and I’m not exaggerating here – he was sitting in a big chair, had his TV showing footage of a fireplace, sipping fruit juice from a wine glass, and wearing a bathrobe and a goddamn fez.” Kendo turned to Monoma with a dead-serious expression and her hands on her hips, waiting for any response.

“What I do in my downtime is no one’s business but my own,” he replied. He instantly turned red when the class busted in hysterical laughter that lasted almost a full minute. “OK, yeah, haha, joke’s on me.”

“You fuckin’ loser!” Setsuna jeered as the laughter finally died down. “Oh my god.”

“It wasn’t that bad,” the copycat claimed.

“I honestly would rather have caught you masturbating,” Kendo claimed.

“Now you’re exaggerating—”

“I am not.”

“Do I wanna hear how we got to this topic?” Kaibara asked as he entered with Bondo, Shoda, and Fukidashi.

“I’ll tell you later,” Tsuburaba said. “It’s pretty cringy.”

“Monoma and cringe do go hand-in-hand,” Fukidashi noted.
“When did this become all about me?”

“Isn’t it always?” Bondo asked sarcastically.

“Bondo with the zinger,” Setsuna said.

“Uh, hey, class is about to start,” Monoma quickly interrupted. “We should get in our seats and stop talking about this.”

“He’s right. Let’s get ready for class, everyone,” Kendo instructed as she sat down. *It’s been a while, but it’s nice to be back.*
“Alrighty, thank you for being patient, everyone,” Fukidashi said. “Let’s give a warm welcome to our newest players, Yanagi and Shinso.”

“Hey,” Reiko dryly greeted.

“Thanks for having me,” Shinso said casually. They were on Fukidashi’s right, across from Tsuburaba and Kaibara. At the last side of the table was Komori, Yui, and Honenuki, who helped Fukidashi set up the board and mini-figures.

“No prob, man,” Tsuburaba said. “Any friend of Yanagi is cool in my book.”

“More than friend, it looks like,” Honenuki noted. Yanagi glared at him and turned away while Shinso chuckled and shrugged.

“Is this gonna work with seven players?” Kaibara asked.

“Yanagi’s not gonna be playing with a normal character,” Fukidashi explained. “She’ll be role-playing, but she won’t fight or level-up.”

“I don’t really care about that stuff,” Reiko said. “The role-playing is the only part that sounded interesting. Shinso wanted in, so I just said ‘fuck it.’”

“We’re all set with the board,” Kinoko said.

“Mhm,” Yui nodded.

“Then I’ll begin the recap,” Fukidashi began. “Last time, our five heroes completed their quest to rid the nearby mountain of the monsters who had been killing livestock in Joven Village. You discovered in the cavernous mountain that an Imp had been controlling giant rats to collect food for him. After a tough battle, you defeated the Imp and are now returning to the village to collect your reward…”

As the band of adventurers continued through the thicket towards Joven Village, four of the members hung back and watched their Bard, Leon Rampart – a bug-eyed half-elf with light-brown hair wearing a flashy red coat over plain green clothes – continued singing his heart out and playing his guitar.

_Tonight, the music seems so loud_

_I wish that we could lose this crowd_

_Maybe it’s better this way_

_We’d hurt each other with the things we want to say_

_We could’ve been so good together_

_We could’ve lived this dance forever_
“Leon, shut up,” one of them said.

...But noooooow, who’s gonna dance with meehee?

“Seriously man.”

“OK, I’m done,” Leon said while hanging his guitar on his back like a weapon. “You’re no fun, Al.”

“You’ve been singing for an hour.” The man talking was Al Genome, a human fighter with dark brown hair and a stern presence. He wore tight dark clothes and metal armor with a drill-like lance on his back.

“I was enjoying it,” an emotionless voice said. Trailing the back of the group was Cosette Vekali, a Goliath Barbarian girl with straight black hair and an oversized mace. Instead of armor, she wore a short dress made of different animal hides stitched together, along with a leather belt that held her weapon and a few pouches.

“As leader, I say give it a rest.”

“You’re not the leader. I’m the leader,” Leon claimed. “Look at me lead.”

“I’m the one who killed the imp,” Al fired back. “I’ve been the one leading on us since we met.”

“You’re both wrong,” another voice said. “I’m the leader here.” The voice came from the imposing half-ore Paladin with ashy blond hair, a monstrous face, and dark metal armor, Clay Groture.

“You haven’t done shit,” Leon said dismissively. “I’m the most charismatic one here. Why wouldn’t I lead?”

“Because you already have a leader – me,” Clay replied.

“Wh-Why does it matter?” a quiet voice said. Everyone turned to the source – a Halfling druid girl named Mycelle Toadstool – who shied away from the attention. Mycelle had long, mushroom shaped brown hair with flowers placed throughout and wore a light green dress with a dark green cloak. “We d-don’t need an official leader. We’re almost at the town, s-so let’s table the discussion.”

“Agreed,” Cosette added. “Let’s stop talking about it.”

“...This isn’t over,” the three men said to each other as they entered Joven village. Only a few steps into the town made them notice something odd.

“It’s deserted,” Clay realized.

“Hello?” Leon called out. “Anyone around? Maybe someone who can give us our reward?”

“Your reward is in the tavern,” everyone heard to their right. They looked and saw a little girl staring at them blankly. “Everything will be explained there.”

“Little girl, where are your parents?” Al asked. The girl ignored him and walked behind a wooden post. “Hey, hold on.” Al followed her and looked behind the post, but she had disappeared once out of sight.

“Freaky,” Cosette commented.
“What could have happened here?” Mycelle wondered. “There were p-people around yesterday.”

“Only one way to find out,” Clay said as he gestured to the tavern at the far end of the village. “Be on your guard, everyone.” The five adventurers hurried to the tavern and swung open the door. Like the town, it was deserted, but seemed fine otherwise. Across from the door was a note hung to the wall. The group got closer to the note and leaned in to read the small print.

**Turn around, dickbags.**

“Turn around, dickbags.” The grouped whipped back and grabbed at their weapons, ready to battle. Facing them was a lone man who put his empty hands up. “Woah. Why the hostility?” The man had purple hair, dark bags under his eyes, and an unnerving grin. He wore a purple cape over a heavy gray shirt and black pants. “I just wanna talk—”

“What happened to this village?” Al questioned. “Where is everyone? Is this your doing?”

“…Yes and no,” the man said as he pulled up a chair. “Put away your weapons and I’ll explain the situation. There’s booze behind the bar if you want.”

“Don’t try and tempt us with— Leon, don’t start drinking.”

“You’re not my dad, Al,” the bard grumbled as he grabbed to a bottle of alcohol. He tipped it back while pushing a barrel to Cosette, who immediately started drinking from it.

“Guys, what if he’s tricking you?” Mycelle warned. “We should keep level heads.”

“I’m just loosening up,” Leon claimed. “Tell us about your thing, Mr. Whatever.”

“What is your name?” Clay questioned.

“Gen,” the man replied. “Gen Miasma. I’m here investigating the destruction of Joven village.”

“D-Destruction?” Mycelle asked. “What’s that mean? The town looks fine—”

“Looks can be deceiving, small person,” Gen said before snapping his fingers. In an instant, the tavern changed from its pristine condition and showed its true destruction. Half of the building was gone with only bits of rubble in the ground showing it ever existed. The side they were on was in complete disarray with broken tables, chairs, and bottles. Clay walked out from under the ramshackle roof and looked over the town – or what he had thought was a town. No other buildings were standing. Even rubble in the ground was sparse.

“What happened here?” Cosette asked.

“Why did it look fine until now? A spell?” Mycelle questioned.

“How did I grab the only two real drinks here?”

“Too many questions. One at a time,” Gen requested. “I put out those drinks as a peace offering—”

“That’s really not important right now,” Clay interrupted.

“I disagree,” Leon said as he emptied the rest of his drink.


“Scary,” Gen sarcastically commented. “It was destroyed a week ago. In an instant, the place was
destroyed. No survivors. Only a couple of witnesses, and they’re not even sure what caused it. I’m thinking it was some powerful spell from some powerful asshole.”

“Wait, hold on,” Leon began. “If it was fine a week ago, why did we walk through like no one’s business yesterday? Why did it look fine until now?”

“That was my doing. I made an illusionary town to fool you all. It’s all a trick on the mind,” he explained while tapping his head. “I’m what’s called a Psionic – a psychic, if you will.”

“You’re a serial killer?” Cosette asked.

“No, that’s a psycho,” Gen said. “I have mind powers. Telekinesis, telepathy, illusions – I have plenty of tricks. I’ve actually been sitting on the bar this whole time.” In an instant, Gen was gone, but reappeared sitting cross-legged on the bar. “Hey.”

“Seems pointless, but alright,” Leon said.

“Sometimes, you just gotta go for style points… hoo-ah.”

“You said you were investigating this village, right?” Mycelle inquired. “Why? Were you hired to do it?”

“Coerced, you might say,” Gen said before laughing to himself. “Seemed more like begging at the time.”

“Screw you,” another voice said. It was a girl’s voice, seemingly coming from Gen’s pocket.

“Oh, now you want to speak? I thought you were shy,” Gen mocked. He reached into his pocket and tossed a trinket to the ground. The travelers looked closely and saw it was a necklace containing a large blue gem. Form the locket, an otherworldly mist rose and took on a human form. Floating above the floor was a teenage girl with gray hair that covered her left eye. She wore a fancy white dress that had rips and frayed edges, along with a metal collar that connected her to the locket with an ethereal chain. Her face was emotionless and featured smudged make-up – most noticeably, a set of mascara tear streaks down her cheeks.

“What a freaky design,” Kinoko commented.

“I don’t remember the make-up part,” Shinso remarked.

“Thought of it on the spot,” Reiko said. “Cool, right?”

“Super cool.”


“I apologize for having Gen trick you all,” the ghost politely said. “I’m the reason he’s investigating this place. My name is Anastasia Blithe, but you can call me Ann.”

“…Hello,” Leon casually greeted. “Hello there, ghost friend.”

“This just raises further questions!” Clay snapped. “How— what— why—”
“I’ll ask,” Al offered. “Why would a ghost hire us to kill an imp and have a mystic fake a town?”

“What even is today?” Leon asked while knocking his head on Cosette’s empty barrel of liquor.

“The mission you accepted was a test,” Ann clarified. “Gen and I wanted to see you all in action, so we followed you and watched your fight. For our quest, we’ll need strong companions such as yourself.”

“What quest?!” Clay asked. “What’s Joven Village have to do with it? Why the ghost? This is so convoluted! My brain hurts!”

“This quest may involve the whole kingdom,” Gen said. “There’s been plenty of strange happenings all across the land this past few months. Demonic rituals in Arbosere, experiments on beasts near Aqualung, the dead rising by Millsy Village, and much, much more. All of it happened after the coup. Once King Dracule and Princess Saphro were ousted, things have been going to shit all over Syndalle.”

“Joven Village’s destruction had a purpose, though I don’t know why,” Ann added. “I know because the way it was destroyed… was the same way my home was destroyed… and how I was killed.”

“How did you die?” Mycelle asked. Ann was quiet, seemingly in sadness, but her expression slowly became a quiet rage.

“Thieves raided my family’s manor in search for a locket – a red one, to be exact. They wanted this blue one as well, but didn’t realize they were kept together, so they missed it. The manor was then destroyed… with everyone inside. I cannot rest until the lockets are reunited…”

“So, your resolve bonded your spirit to the locket,” Clay realized.

“Bingo,” Gen said. “I found this other locket in the rubble of her house not long ago. Didn’t have anything better to do, so I went along with her idea. We’re gonna help this ghostly girly find the other locket before more hell breaks loose. How’s that sound?”

“Wait, wait, hold on,” Tsuburaba said as he started grinning. “So, Yanagi, you’re saying that on the night your character died… that there was a great big flash and everything just changed?”

“You little fucker. I get enough Danny Phantom jokes from this guy,” she groaned while pointing to a laughing Shinso.

“You’re just mad because your molecules got all rearranged,” Kaibara added, making Tsuburaba and Shinso laugh even harder.

“Wait, wait, hold on,” Tsuburaba said as he started grinning. “So, Yanagi, you’re saying that on the night your character died… that there was a great big flash and everything just changed?”

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“You’re just mad because your molecules got all rearranged,” Kaibara added, making Tsuburaba and Shinso laugh even harder.

“You can turn my offer down if you want, but this involves the entire kingdom. You’ll be swept up either way,” Ann warned. “Will you help Gen and I stop the evil that plagues the land?”

“…Huddle up, guys, huddle up,” Leon called out. The five huddled together as Gen moved away, taking Ann’s locket with him. “What’re we thinking?”

“The ghost has a point,” Clay began. “All these strange happenings around the kingdom can’t be coincidence, right? This Gen guy seems pretty strong too, so maybe we can all save the kingdom.”

“I’m not convinced,” Al said, “but we’re all still rookie adventurers, so I doubt a ghost and powerful
Psion would be tricking us for no reason.”

“I agree,” Mycelle added. “If we can help save other places from a terrible fate, we should, right?”

“Sounds good to me,” Cosette said.

“Alright, you two. We’re all in,” Leon announced.

“Nice,” Gen answered. “Now you don’t need to keep arguing over who’s the leader.”

“Why?”

“I’m the leader,” he declared before walking off. “Let’s go.”

“Who said you could be the leader?” they all angrily asked.

“I did. Just now. I’m also giving us a name. We’ll now be called Mind’s Eye.”

“Do we get a vote?” Mycelle asked.

“Ehehehehehe… don’t ask stupid questions.”

“You get used to him after a while,” Ann assured her new companions.

“I recognize some of those names Shinso mentioned,” Kinoko noted. “Saphro is Kendo’s character, right?”

“You also brought up the place Pony went to in her campaign,” Tsuburaba mentioned.

“Fukidashi wanted me to namedrop them. Hint at future things I guess.”

“I’m building a world here, guys,” Fukidashi declared. “DM has to plant the plot seeds to be plot points later, y’know? It’s gonna be cool, trust me.”

“Dude, this is DND,” Honenuki pointed out. “None of this is cool.”

Chapter End Notes

We’ll meet again for No Metagaming 4: The Search for More Money
Becoming a Real Girl

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Heeheehee. There he is. As lunchtime wrapped up and the students worked their way back to their classes, a set of goggles over pink hair peeked out from a corner. My little cyborg-to-be. A pair of yellow eyes with scope-like pupils locked themselves on Awase’s back as he walked with Kuroiro and Honenuki. Now’s the perfect time. Hatsume fully crept out from the corner and subtly followed the hero students. Under her arm was a black bag with scrap metal and wires spilling out. As she crept closer, she whipped out one of her inventions and fastened it to her waist like a belt. The machine activated and two metal stilts shot out, lifting her off the ground as she pulled out a megaphone. “Yosetsu Awase!” she yelled into the megaphone. All eyes went to her, including Awase’s, who already looked surprised and fearful. “Come to the Design Studio and help me make babies!” There was a moment of silence before the entire hall burst into laughter, the loudest of which came from Kuroiro.

“Damn, dude! Your girlfriend is pretty ballsy!” the white-haired boy cackled.

“Shut up,” Awase said with a tired sigh. As the students dispersed, Hatsume returned to the floor and scampered over to Awase.

“Hey! Come on! I’ve got some babies I need a hand with and you’re just the guy to help!”

“We’ll leave you two alone,” Honenuki said as he dragged a still-laughing Kuroiro off with him.

“Hatsum—”

“I’ve also been working on the blueprints for your cybernetic enhancements in my downtime, but I need more of your measurements!”

“Hatsu—”

“I’ll need bicep circumference, finger length, pen—”

“Hatsume!” Awase suddenly barked before taking a deep breath. “Come over here,” he ordered while dragging her into an empty classroom.

“What’re we doing?” she asked. “Coming up with an alibi for you skipping class? I think—”

“Stop,” he said. “Stop talking for… at least 15 seconds or I might just weld your lips shut.” This made Hatsume finally settle down and lose her manic grin. “Enough. I’m not putting up with your stalking anymore. It’s creepy and embarrassing and I’ve had enough of it. Goodbye.” With his feelings laid out, Awase silently left and continued back to class. Hatsume peered out of the classroom and watched his back as he walked away.

Was it something I said?

As afternoon classes in the Support Department continued as chaotically as ever. Hatsume was noticeably less hectic. Her usual vigor had slowed to a comparative crawl, though she was still going faster than most other students. Her senior classmate, Yuyu, looked on worriedly from her own workstation. What’s up with her today? she wondered. Did Power Loader scold her? No,
that never upsets her unless he kicks her out. Yuyu put it out of mind until classes finished. Once it was just her and Hatsume, she approached her junior. “Hey, Mei?”

“Hm?”

“You feeling alright? You’ve been pretty sluggish and quiet since lunch.”

“Must’ve been somethin’ I ate,” the pink-haired girl explained while tightening the screws on her latest creation.

“Yuyuuuuuu!” a feminine voice called out. Yuyu turned in time to see Nejire diving into her arms. “Hi.”

“Hey, Nej,” she greeted.

“Hi, Hatsume. What’cha workin’ on?”

“Hydraulic compressors for some second-year,” she flatly explained.

“Something’s bugging her,” Yuyu quietly explained to her girlfriend. “That’s the first time she hasn’t gone on a tangent about her project when asked about it.”

“…Boy troubles,” Nejire loudly claimed, making Hatsume flinch. “Or girl troubles. One or the other, you’ve got love on the brain.”

“I think you’re barking up the wrong tree, Nej,” Yuyu said.

“No, she’s right,” Hatsume revealed. “Awase told me to stay away from him.”

“Aw, really? That sucks,” Nejire said with a comforting hand on her shoulder. “Want me to beat him up for you?”

“Nah. Nothing I can do about it now,” Hatsume casually stated.

“What set it off?” Yuyu asked. “What made him finally say no?”

“I invited him to help me out in the studio,” Mei explained. “I yelled at him through a megaphone to come and make babies with me.” Yuyu and Nejire looked at each other and both sighed. “…What?” Hatsume asked.

“Mei, don’t you think that was maybe, I don’t know, embarrassing for him?”

“I dunno.”

“Let me take this,” Nejire said. “Hatsume, what else have you done to get his attention?”

“Tried to convince him to become a cyborg, took his measurements in the hall, spied on him as he walked home – normal stuff.”

“No, no,” Yuyu groaned while pinching her forehead. “Mei, that’s the furthest from normal you can get… which, for you, is normal. It’s kinda ironic.”

“Well, it’s a little late for that information. Now what?”

“Oh! Oh! I know!” Nejire proclaimed while bouncing up and down. “Hatsume, you still have a shot. We just need to teach you how to act normal for at least a minute.”
“Even that sounds impossible,” Yuyu commented. “What do you wanna do, Mei?”

“Hmm…” Hatsume rubbed her chin and looked back down at her workstation. “My creativity will be stunted if I can’t get him off my mind. I need to clear the air with him, at the very least. I’m in, Nejire.”

The trio of girls left U.A. and wound up at Nejire’s house for Hatsume’s “Normalcy lessons.” Yuyu and Hatsume waited in her excessively pink room as she secretly prepared.

“Question,” Hatsume began. “How’d you get Nejire to date you?” Yuyu paused for a moment before laughing.

“Don’t ask me. I have no clue. Nejire just kinda showed up one day and wouldn’t leave me alone. I stumbled into having the perfect girlfriend. Even now, just the sight of her makes my stomach do flips.”

“No kidding? Wow.” Hatsume sat on Nejire’s bed and flopped down on her side. “My brain’s all scrambled. I hate it.”

“That’s just how I felt,” Yuyu commented.

Watching Mei have feelings like this is interesting. It’s like Pinocchio – she’s becoming a real girl.

Her eyes went to the door as Nejire entered, using her Quirk to float off the ground. She had changed into a blue nightie and was carrying a plastic wand.

“Hi! I’m the blue fairy!” she proclaimed as she floated inside.

...Well, that’s some coincidence.

“I’m gonna turn you into a real girl, Hatsume.” Nejire reached out and poked a befuddled Hatsume on the nose with her wand. “OK, ready to start?”

“…I guess.” Hatsume shot a glance to Yuyu, but the blonde girl was too busy staring at her floating girlfriend to notice. “What’re we doin—”

“Clothes!” Nejire grabbed a pile of fabric and whipped it into Hatsume’s face. “Go change.” Hatsume held out the outfit – a pink sundress – and grimaced.

“Not my style,” she declared.

“Alrighty!” Nejire said with a thumbs-up. “Next is make-up. What’s your color?”

“Make-up’s not my thing either.”

“OK, we’ll skip that,” Nejire said nonchalantly while tossing the make-up away.

“Two for two. Keep it up,” Yuyu snarked.

“I don’t mean to sound ungrateful, Nejire,” Hatsume began, “but I wasn’t really looking for a makeover or nothin’. I don’t wanna change too much. I just need to learn to interact with him without weirding him out.”

“OK, then let’s practice that,” Nejire said. “Yuyu, you be Awase. I’ll guide you through talking, Hatsume.”

“Wait, she looks nothing like Awase,” Hatsume pointed out.
“Can’t you just prete—”

“Oh, you’re right,” Nejire noted. “What should we do?”

“I’ve had an idea for a plastic surgery machine in the back of my mind for a while now. I just need some scissors, a toaster, several bags of screws, chocolate—”

“Why don’t I just wear a headband?” Yuyu quickly offered.

“That works.” Nejire grabbed a blue scarf from her drawer and tied it around Yuyu’s forehead before setting her in front of Hatsume.

“OK, let’s start with a greeting,” Nejire instructed.

“Hi, Awase,” Hatsume began with her usual energy and crazy smile.

“Hey, Hatsume. What’s up?” the pink haired girl froze and slowly turned to Nejire.

“Now what?”

“Make conversation.”

“Wanna see this new baby I’ve been—”

“Maybe something other than machines,” Nejire suggested.

“…My mind is blank!” Hatsume laughed.

“I don’t wanna rain on your parade, Nej.” Yuyu began, “but I think we’re doing this wrong. What’s our desired endgame in doing this?”

“Hatsume confessing to Awase and him agreeing to go out with her. Right?”

“Right,” Hatsume confirmed.

“If they end up a couple, Mei isn’t gonna act like this. She’ll be herself. We can’t change who she is and expect her to be happy staying that way, y’know? Wearing grungy work clothes, being covered in grease and soot, and constantly talking about machines is who Hatsume is.”

“…I guess you’re right,” Nejire said sadly. “Sorry, Hatsume.”

“Don’t apologize,” she replied. “We just need some creative thinking! Right, Yuyu?”

“Right. Let’s brainstorm. How do we let Hatsume make her feelings known without scaring anyone?” Yuyu sat down and scratched her head. Nejire recognized her girlfriend’s “thinking pose” and mirrored her. Hatsume copied the pair also, not wanting to feel left out.

“…Got it!” Nejire announced. She bolted to her nightstand and dug through the top drawer, pulling out a notebook and pen. “Love letter!”

“A love letter?” Yuyu asked as Nejire sat Hatsume at her desk.

“If you can’t find the right words in the moment,” Nejire began, “we’ll find them this way. Trial and error until you’ve said all you want.” Hatsume looked down at the paper and grew an uneasy expression.
“Kinda feels like cheating. Like, I’m being… cowardly by not facing him.”

“It’s not cowardly,” Yuyu assured her. “You’re just doing things a little different. You’ve already made it clear to him that you like him, so you’re far from being a coward, Mei.”

“What do I even write?”

“Whatever you really want him to know,” Nejire instructed, “and if you don’t like what you’ve written, just try again. You can do it!”

“If you insist…”

The next day, Hatsume, Nejire, and Yuyu put their plan into action. Hatsume’s note was ready in an envelope as they looked through the shoe lockers for Awase’s. “Don’t worry about him coming here early,” Nejire said. “I asked Setsuna to stall him after class.”

“As soon as the note is in his locker, I’m booking it back to the studio,” Hatsume proclaimed.

“Over here,” Yuyu said. The other girls joined her at Awase’s locker as Hatsume took out the envelope. She took a deep breath and held it up to the slit in the locker door.

“Here goes nothing… wait, it’s too thick!”

“Huh?” Yuyu and Nejire looked closer and realized the envelope was too large for the opening. “Oops. Now what?” Yuyu wondered.

“Panic?” Nejire suggested.

“No. No panicking yet,” Yuyu said. “Maybe I can pick the lock or—”

“Seriously, guys. I need to get home.” The trio of girls froze when they heard Awase coming down the hall.

“Well, shit,” Hatsume groaned. “Panic?”

“Wait, this is perfect,” Nejire realized. “You said you it felt cowardly not confronting him head on, so here’s a compromise. Give him the letter yourself.” Before Hatsume could argue, Nejire looped her arm around Yuyu’s neck and pulled her away, leaving the young inventor on her own.

“Hold on, Awase!” she heard Setsuna yell. “I wanna show you that new Godzilla movie trailer.”

“You showed me already.”

“…I wanna show you again!” Awase turned the corner with Setsuna following close behind. They both stopped when they noticed Hatsume in front of Awase’s shoe locker with an envelope in her hands.

“Hatsume,” he began. “What… what’re you doing now?” He sounded irritated, making Hatsume nervous. She looked at Setsuna, who wore an apologetic face, and then at Yuyu and Nejire, who were peeking around the corner. “Is that another drawing of me as a cyborg?” he asked while pointing to the envelope. Hatsume forced her body to move and she walked forward. She swerved to Awase’s right, but stopped to hold the letter out to him. There was a moment of stillness, but eventually, he took the letter, prompting Hatsume to scamper off without a word.

“Well, my work here is done,” Setsuna said before walking off. “Later.” Awase looked around
confusedly, ultimately landing his eyes back on the envelope.

“I hope this doesn’t explode.” Awase slowly peeled the envelope open and took out the paper inside to read.

_Awase_

*I’m sorry for stalking you. I ignored your feelings for too long and only focused on my own. That was selfish. I’m not used to feeling this way about people – just machines. What I’ve been trying to say is that I like you a lot. If you don’t feel the same way, I understand and I’ll leave you alone._

_Mei Hatsume_

Awase sighed and looked regretfully at the letter. He wasn’t sure what to do, but before he could really think of anything, his legs began moving on their own. He was following Hatsume without realizing. He rounded the corner, seeing her slowly trudging down the hall, and called out “Hatsume!”

“Hm?” She looked back and saw Awase approaching her warily.

“Listen, I…” He seemed unsure at best, but still looked her in the eyes. “I read your letter… If your promise to stop stalking me, then I, uh… do you wanna go out sometime?” His face was turning red, as was Hatsume’s.

“Yeah. I, uh, I would,” she finally said. “You have my number already, so… call me sometime.”

“Right. Right, I’ll do that. I have to get home now, so… bye.” He turned and hurried back to his locker, leaving Hatsume on her own again. She wasn’t by herself for long as Yuyu and Nejire ran out from down the hall and grabbed the pink-haired girl in a hug.

“I’m so proud of you,” Yuyu said.

“Good job!” Nejire cheered. Hatsume smiled and returned the girl’s embraces.

“I knew it,” she said. “He digs me.”

Chapter End Notes

_I don’t think I’ve mentioned it before, but if anyone wants to do fanart for this story, I’ll happily share the link in the chapter notes_
As morning classes wrapped up and the students of 1-B headed to lunch, Kuroiro stayed planted in his desk and watched everyone leave. “Hey, Kuroiro?” Monoma began with Tsuburaba and Pony at his side. “Are you… feeling alright?”

“Why do you ask?”

“You been acting weird,” Pony blurted out.

“Your look has really changed,” Tsuburaba noted.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“Really?” Monoma sarcastically asked. Kuroiro had always been a little eccentric, but he had seemingly ramped it up in the previous week. He was wearing a white medical eyepatch over one eye along with red bandages around his hands. His shirt was untucked and his jacket unbuttoned, showing off a black plastic cross necklace with a dragon on it. His hair was also shaggier and spikier and he had big earrings.

“Yeah, really. I’ve always looked like this.”

“You all covered in bandages,” Pony pointed out. “Don’t be embarrassed if you are injured.”

“Pony, I don’t think that’s it,” Monoma told her.

“I dunno. Maybe he hit his head,” Tsuburaba suggested with a laugh.

“Don’t concern yourself over me,” Kuroiro told them while running his hand through his hair. “You’d be meddling in forces beyond your comprehension.”

“Oh, are we?” Monoma tiredly asked. Kuroiro ignored them stood up, heading for the door. “I’m pretty sure we can comprehend fake eyepatches.”

“It keeps my dark powers at bay—”

“Yeah, I’m sure it does,” Monoma scoffed as Kuroiro slammed the door behind him. “Goths.”
“My necklace?” He looked down at the plastic trinket around his neck and went to speak, but Ibara cut him off.

“I’m overjoyed that you’ve found God as well, my friend,” she beamed.

“Oh, I’m not… th-that’s not what this is,” Kuroiro stammered. *She’s too wholesome.*

“I’m sorry for making assumptions,” she said with a small bow. “If I may ask, what is it?”

Kuroiro had been waiting for someone to ask and instantly grew a smirk before posing in a “mysterious” way.

“This charm was forged long ago to seal away evil power,” he embellished. “I must wear it to keep the power of Black Hole sealed within my body, lest it destroy our very existence. I must carry this burden on my own and in secret. Such is fate for the Ebony Hero.”

“…Alright then,” Ibara slowly said. “Good luck with that… I think.” She walked off and glanced at him confusedly as she entered the cafeteria.

“She just doesn’t get it,” Kuroiro told himself.

“Doesn’t get what?” Kuroiro jumped a little bit when he suddenly heard Honenuki behind him.

“You snuck up on me,” he grumbled. “The true, dark nature of my power confuses Shiozaki.”

“Is that why you’ve been acting like an edgelord?” Honenuki asked, making Kuroiro groan.

“You don’t get it either.”

“Guess I don’t. We still on for training later?”

“Sure.”

“Cool. Let’s go eat,” Honenuki said while leading the white-haired boy into the cafeteria.

Kuroiro looked out the window at the setting sun before putting his eyepatch back on. *Man, I really overdid it with the weights. I’m gonna be sore in the morning.* His cinched the bandages around his hands and walked back to the personal training areas. “Honenuki, you almost done?” He didn’t see Honenuki, but Cementoss instead.

“He’s still at it,” the pro told his student.

“Did he ask you for help with somethin’, sir?” Kuroiro asked. He peered inside the training area to see Honenuki catching his breath. He was standing on a layer of cement instead of the normal metal floor. “He’s practicing his Quirk in there? Why not just do it outside?”

“Honenuki wanted to practice in a more controlled environment,” Cementoss explained. While Honenuki went back to his training, Cementoss motioned to a dial near the door. “These rooms have temperature control.”

“Temperature control?” Kuroiro parroted before looking at the dial. “30 degrees!?”

“He told me he needs to build up a resistance to the elements,” Cementoss continued. “Last time we did this, he was at 95 degrees.” Kuroiro was blown away as he watched Honenuki soften the ground and throw it upwards, creating a wall of cement, all while frozen breath poured from his mouth.
“That’s intense.”

“He’s quite driven.” Honenuki returned the ground to normal and trudged to the door. As he walked out, Kuroiro was immediately shivering from the cold air rushed into the hallway. “Very impressive, Honenuki” the pro hero complimented.

“Thanks, Mr. Cementoss. Sorry I kept you so long.”

“Nonsense. I’m always happy to help my students.” Cementoss went to clear out the cement while Honenuki slowly walked off with Kuroiro.

“This is about Todoroki, isn’t it?” Kuroiro asked. “You’ve had him on your mind since the Sports Festival. What’s up with that?”

“It’s nothing,” Honenuki replied.

“This doesn’t look like nothing.” Honenuki wanted to argue back, but had no excuse.

“Both classes have two recommended students, right?” he rhetorically asked. “There’s me and Yanagi, and there’s Todoroki and Yaoyorozu. I don’t think it’s cocky to say that Todoroki and I have better combat-based Quirks than the other two, yeah?”

“Sounds right to me.”

“Me and Todoroki are both the recommended fighting student in our classes,” he continued. “We’re like doppelgangers. We should be rivals... but ever since the Sports Festival, I feels like I have no shot. I’m supposed to be Class 1-B’s strongest, but how can I do that if I’m stuck behind Todoroki.” Honenuki clenched his fist and punched his open palm as he glared at the floor. “It feels like I’m letting our classmates down – like I’m proving everyone right when they say Class 1-A is superior. I need to train much harder if I’m ever gonna fight Todoroki.”

“Dude…” Kuroiro didn’t really know what to say, but seeing Honenuki so self-conscious about his strength made him gloomy. Not even the type of gloomy he enjoyed. “You haven’t even fought him yet, so don’t just assume you’d lose right away. Whenever you do fight him, I’ll make sure to cheer you on.”

“…Thanks, man,” Honenuki replied. “I’m gonna go get something to drink. Want anything?”

“Something as dark and black as my soul should do.”

“…Milk it is,” Honenuki joked. Kuroiro sneered as Honenuki walked off before leaning against the wall.

So, you’re trying to one-up someone in Class 1-A too, huh? He looked down the hall once he heard a set of footsteps. Walking his way was Tokoyami. Well, speak of the devil… “Tokoyami,” he greeted

“Kuroiro,” the bird-headed boy said as he stopped and locked eyes with Kuroiro.

“…I hope you’re powers of darkness haven’t been giving you much trouble,” Kuroiro hissed while posing. “A demon with a weak host will eventually devour its container.”

“I wouldn’t worry. Dark Shadow is completely in my grasp,” Tokoyami assured him while posing more subtly. “You seem to have a firm handle over your own powers of darkness, but I’d expect that for less-horrifying power.”
“Oh, you think my darkness isn’t as powerful as yours? Even now, my soul could be shredded and scattered across nothingness. I truly live a tortured existence.”

“My demonic powers threaten to consume me and wreak havoc if I lose control. I must keep constant vigilance.”

“Such is life for a dark soul,” they both said at the exact same time.

“Just give it up. I’m way cooler than you,” Kuroiro said.

“Is that so?” Tokoyami asked with an annoyed tone. The two boys glared at each other for a while before hearing a familiar set of voices coming their way.

“So that’s why you wear a mask all the time?”

“That’s correct.” The two goth boys looked and saw Honenuki and Shouji walking and talking. “I’ve often been told my face is somewhat intimidating, so I choose to hide it.”

“I’ve heard that a few times too,” Honenuki answered, “but I just kinda said ‘fuck it’ and refused to hide my face. I don’t even wear one with my costume.”

“Aren’t you worried that you’d scare the people you save?” Shouji asked.

“A little, but that’s why I wanna be a famous hero. My face is scary, sure, but I want people to see it and think ‘hey, it’s Juzo, the Softening Hero. Man, I feel safe.’”

“I see. That’s an admirable goal,” Shouji complimented. “I must admit, I wish I had the confidence to do something like that.”

“It’s not really about confidence, y’know? We’re just doing two different things. One isn’t better than the other.”

“I see your point,” Shouji said as he and Honenuki approached the goth boys.

“Hey, I didn’t know you guys were pals,” Honenuki commented.


“Correct. We are… pals,” Tokoyami continued before hastily exiting. “Well, I should be going. Goodbye.”

“Later,” Shouji said before following the bird-headed boy.

“Soosoo… pals, huh?” Honenuki asked while tossing Kuroiro a can of juice. “Really sounded like it.”

“You’re one to talk, Mr. ‘I have to surpass Todoroki,’” Kuroiro shot back. “I met him after the Sports Festival at a bookstore. He was looking at gothic poetry. Since then, me and him have had this… goth-off, for lack of a better term.”

“That explains all this,” Honenuki said while gesturing to Kuroiro’s accessories. “Trying to get the… edge on him?”

“That was bad,” Kuroiro commented before laughing at the terrible joke.

“I guess we’re both trying to one-up someone in 1-A. We have more than a few things in common
“Never thought I’d say this, but I know now what it’s like to be Tetsutetsu.”

“True.” Honenuki finished off his drink and tossed the can into a nearby bin. “I’m starving. After I change, we should go get something to eat.”

“Together? Like a date?” Kuroiro asked jokingly.

“Sure. Let’s call it that,” Honenuki replied. Kuroiro nearly choked on his drink while Honenuki headed to the locker room. “Be back in 5.” The white-haired boy looked back and forth between Honenuki in his drink with a blank mind.

...What the fuck just happened?

Chapter End Notes

Two ships in a row.
Stay tuned for Final Exams. Chapter 35 drops tomorrow with the students vs teachers match-ups.
With school back in its usual rhythm, time flew by fast. Without realizing it, the last week of June had snuck up on Class 1-B and finals were close at hand. “Son of a bitch… Son of a bitch… I’VE BARELY STUDIED AT ALL!” Awase (grade rank 20/20) yelled.

“I feel that!” Setsuna (rank 19/20) said jovially. “Hahahahaha!”

“Sets, why are you laughing?” Rin (rank 10/20) asked from behind Setsuna. His girlfriend stopped laughing and turned around slowly. She was still smiling, but had streams of tears running down her cheeks.

“Cause I’m hopeless,” she whispered on the verge of both laughing and sobbing.

“D-Don’t cry!” Rin quickly said. “I can help you study! You can pass!”

“Thanks. You’re the best,” the lizard girl complimented while burying her face in Rin’s shoulder.

“It feels kinda weird that we’re already at finals,” Fukidashi (rank 12/20) said.

“Agreed,” Bondo (rank 11/20) replied.

“This first semester has been one thing after another,” Kinoko (rank 7/20) added. “We had the Sports Festival so early in the year, then the internships not long after—”

“That’s what I mean!” Awase suddenly barked. “We’ve had so much shit to do! I just haven’t had the time! That’s my problem!”

“It’s not that hard to keep up with just a little studying,” Monoma (rank 2/20) interjected

“C’mon, Awase. You can still pull off a passing grade,” Kendo (rank 3/20) assured him.

“Everything we’ve learned was pretty simple stuff,” Reiko (rank 6/20) said. “I’m surprised you couldn’t keep up.”

“Don’t talk to me like I’m an idiot!” Awase griped.

“How’s anyone gonna talk to you now?”

“Don’t you get on your high horse, Kamakiri!” the welding boy fired back. “You’re not exactly a model student!”

“I’ll be just fine,” Kamakiri (rank 18/20) answered.

“Yeah! I’m sure we can pull this off, guys!” Tetsutetsu (rank 15/20) shouted with a big smile.

“Hey, how’d we do worse than him!” Setsuna asked.
“Yeah! You’re supposed to be the class idiot!” Awase yelled at the still-smiling Tetsutetsu.

“It’s not just a written test,” Shoda (rank 9/20) pointed out. “We’ll have a practical exam too.”

“I wonder what kind of test it’ll be?” Rin questioned.

“I wouldn’t worry too much about that,” Kendo said. “I asked Togata about it and he said the final exams are usually against robots like the entrance exam.”

“No way! That’s great!” Awase cheered. “Now I just need to study my ass off!”

“If you’re really in dire straits, perhaps I could assist you,” Shishida (rank 1/20) offered.

“Seriously?! Could you really?!”

“Hey, could me and Rin get in on this?” Setsuna asked.

“Of course.”

“Uuuh, can me and Kaibara join in too?” Tsuburaba (rank 16/20) asked.

“Hero Law isn’t good subject for either of us,” Kaibara (rank 13/20) admitted.

“I’m happy to help,” Shishida said.

“We’re gonna kick that test’s ass!” Tetsutetsu declared. “Right, Ibara?!”

“I do hope so,” Ibara (rank 4/20) replied. “The summer training camp sounds like fun, so I wish we can all succeed.”

“I’ll need to buckle down and study all my notes,” the iron boy declared. He pulled out a spiral notebook form his bag and showed it off to Ibara. She took it and flipped through the pages of illegible scribbles, then looked back to the oddly-proud Tetsutetsu. “I’ve got this in the bag.”

“…It seems that way,” Ibara politely said. “Perhaps we could study together? You seem to… have a grasp on the material, so I may learn something from you.”

“That sounds awesome!”

“She’s too polite for her own good,” Monoma noted as he watched the pair.

“Maybe she could teach you,” Kendo snarked.

“Are we still on for our usual study sessions?”

“Yup.”

“You guys study together?” Pony (rank 16/20) asked as she approached Kendo and Monoma.

“Every finals week,” Monoma said. “How about you, Pony? Need a study partner?”

“Could you?!” Pony practically begged. “My grades aren’t super good. Hope I’m not imposin’.”

“We’re happy to have you,” Kendo assured her. “Hey, Yui?” she called out. “Wanna study with us?”

“OK,” Yui (rank 8/20) answered.
“Those fools. Flocking to knowledge at the very last second,” Kuroiro (rank 14/20) said to himself.

“Looks like you’re not in great shape yourself,” Honenuki (rank 5/20) noticed. “Need a tutor?”

“…Yes please.”

The students of 1-B studied and trained all week for their final exams, determined to pass and prove themselves. After the grueling written test, they gathered outside in their hero costumes for the practical exam. Waiting for them was Principal Nezu, who stood in front of a line of teachers – Vlad King, Power Loader, Cementoss, Present Mic, Midnight, Snipe, 13, and Ectoplasm. “Hello all,” the principal greeted. “I hope your prepared for your practical exam.”

“Bring on the robots!” Awase boasted. “I’m ready to kick some ass!”

“I’m sorry, but you won’t be fighting robots,” Nezu politely explained. “After some deliberation, we decided to completely revamp our final exam format to focus not only your own skills, but teamwork and battling against real opponents. You’ve been split into pairs and will fight against one of our own U.A. staff members. Isn’t that exciting?”

“We’ve gotta fight the teachers?” Setsuna asked.

“Are we ready for something like that?” Fukidashi wondered.

“I’m sure you’ll do fine, but it’ll be tough,” Mr. Kan said. “Class 1-A went yesterday and 15 of them passed.”

“Some of 1-A failed? That’s hilarious,” Monoma commented before being chopped on the head by Kendo.

“If we’re in pairs, then shouldn’t there be 10 teachers here?” Kendo asked. “I see only nine.”

“Our final proctor is running a bit late– oh, there he is,” Nezu said while looking up. 1-B mimicked him and saw a blue figure hurtling towards the ground.

“I AAAAM… HEEEERE!” All Might crash-landed next between the students and heroes turning the stone beneath him to rubble. “TO FIGHT!”

“Two of us are gonna fight All Might?” Kuroiro said. “I feel bad for those poor saps.”

“You are the poor sap, Kuroiro!” All Might announced.

“…What?”

“You’ll be facing me! The third match of the day will be me against you and Shiozaki.”

“…What?”

“Having trouble processing it?” Tsuburaba asked with a laugh. “Dude, you’re fighting All Might!”

“…Shit,” Kuroiro grumbled.

“All Might, sir?” Ibara began. “If I may ask, how were the match-ups decided? Both Kuroiro and I are more adept in capture and rescue then in fighting.”

“That’s exactly why this match is happening! Wanna explain our reasoning, Vlad?”
“I guess,” Kan began. “The matches and teams were decided based on factors such as fighting style, grades, and interpersonal relationships. For example, our reasoning behind this pair and opponent was on your personalities.”

“Our personalities?” Kuroiro asked.

“Shiozaki, you’ve made it clear on many occasions—”

“VERY clear,” Mic interrupted before innocently whistling.

“You’ve made it clear that you hate senseless violence,” Kan continued. “In a life-or-death situation, especially when innocent civilians are involved, you cannot hold yourself back like that. You can deal with villains however you want, but holding back like that won’t fly in a crisis. By fighting someone as strong as All Might, you’ll have to push yourself and do whatever it takes to win, even if you have to hurt him.”

“Must I really?” Ibara asked in disbelief.

“If you can win with your usual methods, then that’s great!” All Might said. “We just wanna make sure you give it your everything!”

“What’s this have to do with me?” Kuroiro interjected.

“You have a knack for staying calm under pressure and pushing your comrades to do whatever’s necessary to succeed,” Kan explained. “An example would be your Heroes vs Villains training where you convinced Awase to attack Kodai.”

“You also didn’t flip out when you learned I was your opponent,” All Might added. “Very impressive.”

“Our other match-ups weren’t as in depth into your personalities,” Kan continued. “We were mostly looking at fighting styles and grades for those.”

“Please take a look at the monitor behind us,” Nezu said. “Be on the lookout for your name as we announce the rest of the match-ups.”

Match 1: Sen Kaibara and Tetsutetsu Tetsutetsu vs. Cementoss
Match 2: Kojiro Bondo and Manga Fukidashi vs. Present Mic
Match 3: Shihai Kuroiro and Ibara Shiozaki vs. All Might
Match 4: Yosetsu Awase and Setsuna Tokage vs. Nezu
Match 5: Kinoko Komori and Nirengeki Shoda vs. 13
Match 6: Itsuka Kendo and Reiko Yanagi vs. Ectoplasm
Match 7: Juzo Honenuki and Kosei Tsuburaba vs. Midnight
Match 8: Neito Monoma and Pony Tsunotori vs Vlad King
Match 9: Hiryu Rin and Jurota Shishida vs. Snipe
“Your time limit for the exam is 30 minutes,” Nezu continued as he took out a pair of handcuffs. “You have two options to claim victory – either put these handcuffs on your opponent or escape from the testing rounds through the gate.”

“We can just run?” Pony asked.

“You’ll be up against people much more experienced than you,” Midnight explained. “In a real situation like this, you may be tasked with finding a hero more suited for the situation, so running to get reinforcements may be in your best interest.”

“Think of this exam like a real battle,” 13 interjected, “and treat us as villains.”

“Now, I know what all of you are thinking,” All Might added. “You think your only option is to run since you’re so outmatched. That’s why the design course whipped up something very special for today.” He pulled out from his belt a pair of thick metal bracelets. “Booyah! Ultra-Compressed Weights designed by our very own Mei Hatsume.”

“Ooooh, so that’s what Mei’s been working on,” Awase said to himself. “She mentioned not being allowed to talk about them.”

“These will weigh us down by about half our body weight, so now, the playing field be a little more even.”

“We’ll begin the exams now,” Kan said. “Kaibara, Tetsutetsu, you’re up first.”

“Yes, sir!”

“Right.”

“While you all wait for your turn, you can either strategize or watch the other fights inside. Don’t let me down, class. Show us all what you can do.”
"I think we have a pretty good plan," Kendo said as she and Reiko walked through the facility. "It’s a good thing we can try to escape instead of fight. Your Quirk is perfect for that."

"Yeah, but I think Ectoplasm is prepared for my Quirk," Reiko noted. "They’re not gonna make it easy." The girls entered a dark room with a large screen on the wall. Recovery Girl was present to watch over the fights, and already joining her was Monoma and Pony.

"You guys are gonna watch the matches too?" Kendo asked.

"Yeah. We’ve got a strategy figured out," Monoma explained, "and our match isn’t for a while, so might as well."

"I’m gonna run my little tail off!" Pony announced.

"Sounds good," Reiko said. "Looks like the first match is starting."

"Team Kaibara and Tetsutetsu. Practical exam: begin."

"LET’S DO IIIIIIIIT!"

"Don’t give away our location like that," Kaibara scolded.

"I’M! SORRY!" Tetsutetsu yelled.

“…Let’s just go.” The pair of boys jogged through the city area, keeping their eyes peeled for the gate and for Cementoss.

“So, what’s the plan?” Tetsutetsu asked. “I’m thinking we fight. Probably get a higher score that way.”

"Maybe, but we should focus on just passing and worry about score later," Kaibara said. They turned another corner and found both Cementoss and the exit gate further down the street.

"Looks, like we can’t avoid him," Tetsutetsu said while hardening his skin into steel. "Get ready, Kaibara."

"Cementoss isn’t a very mobile fighter," Kaibara explained. "If we get in close, it’ll be easy to stay close. The problem is that we’re always in his range since we’re in a city area." The boys felt the ground rumble as Cementoss activated his Quirk. Between them and the hero, walls of cement sprung up.
“Let’s see you try and counter this,” Cementoss said. “Will your bodies and Quirks hold out long enough to reach me?” Tetsutetsu ran towards the walls with his iron fist cocked, quickly followed by Kaibara who spun his arm like a drill. They shouted and drove their fists into the first wall, making it crumble apart almost instantly. They kept going and continued into the second wall, shattering it into debris.

“KEEP ON PUSHIN’, KAIBARA!”

“RIGHT!” They boys continued to pound their way through the never-ending walls, but as time went on, they began to slow down.

“Prolonged fights aren’t your strengths,” Cementoss noted. “My Quirk has no limitation like that. All you’ve done is waste time and energy.”

“He’s right,” Tetsutetsu realized. “I’m running low on iron.”

“My arms are seriously worn out,” Kaibara said while clutching his right arm. “We need a new strategy.”

“Dammit! We can’t lose this! I won’t give up!” Despite his declaration, Tetsutetsu couldn’t think of anything while more walls popped up around him. “Shit! If only there was a way to combine our Quirks.”

“…Wait, say that again,” Kaibara requested.

“This would be way easier if we could combine our Quirks—”

“That’s it! I never thought I’d say this, but you’re a genius, Tetsutetsu!” Kaibara quickly unfastened his utility belt and held out his arm. “Do you have enough iron left for one last push?”

“You bet!”

They’ve been quiet for a while now, Cementoss thought. Have they given up? He considered ending the fight then and there, but then heard a sound. It was Tetsutetsu screaming – not a rare sound to hear, but it was quickly getting closer. How are they covering so much distance so quickly? Cementoss got up and backed away from the cement wall closest to him. They should be slower after fighting for so long. As the wall burst apart, Cementoss saw their strategy – Tetsutetsu’s legs were strapped around Kaibara’s spinning arm and he was holding his arms above his head, forming a human drill.

“SO DIZZYYYYYYYYY!”

“We’re almost there!” Kaibara assured his teammate. Cementoss reached down to activate his Quirk again, but Kaibara aimed Tetsutetsu low and skidded him across the ground before swerving up towards Cementoss’s torso.

“LET’S SAY IT!” Tetsutetsu begged.

“You got it,” Kaibara replied with a smile.

“GIIIIIGA DRIIIIIILL BREEEEEAAAK!” Tetsutetsu’s spinning fists dug into Cementoss and hurled him into the air as the boy’s shouted their attack name.

“I’ve got him!” Kaibara declared as he unhooked Tetsutetsu from his arm. He grabbed the handcuffs
from his pocket and ran to where Cementoss was about to land. As the pro hit the ground, Kaibara dove and hooked the cuff onto his ankle. “Captured.”

“Team Kaibara and Tetsutetsu have passed.”

“Alright!” Kendo cheered. “Now that’s teamwork!”

“That was super cool!” Pony gushed.

“Only Tetsutetsu would agree to such a risky move,” Recovery Girl pointed out, “but they pulled it off with flying colors.”

“Is he OK?” Reiko wondered. “He’s looking a little green.” Everyone watching had to turn away from the screen as Tetsutetsu began an extended session of projectile vomiting. “Oof.”

“Team Bondo and Fukidashi. Practical exam: begin.”

“I can’t believe they made me come back out here,” Mic grumbled near the entrance gate. He looked around his feet for any bugs, then back at out into the forest training area. “Not one of them would trade with me. Bunch of jerks, all of them. ‘Oh, we need to have the same areas for both classes,’” he said in a mockingly whiny voice. “At least neither of these kids can summon bugs... I hope.” Mic grew impatient as he waited for Bondo and Fukidashi to show their “faces” and decided to be proactive. He took a huge breath and sent an eruptive scream forward into the forest. “COOOOOOOOMME OOOOOUUUUUT!” Nothing.

“HUUUUURRRRRRY UUUUUUP!”

“LEEEEEET’S GOOOOOOO!”

“C’MOOOOOOOOON!”

Still nothing.

“This is boring,” Mic said while checking his watch. “They’re really biding their time. They know my location after my attacks, so they must have a strategy if they’ve waited this long.” It wasn’t long after that Mic finally saw Bondo approaching. *No Fukidashi, huh? That crafty little gremlin must be around here somewhere.* Mic reeled back and inhaled for another shouting attack, prompting Bondo to spray a pile of glue in front of him. The glue hardened instantly and Bondo ducked behind it. “YYYEEEEAAAAAHHH!” The leaves and branches were blown back from the shout’s force but Bondo’s glue pile was unaffected.

Fukidashi’s probably close by, but I don’t know where. It won’t be as powerful, but I can at least hit him without aiming. Mic let out another shout, this time into his neck speaker, which sent out shockwaves in all directions. *Now, where are you?*

“Hey, Mic!” The pro looked up to see Fukidashi in the air, silhouetted by the sun.

*How’d he get up there? Did Bondo throw him?* Mic inhaled to attack again, but Fukidashi made his move first.
“SHING!” Fukidashi called out, summoning a bright light from his speech bubble head.

“So bright, even with my shades,” Mic complained before screaming into his speaker and sending shockwaves out. Once the spots in his eyes went away, Mic checked around the area again. He had lost sight of Fukidashi, and Bondo hadn’t made a move to attack, but two more piles of glue had appeared much closer to Mic.

So, it was a distraction to let Bondo get closer and confuse me of where he could be. If he’s behind one of these two new piles, then I’m in range of his glue. He could still be behind the first pile, or even behind a tree. Mic checked behind himself quickly and remembered he was immediately in front of the gate. I can’t move from this spot without giving either of them the chance to escape, but I’ll totally see them coming. After another moment of waiting, Mic let out another sound attack aimed straight forward. At point blank, Bondo can’t be enjoying my solo. Fukidashi’s probably not holding up awesomely either. I’ve got this in the bag—

“BOOOOOM!” An explosion hit Mic’s left side, tearing up his costume and damaging him.

“Little gremlin,” Mic growled while looking at Fukidashi, who was along the fence on his left. If you’re over here, I’m guessing Bondo is over here.” He turned around and saw Bondo running towards him along the right side of the gate. He could also see that Bondo’s earholes were plugged up by his own glue. So that’s how he could take so many of my shouts. He inhaled for another shout, but before he could…

“BOOOOOOOM!” Another explosion went off, this time at Mic’s feet, and he was thrown into the air. Bondo shot out glue and nailed Mic in mid-air, making sure that Mic would be staying down once he landed.

“Welp, you got me,” Mic said as Bondo cuffed him. “Nice work.”

“Aw yeah!” Fukidashi cheered while raising his hand. “Up high!”

“Down low,” Bondo said while hi-fiving his teammate.

“Team Bondo and Fukidashi have passed.”

“Team Kuroiro and Shiozaki, please report to Training Ground Beta for your practical exam.” Ibara looked down at her feet and sighed before heading down the hall.

“I guess I can’t avoid it any longer,” she told herself.

By fighting someone as strong as All Might, you’ll have to push yourself and do whatever it takes to win, even if you have to hurt him. Kan’s words repeated in Ibara’s mind again, making her heart sink further down.

I understand his reasoning. I understand that I must do everything I can to protect people once I’m a hero. I understand. I really do. But… She stopped and leaned on the wall, clenching her shaking hands together. I don’t know if I’m ready. She jumped a bit when she heard heavy footsteps coming her way. After a moment, Tetsutetsu emerged from around the corner.

“Oh hey!” he greeted with his normal gusto. “Headin’ to your match?”

“Y-Yes… I am.”

“Good luck! I’m rootin’ for ya!” he said while bumping Ibara’s shoulder playfully and continuing
“Thank you… Tetsutetsu?”

“‘Sup?”

“I… have a question.”

“Kay!” Ibara couldn’t will herself to look back at Tetsutetsu, but took a deep breath and continued.

“Why do you like to fight?” The iron boy was silent for a while, obviously having trouble putting his thoughts into words.

“It’s… it’s like… I dunno. It’s just fun to me. It’s something you have to put your all into, no matter what.”

“But fighting causes pain,” Ibara said. “I just can’t bring myself to take part. I could never enjoy it.”

“You don’t have to,” Tetsutetsu told her. “No one likes to hurt people. It’s not the pain that makes fighting fun for me – it’s the passion! You don’t have to enjoy fighting. You don’t even have to fight back if you can win without it.”

“Team Kuroiro and Shiozaki, please report to Training Ground Beta for your practical exam.” The announcement came again and Ibara still couldn’t bring herself to move, but then Tetsutetsu put his hand on her shoulder.

“If there’s anyone in the world who can defeat All Might without damaging him, it’s you.” Ibara’s breath hitched. She could practically feel his sincerity through his grasp.

“Tetsutetsu… I—” She was stopped when the boy lightly shoved her forward. Looking over her shoulder, Ibara saw the boy giving her a thumbs-up and a toothy grin.

“Do your best, OK?”

“I… yes. I will.” She smiled back at the boy and sped towards Training Ground Beta. It took a few minutes, but she arrived to meet Kuroiro at the entrance. “I apologize for my tardiness, Kuroiro.”

“It’s fine,” he replied. “All Might said you may need a few minutes.”

“Where is All Might?”

“He’s further in the city. Probably near the exit gate.” Kuroiro handed Ibara the handcuffs and they walked into the fake city. “You’ve got a better shot of actually fending off All Might, so try and cuff him if you can. I’ll support you if I’m able to, but I’ll also look for a chance to head for the exit. Sound good to you?”

“Yes. I’ll… I’ll do whatever it takes to win. I promise.” Ibara gripped the cuffs in her hands and looked ahead, ready to face the #1 hero. *Whatever it takes.*

“Team Kuroiro and Shiozaki. Practical exam: begin.”
“I guess they’re ready,” All Might said to himself. He stretched out his legs and rolled his shoulders from his position in front of the exit gate before slowly pulling back his fist. “Let’s see if they can handle an attack from the #1 pro.” In a flash, his punch was thrown and a wave of destructive force flew down the main road. The pavement practically evaporated into dust. The faces of buildings were stripped away. Small bridges bent and tore away from the pressure. All the way down the main road was absolute devastation from the single punch. “A pretty good warm-up, I’d say. Good job, All Might,” he told himself. “Let’s see if my students are still up and about.”

All Might dashed down the block before slowing to a jog about halfway through. *Gotta keep my ears open and my eyes peeled. Shiozaki can use her vines to try cuffing me from a distance. There’s also Kuroiro – he may try slipping by me and then run to the exit.* As the entrance gate came into view, All Might stopped and looked around to find his opponents. “Oh, heroes,” he called out. “I’m ready to fight if you are!” He couldn’t find a trace of either student. “Oh well. If there are no heroes to stop me…” All Might clenched his muscles and raised his fists over his head. “I’ll just destroy this whole area!”

Before All Might could bring his fists down he felt his arms constricted. He looked up and saw vines encircling his arms and leading down an alleyway on his right. “Finally making your move, eh?” All Might snapped the vines easily and ran down the alleyway. At the end of it, he didn’t find Ibara, but a bundle of vines rooted in the concrete instead. “Ah, yes. Shiozaki can control her vines even after detaching them. They’re probably on their way to the gate now. All Might turned and ran back to the main road, but didn’t notice as a single vine coiled around his ankle.

“It seems he hasn’t notice the vine on his ankle yet,” Ibara said as she and Kuroiro ran down the side street opposite of the direction All Might had gone. “As long as it’s on him, I’ll know his location.”

“Right. Let me now where he is next time he sends a fucking typhoon our way. It’ll be hard to tell.”

“He’s back on the main road,” Ibara explained while ignoring her partner’s sass. “I don’t think he knows our location. Wait, he just jumped.” The duo looked up worriedly and saw All Might rising above the buildings behind them.

“Think he sees us?”

“New Hampshiiiiiiire…”

“I’ll take that as a yes,” Kuroiro sighed.

“SMASH!” As All Might rocketed towards them, Ibara shot her vines forward and pushed Kuroiro ahead while she jumped back. Just as they landed, so did All Might. The concrete under his feet was crumbled instantly and the force of his landing shredded the vine around his ankle. “Pretty sneaky, young Shiozaki.” Ibara instantly sent more vines to All Might and pinned his arms to his sides, but only for a moment. “I’m afraid sneaky won’t be enough today!” All Might flexed and broke the vines apart, then grabbed at the ends still attached to Ibara. He yanked them forward, sending her flying into his grasp with a pained yelp. Before she could attack again, All Might pushed her into the building wall, crumpling the metal on impact. “You just stay here while I deal with your partner.”

“W-Wait!” Ibara gasped. She watched helplessly as All Might ran to Kuroiro and plucked him off
the ground before slamming him down into the pavement. Kuroiro was stunned, barely having time to react before yelling in pain.

“Is that all, you two?” All Might asked. “We’ve barely started.” In an instant, Ibara pushed herself from the dented wall and pulled Kuroiro into her arms. Her vines then shot up, pulling her up the side of the building.

“Don’t worry, I’ve got you,” she assured Kuroiro.

“Delawaaaaaare SMASH!” Ibara heard the attack coming and swung herself to the right, avoiding the incoming blast of air pressure. She watched as the attack tore across the building, leaving a deep scar across the metal and windows.

_He’s too powerful, Ibara told herself. I can’t hope to match his strength with my vines._

“SMASH! SMASH!” All Might fired two more air-pressure attacks, but Ibara dodged both and pulled herself onto the roof. Once she landed, Ibara stopped and set Kuroiro down.

“Are you OK?”

“I’ll be fine,” Kuroiro groaned while holding his side. “Let’s just keep going.” He got on his feet, but then fell into Ibara’s arms and coughed for air.

“Kuroiro!” she said in worry. As a line of blood trickled from Kuroiro’s mouth, Vlad King’s words dug into her mind again.

_In a life-or-death situation, especially when innocent civilians are involved, you cannot hold yourself back like that._ Ibara grimaced at the memory and bit her lip, trying to think of the best course of action.

_Should I really…?_

“Shit! Behind you!” Kuroiro warned. Ibara looked back quickly and saw All Might above them coming down like a comet. “Let’s go!”

“R-Right!” She ran with Kuroiro leaning on her shoulder and leapt of the roof towards the main road. While a few vines curled around Kuroiro, the rest shot out to another rooftop and hooked on the corner. The duo swung their way down the street, heading towards their exit.

“Delawaaaaaare SMASH!” A blast of air pressure from All Might destroyed the rooftop Ibara’s vines clung to, but she grabbed onto another building and continued swinging down the street.

“incoming!” Kuroiro warned. Ibara glanced back and saw All Might rocketing towards them with his arms in an X-shape.

“Carolinaaaaaaa SMASH!” At the last second, Ibara lowered herself and Kuroiro out of the way, but the attack snapped their vine.

“Oh fuck!”

“Hold on!” Ibara cried out. She hooked her vines onto a broken window and swung out their remaining momentum before tumbling onto the main road. “Are you OK, Kuroiro?”

“Never better.” The pair got up and surveyed the area for their opponent. They were getting very close to the exit gate, but All Might blocked there path.
“I’m impressed that you’ve made it this far without a single attack,” All Might complimented. “You’re both fine students, but this is U.A., where you push yourself beyond your limits. Any limits.”

“Shiozaki, are you still good to fight?” Kuroiro asked. “Shiozaki?” He looked and saw Ibara’s face twisted up in anguish and anxiety. “Hey! Get a hold of yourself! Didn’t you say you’d do whatever it takes to win?” Ibara jolted from her nervous freeze and looked to her teammate. “We’re almost at the gate. We can pass! I’ll try and make it there… can you keep All Might away from me?”

“Kuroiro…” Ibara’s chest felt heavy with emotions and she paused, but then saw the line of blood that had come from her teammate’s mouth. *He’s hurt because of me,* she thought. *I promised never to raise my hands in violence. I thought I was strong enough to uphold my vow, even as a hero. But now…* “I’ll do it.”

“Don’t forget the cuffs,” Kuroiro instructed. “If you have a chance to cuff him before I reach the gate, take it.”

“I will.”

“Let’s continue, my students!” All Might said as he ran towards the duo with his fist cocked. “Detrooooooooooiiiiiiit…”

“Kuroiro, now!” Ibara called out. All Might watched as Kuroiro’s chest portal opened and vines poured out.

“What the— you stored vines in his body for a sneak attack?” The vines spread out over All Might’s front and then went down, rooting themselves in the ground.

“Kuroiro, get going,” Ibara instructed. As her partner left, her hair burrowed into the ground and popped up behind All Might, constricting him from behind.

“A pincer attack, eh?” All might commented. As he struggled against the bonds, a vine holding handcuffs snuck its way across the ground towards All Might’s ankle.

*As long as he doesn’t notice, I can end this here. We can win right now!*

“Oklahomaaaaaa SMASH!” All Might suddenly broke into a spinning frenzy that sent the vines holding him flying away, along with the handcuffs.

“No! The handcuffs!” Ibara yelled.

“And now for young Kuroiro!” All Might announced. Ibara quickly wrapped him with her vines again, but he pulled them off as quickly as they grabbed him. “This isn’t enough to defeat me, young Shiozaki! You must push yourself beyond any limit to achieve victory!”

“I know that!” she shouted back. Ibara looked past All Might as Kuroiro ran, still clutching his side. When she turned her attention back to her opponent, the pro was almost completely free of her grasp and was cocking his fist.

“Teeexaaaaaas... SMASH!” All Might threw his punch, but a set of vines changed his aim at the last second. His punch flew into the ground and All Might went sailing into the air. As he ascended, he felt the vines still around him guiding him away from the exit gate.

“Please forgive me, All Might!” Ibara shut her eyes as her vines threw All Might down the main
road and straight into a building. She heard her opponent roughly crash through the building and plummet four stories onto the side street, landing with a boom. Her body and mind were unmoving, but after a moment, she heard an announcement.

“Team Kuroiro and Shiozaki have passed.” Ibara forced her eyes open and saw Kuroiro at the exit gate. He waved and leaned against the gate as a robotic stretcher approached him. Ibara waved back, but then turned and ran down the road.

“All Might! All Might!”

_Holy shit. It’s been a while since I went straight through a building, _All Might recalled. _That girl has some serious power behind those vines. She redirected my smash and hurled me through a freakin’ skyscraper. Maybe it’s a good thing she’s not a fan of violence._

“All Might!” Ibara called out again. “Where are you?”

“Over here!” All Might slowly got up and unlatched the weights around his wrists and ankles. He looked himself over and saw his costume was torn and his hair was disheveled. The ground beneath him had become a crater and debris from the building were strewn around the side street.

“All Might! I—” Ibara ran up to All Might, but slowed to a stop when she saw the damage she had caused. “Are... Are you hurt?” Her voice was already cracking and tears were welling in her eyes. _Good thing I planned something to say, _All Might thought. _Time to be a teacher._

“Young Shiozaki, I... I’m, urp—” All Might was interrupted when he felt something rising up his throat. _Oh shit, not now! Not here! Gimme, like, 3 minutes, you crap body! _Despite trying to keep it down, All Might leaned forward and hacked up an enormous glob of blood onto the ground. _Uh oh_. He stared down at his blood, frozen in awkwardness, but then saw tears falling next to the red puddle. This can’t possible end well. _Good freakin’ job, All Might._ He looked up hesitantly and felt his heart break once he saw Ibara’s destroyed expression. She was shaking, holding hands over her mouth in shock, and had tears flowing freely out of her scrunched-up eyes. “Sh-Shiozaki—”

“I’m so sorry!” she wailed as she ran off. All Might wanted to chase after her, but on his first step, he felt steam pour from his body.

“Just perfect,” All Might grumbled as his body shrunk to its skinny form. “I couldn’t hold out for another minute to give her a pep talk. After she did so well and gave the fight her everything... she went beyond what I had asked and I can’t even comfort her now.” All Might ineffectually punched the wall near him as Ibara’s sobs echoed down the street. “What kinda crap teacher am I?”

“Man, I’m stuffed!” Tetsutetsu said as he rubbed his stomach. “Nothing like second lunch after losing the first one.” The iron boy walked through the facility, looking for the screening room to watch the fights. _I wonder if Ibara and Kuroiro are done yet? _He jogged through the halls and looked around, but didn’t see anything he recognized. _Yup. I’m lost_. He skidded to a stop and turned around, planning to retrace his steps, but something caught his ear. _What is that? _he wondered. He continued down the way he headed, following the soft, erratic noise. As he got closer, he realized what the sound was. _Who’s crying? _He turned another corner and finally located the wall near him as Ibara’s sobs echoed down the street. “What kinda crap teacher am I?”

“...Go away,” she mumbled.
“You look upset,” the iron boy noted while closing the door. “Did you lose?” Ibara said nothing, but she did shake her head. “So you won? Good job!” Tetsutetsu instantly regretted saying anything as Ibara began sobbing again. “Oh, uh…” He didn’t know what to say, so he just walked to her side and slid down the wall next to her. “Wanna talk about it?”

“…I did something awful… and no matter how much I apologize and repent… I can never make it up.”

“I dunno what you did, but it’s probably not as bad as you think,” Tetsutetsu said. “As long as you’re sorry and you apologize, I’m sure it’ll be fine. I can’t really picture anyone holding a grudge against you.”

“…But I can’t forgive myself,” Ibara said as she raised her head towards Tetsutetsu. “How could I after what I’ve done?”

“What did you do?”

“I-I was forced to attack A-All Might,” Ibara explained while falling apart again, lip quivering and body shaking, “an-nd when I-I found him, he-he coughed up blood.” Ibara scrunched her dress between her hands and squeezed her eyes shut again. “I h-hurt All Might that badly… I’m a terrible person!”

“No, you’re not—”

“I am!” Ibara cried. “I-I was caught up in t-trying to pass the test and I-I hurt All Might. I-I-I didn’t want to fight, b-but Kuroiro got h-hurt because of me and All Might k-kept saying—”

“Ibara, stop.” Tetsutetsu sternly insisted. “Take a deep breath and stop talking.” Ibara did as he requested and paused her anguish to hear the boy out. “You’re not a bad person. No matter what you think right now, you aren’t. All Might will be fine, Kuroiro will be fine – even if you think you’ve done something wrong, it’s nothing that can’t be fixed.” Tetsutetsu took Ibara’s hands between his own and looked into her teary eyes. “You aren’t a bad person, I promise. You’re the kindest, gentlest, and most caring person I’ve ever met. I swear that no one thinks less of you for one attack and a little blood – especially not All Might.”

Ibara couldn’t look away from Tetsutetsu’s eyes. His compassion and kind words draped around her like a blanket and the shaking stopped. The tears came again, but this time, they were accompanied by a smile. “…Thank you,” she said before wrapping herself around the boy. “Thank you, Tetsutetsu. I’m so thankful… that you’re a part of my life.”

“I feel the same,” he responded while holding Ibara close. The embrace lasted a long while, but Ibara wanted it to last even longer. In that moment, she realized what Tetsutetsu was to her – he was a sturdy, unwavering source of confidence and energy. He was the rock she could always anchor herself to, no matter how bad the situation was. Eventually, she pulled back, but didn’t let go completely. She looked over Tetsutetsu closely – his sharp teeth, his erratic and wild eyebrows, his silver, spiky hair. Most of all, his warm and loving smile.

Before Ibara could even think, she had already planted her lips on Tetsutetsu’s.
“Ibara?” Kendo called out. “You around here?” Kendo circled back and returned to the viewing room entrance where Reiko was waiting. “Find her?”

“Yeah, she’s right next to me,” Reiko said while gesturing to the empty space on her left. “Didn’t see her.”

“Dang. Maybe Monoma and Pony found her.”

“We didn’t,” Monoma said as he and Pony arrived at the viewing room entrance. “No sign of her.”

“Hope she’s OK,” Pony said. “She looked upset on the screens. Why’d Recovery Girl turn ‘em all off so quick?”

“She probably didn’t want to broadcast Ibara’s meltdown,” Monoma theorized. “Should we try looking again?”

“I’m gonna,” Kendo said. “She definitely needs the support right now.”

“Don’t fret over me. I’ll be fine.” Everyone turned to see Ibara and Tetsutetsu walking their way. “Though, I’m flattered that you all were worried on my behalf.”

“Hey, Ibara!” Pony greeted. “Sure you OK?”

“Yeah, you seemed pretty fucked back there,” Reiko noted.

“It was quite difficult to deal with, but thankfully, Tetsutetsu was kind enough to comfort me—”

“As a true man would,” Tetsutetsu boasted.

“So, I’ll be fine, thank you.”

“We’re glad to hear it,” Kendo said as she hugged Ibara. “Now that that’s settled, let’s go watch the next round.” The group of students entered the viewing room, where they saw Recovery Girl and Kuroiro walking in from the nurse’s office.

“Oh, hey,” Kuroiro greeted. “How’re you holding up, Shiozaki?”

“Much better now, thank you,” she replied. “Are you feeling better?”

“Yeah. Quick fix for Recovery Girl.”

“Honestly, All Might hasn’t learned his lesson,” Recovery Girl complained. “He’s still too rough with you kids. He nearly crippled Midoriya yesterday.”

“Seriously?” Reiko said. “Shit, dude.”

“Kuroiro, were you nearly crippled?” Monoma asked.

“Uuuuh… no?”
“Looks like out class fared better against All Might, in that case,” Monoma said. “How sad for the supposedly superior—” He was cut off by a karate chop the back of the neck from Kendo.

“Monoma, shut up for a while,” Kendo requested. “Now, let’s see how Awase and Setsuna—”

“THERE YOU ARE!” Everyone flinched and looked back to see All Might arriving in the viewing room. “YOUNG SHIOZAKI!”

“Oh, All Might,” Ibara gasped. “Are you feeling alright?”

“I am! I’ve been looking for… wait, have you calmed down?” he asked. “You were so distraught after the match.”

“Yes, sir.”

“…That’s great! Now, for what I wanted to tell you before.” All Might crouched down to get on eye level with Ibara and put a hand on her shoulder. “I know you hate fighting and I’m sorry. I’m sorry we forced you into a situation where you had to get violent, but I swear that we had your best interest in mind. We thought that if this type of situation happened on a real mission against a real villain, then it would turn out much worse. I’m not saying you have to fight like that once you graduate – I’d be happy if you can go your whole career without attacking like that again – but now that you have and you’ve seen that it’s not the end of the world, you’ll be ready if you must fight again.”

“I understand, All Might,” Ibara said before bowing to her teacher. “I… I know what to do now. I’ll become even stronger so that I won’t have to use violence again, but if the day comes when I must, I’ll be ready. Thank you for helping me through this, sir.”

“Even if it was a little late,” Kuroiro snarked. “Do I get a pep talk?”

“Oh, ah, yes!” All Might said. “You did— you were great out there, Kuroiro. Good job, man. Super job, in fact—”

“Yeah, yeah, whatever. Don’t you have a quick exit to make?”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” All Might asked before he felt steam coming from his back. “…Purely coincidence, but I do have to run now. BYE!” All Might dashed out of the room, leaving a trail of steam in his wake.

“Called it,” Kuroiro said.

“If that’s all done,” Reiko began, “the next match is starting.”

“Yosetsu Awase and Setsuna Tokage. Practical exam: begin.”

“Why am I so nervous?!” Awase asked himself. “He’s a friggin’ mouse and I’m scared shitless of him!” He followed Setsuna as they peeked around through the backstreets of industrial training area.

“I don’t see him yet,” Setsuna said. “Motherfucking mouse-ass, sneaker-wearing, tea-drinking, Great-Mouse-Detective-ass—”

“What the fuck are you talking about?”

“I’m psyching myself up by insulting my opponent. Keeps me calm.” Setsuna and Awase darted off through an alleyway, working their way towards the exit gate.
“…Do you hear that?”

“You pissing your pants over a 3-foot tall animal in a suit? Yeah, I hear that.”

“No, listen.” The pair perked up their ears as rhythmic crashing sounds got closer. “Is something breaking?”

“Kinda sounds that way, but how would Principal Nezu be able to— HOLY SHIT!” Setsuna pointed up at a series of pipes, heavy machinery, and pieces of buildings crashed into each other, creating a chain reaction of destruction that now blocked their path with its debris.

“How’d he even do that?!” Awase yelled.

“I dunno, but that little smart-ass blocked our path on purpose. He’s trying to waste our time and get us to take detours. I don’t think escaping is a great option anymore.”

“What’re you suggesting? That we go after the principal? He’d see us coming from a mile away and just scamper off. He’s definitely faster on his feet.”

“Maybe, but we’ll just have to improvise—”

“SHIT! ABOVE YOU!” Awase grabbed Setsuna and dashed down the alleyway as the building next to them toppled over them. “How is he even doing this?!”

“Oh, those silly students seem to be heading this way,” Nezu said as he sipped his tea in the operating seat of a wrecking ball. “I guess they don’t want to chance being crushed trying to find the exit.” As the principal monologued to himself, he flipped around the crane’s controls and sent the wrecking ball into another building. “These chain reactions would seem like blind luck, but calculating the fallout and where the destruction will go is as simple as pouring a cup of tea for me… AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!”

“He keeps sending wave after wave of shit at us!” Awase complained. “This is BS, man!”

“You’re telling me,” Setsuna said while peeking around the corner. “It looks like the principal is in that crane machine up that way.”

“Alright, you’re stealthier than me, so you try and sneak his way and cuff him. I’ll draw his attention with a head-on assault.”

“Think you can take him? He is destroying buildings.”

“I don’t know if you noticed,” Awase began while stretching, “but I am sturdy as fuck.”

“What’s this?” Nezu wondered while sipping his tea. He peered over his controls to see Awase climbing up and running across rooftops, heading straight for the crane. “It seems they’ve figured out how I was destroying everything, though that itself isn’t too big a mystery.” Another sip of tea. “Tokage isn’t by his side, so she’s probably trying to sneak up behind me.” Another sip. “I’ll focus on taking out Awase for the moment.” Nezu finally put his drink down and took full control of the crane, sending the wrecking ball straight at Awase. He narrowly dodged and continued forward, but the Nezu sharply lowered the ball and made the rooftop crumble, sending Awase falling. “Oops. Was that me? I do hope he’s alright.”
As Nezu pulled the ball from the building he destroyed, he was shocked to see Awase standing on the ball and holding the wire. “Oh my. How tenacious.” Nezu watched with amusement as Awase began shimmying up the crane’s wire before pushing all the machine’s switches in different directions. “You may be able to hold on by fusing your hands to the wire, but I don’t have to make it easy for you! AHAHAHAHAHA!” The crane began swinging around in a circle, which sent the wrecking ball around repeatedly and forced Awase to hold on for dear life. “That should keep him occupied. Now, let’s check on Tokage.”

“I’m right here!” Nezu turned around just in time to see Setsuna diving towards him through the crane’s window.

“Announcing yourself like that isn’t very stealthy,” Nezu calmly stated, “Though you were quicker than I expected.” Setsuna entered the crane and grabbed at Nezu, but the principal dodged each attack and hopped onto the window. “Since this location has been compromised, I’ll take my leave. Even if you ran, you don’t have enough time to escape now! AHAHAHA!” Setsuna grabbed at him again, but Nezu leapt from the crane and scurried down the machinery onto a nearby rooftop. “Ta ta!”

“As the wrecking ball flew around in a circle, Awase watched as Nezu ran from the crane across a few pipes. Even with his hands fused to the wrecking ball, Awase still held on to the spinning machinery for dear life. He could see Setsuna giving chase, but it was clear that Nezu was faster. “Steady… steady… now!” Awase unfused his hands and rocketed off the wrecking ball, flying over the buildings towards Nezu.

“How clever,” Nezu commented. Just as Awase reached him, Nezu sidestepped the attack. Awase fly by, by grabbed onto a nearby pipe and fused his hand to it, stopping him completely. “Be careful, now. Cornered mice are known to bite.” Awase dove at Nezu, but the principal hopped up to dodge, landing on the boy’s head.

“Got him!” Setsuna yelled as she flung herself onto Awase. This time, Nezu simply jumped away and ran off.

“Nice try, you two, but you couldn’t hope to outsmart me!” Nezu prepared to leap off the roof, but felt something grab his tail just before. He looked and saw Setsuna’s detached arm gripping onto him.

“I didn’t know you could grab things once your arms are detached,” Awase noted as he ran after Nezu.

“That’s because we’ve never talked to each other before today, dumbass.” Nezu saw them coming and jumped from the roof, but Awase dove and caught Setsuna’s arm just as it went over the side. Once he had it, he threw it and Nezu over his shoulder, where Setsuna was waiting with the handcuffs and a cocky smile.

“Oh wow. You’ve caught me,” Nezu commented. “Excellent work, you two.”

“Yeah, we’re kinda badasses like that,” Setsuna boasted as she cuffed the principal.

“Team Awase and Tokage have passed.”

“Oh yeah! That’s four wins in a row!” Kendo cheered.

“Man, we’re on a hot streak,” Kuroiro noted.
“Of course, we are,” Monoma began. “We are the best of the best. It was only a matter of time before we got the chance to prove it.”

Chapter End Notes

OK, for those of you who haven't seen it yet, Chapter 194 just came out and, among other things, we finally see more 1-B hero costumes. Plus, the upcoming arc seems to be a fight between classes, so it's likely we'll see more of 1-B in action and see their Quirks (knock on wood)

Now, I'm obviously ecstatic and their costumes look fucking amazing, but I'm sure at least a couple of you are wondering how this'll affect this story. short answer: it won't.

Long answer: I've come too far and done too much to either go back and change everything or just ignore what I've written and use the new canon, and I have everything left in the story too planned out to change it now. I'll be writing with the Quirks and Costumes I've established in mind. If you wanna picture their canon costumes, go right ahead, but don't get confused if the text here refers to the costumes detailed back in Chapter 2. Same goes for their Quirks, relationships, personalities, etc. I'm sticking to what I've written.

There's also the matter of this upcoming manga arc being their first training exercise together. After the cultural festival arc, which will be the last canon arc I plan to cover, I'll be doing two original arcs that I've been planning for a while, one of which is a training battle between the two classes. Obviously, can't have that and stick to canon, so post-cultural festival, you can consider this story canon divergent. After that will be another original arc, and then the story will end.

I'm honestly surprised 1-B is finally getting some focus (knock on wood again). I guess the urge to finally write this was a good omen of sorts. I was positive I'd finish it before that happened, but whatever. The sooner my babies get the spotlight, the better. But I'm rambling now, so I'll wrap this up with a message directly to the canon class 1-B.

Kick some ass out there, kids!
See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Team Komori and Shoda. Practical exam: begin.”

“Uh, um, OK, we should, um… I think we should run,” Kinoko suggested. Her and Shoda snuck through a thin crevasse between the Mountain Zone and Fire Zone of the USJ, directly across from the exit. “13 isn’t a f-fighter, but their Quirk is too strong to face head on.”

“Good point. Yeah, running is our best option.” Shoda peered around the open plaza of the USJ, but saw no sign of 13. “It was pretty lucky we ran into Kaibara before the match. I thought I’d be without my Quirk this whole match,” Shoda said while looking up at his pair of standing hair bangs. “I’ve got two shots.”

“I-How can you use them here?” Kinoko wondered. “13’s Quirk is too dangerous. You couldn’t get close enough.”

“I’ll use them for our escape,” Shoda explained as the pair moved ahead towards the plaza. “I’ve been preparing a special technique since the Sports Festival. Now might be the perfect time to use it.”

“That’s good.” Kinoko looked over her shoulders for 13, but still didn’t see the pro. “13 is probably at the exit, right?”

“Most likely,” Shoda replied as they team approached the USJ’s fountain. “They haven’t shown themself yet. Just to be sure, let’s circle around the fountain and scout the area before we head to the stairs.” Once they reached the fountain, Shoda and Kinoko went to opposite sides and looked around the USJ.

“Still no sign of them,” Kinoko reported.

“Nothing on my side,” Shoda added before they rejoined at the side closest to the exit. “Are we missing something? 13 said to come to the USJ, right?”

“W-We’re in the right place,” Kinoko assured him, “but I’m worried to. Not seeing our enemy is definitely a bad sign.”

“Your right about that,” a cheery voice said behind them.

“…Komori,” Shoda began. “Did you check… inside the fountain for 13?”

“No… did you?”

“Nope.” The two students shared a nervous look before slowly checking the fountain behind them.
Sitting up in the water was 13, who raised a hand towards them and uncapped their finger. “RUN!” Shoda and Kinoko bolted from the fountain towards the stairs, but felt 13’s Black Hole pulling them backwards. “Oh crap!”

“Shoda, grab my cape!” Kinoko instructed. Shoda grabbed the fabric and watched as Kinoko began making mushrooms on the ground. Once they appeared, she grabbed them and pulled herself forward.

“Very creative, Komori,” 13 complimented, “but against Black Hole, it’s just not good enough.” 13 uncapped another finger, increasing the suction just as Shoda and Komori neared the stairs.

“It’s too strong!” Shoda yelled. He instinctively clenched his eyes shut in fear, but then felt himself being pulled away from 13. Kinoko had grabbed his jacket and pulled him in front of her. “Komori, what— OOF!” Kinoko suddenly shoved him forward, where he clung onto the stairs.

“Waagh!” Kinoko finally lost her grip on her mushrooms and fell back towards 13, who capped their fingers and caught her.

“I’ve got you. Are you OK?” 13 asked out of habit. “Wait, I mean, uh, MUHAHAHAHAHAHA! I’ve got you now, hero!” they boasted evily. “Am I doing this right?”

“Let Komori go,” Shoda ordered as he got up.

“Hold it right there, hero,” 13 hissed. “Another move and I’ll atomize your comrade here! …Oh gosh, was that too mean?”

“Shoda, don’t worry about me!” Kinoko yelled. “Only one of us needs to escape to pass! Get out of — mmmff!” 13 abruptly clamped their hand over Kinoko’s mouth and held the struggling girl tight.

“Would you really abandon her like that?” 13 asked with an evil laugh.

“…It’s true that I could reach the exit right now with my new technique,” Shoda claimed, “but this is supposed to be a real fight against a real villain.” Shoda looked up at his two standing bangs, then glared at 13. “I’d never leave a comrade behind. No matter what.”

“Try anything and I’ll uncap my finger,” 13 warned. “You’d never make it to her in time.”

_That’s what you think_, Shoda thought as he activated his Quirk. _I used to only send the kinetic energy I store out from my palms, but now…_ The first set of his stored energy went into his palm, but the second flowed down into his right foot. _I’ve figured out how to put it into the soles of my feet. I call this new super move…_ Shoda sprang forward almost instantly, passing right by 13 and Komori. After a moment of stillness, 13 felt an enormous, palm-shaped pressure in their stomach and went flying backwards. “Flash Impact!” 13 was knocked past Shoda, hitting the ground and falling into unconsciousness. Kinoko was thrown up in the air and was on a crash course for the fountain.

“Komori!” Shoda yelled. He ran after her and reached the fountain just in time to catch her.

“Auugh, why do I feel airsick?” Komori wondered.

“Are you alright, Komori?” Shoda asked as his hair returned to normal. Once Komori realized she was in his arms, her face erupted into a blush.

“Uh, uh, I’m f-f-fine! I’m O-OK!” she stammered. Once Shoda set her down, she grabbed the handcuffs and ran over to 13.

“Team Komori and Shoda have passed.”
“Phew,” Shoda sighed. “I honestly thought we were gonna fail.”

“I-It was pretty touch-and-go,” Kinoko commented. “...Th-Thank you for s-s-saving me... and c-catching me.”

“Sure thing, but getting me out of 13’s range back there was what really saved the day,” Shoda said. “Thanks a bunch.” Somehow, Kinoko’s face got even redder and she turned away.

“You’re welcome...”

“Team Kendo and Yanagi. Practical exam: begin.”

“Be on your guard,” Kendo warned. “Mr. Ectoplasm’s clones can appear from anywhere.” The pair’s exam area was a set of three towers – Training Ground Epsilon AKA The Watchtowers. They were in the center of the west tower’s bottom floor while the exit gate was in the northern one.

“Yeah, I noticed,” Reiko replied. “We’ve already got company.” Kendo looked over her shoulder and saw her teacher’s smoke-like ectoplasm forming together into several clones in front of Reiko.

“Reiko Yanagi,” Ectoplasm growled. “You’re Quirk is perfect from escaping from a single opponent, but how will you deal with enemies who can appear anywhere and follow you into the air?” Kendo prepared to dart past Reiko and attack, but another set of clones popped up on her side. “Itsuka Kendo. You have a powerful Quirk and commendable skill in martial arts, but dealing with many opponents and drawn-out battles is not your strong suit.” Kendo and Reiko pressed closer against each other and watched for any movement from the clones. “Show me your determination!”

“Maybe some other time,” Reiko replied. “For now, we’re gonna bail.” She quickly phased into the ground before popping back up and grabbing Kendo, pulling her into the air.

“You’ve gotten stronger to be carrying her that quickly,” Ectoplasm commented, “but there will always be faster opponents.” The dozen clones floated up and gave chase to the girls as they ascended the tower, easily gaining on them.

“Kendo, we’ll need a boost,” Reiko requested.

“Leave it to me!” Kendo spread her arms out and grew her hands to maximum size. Just as Ectoplasm’s clones were about to reach her, Kendo swung her giant hands forwards, creating a powerful gust that flung the clones back and sent the girl’s flying higher. “How’s that for a boost?”

“Perfect. There’s the hall to the next tower.” As the momentum faded, Reiko set Kendo down on the top level of the tower at a hallway entrance. They ran inside, but once they reached its halfway point, another dozen clones appeared before them.

“Will you turn back and keep running?” Ectoplasm questioned.

“Nah. That’d be a waste of time,” Reiko commented. “Kendo, run wild on this nerd herd.”

“Don’t gotta tell me twice,” Kendo commented with a smirk while cracking her knuckles. The first clone jumped at Kendo with an axe kick, but she slipped underneath and elbowed it back into ectoplasm. She charged into the crowd of attacking clones with no fear, defeating a pair with a wipe of her giant hand. Another threw a spin kick, but Kendo ducked behind him and destroyed it with a chop to the back of its neck.

“You’re really whooping ass,” Reiko flattered. One clone flew past Kendo and kicked at Reiko, but
she dodged by floating up into the ceiling. After a few seconds, Reiko emerged in a different spot and saw that another handful of clones had been defeated already.

“You’re doing quite well,” Ectoplasm began, “so I’ll stop holding back.”

“Uh, Kendo? We’ve got company.” Kendo looked behind her and saw the clones they had blown away in their escape attacking from the opposite side of the hall.

“Crap.”

“Kendo’s really strong,” Pony commented. “She tearing through them.”

“Yeah, she’s always had a knack for martial arts,” Monoma said. “She’s still got all her Peewee Karate belts and trophies under her bed.”

“Aw, that’s cute,” Pony cooed.

“Look like she’s slowing down,” Tetsutetsu pointed out.

“Well, she’s defeated about 20 clones on her own,” Ibara added. “I’d be surprised if she wasn’t tired.”

“Go, Kendo and Reiko!” Pony cheered.

“They can’t hear you,” Kuroiro said.

“Don’t bring me down now, man!”

“That’s clone 29,” Reiko stated. She floated down to Kendo as the martial artist slowly caught her breath and wiped the sweat from her brow.

“That’s all of them, right?” Kendo asked as they continued towards the exit.

“He can make between 30 and 36,” Reiko explained. “His real body is most likely near the exit. I’ll try and slip by him.”

“Sounds good,” Kendo said, still short of breath.

“You OK?”

“I’m all good for one last push,” she answered with a thumbs-up. At the end of the hall, the girls found themselves looking over a tower just like the one they started in, but at the bottom, they could see the real Ectoplasm and the exit gate.

“Congratulations on defeating my clones, but this is your last stop.” Ectoplasm’s neck suddenly spasmed and he spat out a huge cloud of ectoplasm from his mouth. It pooled at the base of the tower, where a giant head popped up, almost as big as the tower itself. “Giant Bite Detention!” The giant clone head unhinged its jaw and leaned in to chomp down the two girls.

“Kendo, get back!” Reiko yelled. “If we’re caught in this thing, we’re— oof!” Reiko was abruptly thrown to the side by a gust of wind from Kendo’s hand. The jaw clamped down on Kendo and swallowed her up, but Reiko was spared and ducked behind a pillar. “Crap. This thing can snatch me up even if I’m phasing, and now it’s got my partner. Not good.” Reiko peeked out and saw Kendo reappearing, lodged in the clone’s neck.
“Reiko!” she called out. “You can do this! I was too tired to keep going, but now, he can’t make more clones without letting me go! You’ve got this!”

Kendo… right. Time to pass this thing. Reiko thought as she phased into the wall and floated down. My phasing needs a recharge time of however many seconds I stay transformed. I can’t use all 30 seconds in one go or I’ll be helpless if I’m found. Once she reached the second floor, Reiko came out form the wall and ducked behind a pillar to recharge. She glanced around and saw the giant clone was scanning the area for her, forcing her to hide again. I can’t let him see me or it’s over. Reiko waited with bated breath as her Quirk recharged. Once her time was back, she slipped back into the wall and reached the bottom floor.

“Just one mistake and it’ll be over,” Ectoplasm warned. “You only have one shot to escape or cuff me, Yanagi, but don’t wait too long. Time is running short.”

He’s right. It’s now or never. Once her transformation had regained its time again, Reiko phased into the ground and headed for the exit gate. It won’t count as an escape unless I go through the gate, which means I’ll have to pop back out. I’ll be vulnerable for a second, but if I can make it past Ectoplasm, then I’m home free. My problem is figuring out exactly where I am. I can’t make too much of an error here, but I can’t peek my head out without getting spotted.

As Reiko’s time limit ran low, she shot out of the ground to make her escape, but found Ectoplasm blocking her path. “Oh shit!”

“Reiko, behind you!” Kendo screamed. Reiko didn’t need to turn around to know that Giant Bite Detention was closing in on her from behind.

Well, can’t go back now. Only choice is to go forward! Reiko landed and leapt headfirst towards Ectoplasm as he threw a spin kick towards her and Giant Bite Detention closed in on her. Gotta time this… NOW! Reiko suddenly started floating again and flew underneath the kick, passing through the ground under Ectoplasm. Once she slipped by her teacher, her Quirk ran out of time and popped out of the ground just as she passed through the gate.

"Team Kendo and Yanagi have passed."

“…Sweet,” Reiko commented as she fell to the floor

“Wonderful job, you two,” Ectoplasm said as he released Kendo.

“I kinda had to improvise at the end, but thanks.”

Chapter End Notes

I'm happy to announce the the very first (and only) OC contest! If you got an OC, then here's your chance to out them in this story. Up to 3 winners will be chosen. Enter the contest and learn the rules through this link:

https://archiveofourown.org/works/15734640

Or just click go to my author page and find the story call "The Heart of a Hero OC contest."
To enter, you have to leave a Kudos and Bookmark THIS story - the main one you've
been reading - and then comment on the other story the link takes you too. OCs commented here will be ignored.
Have fun.
“Hey, guys,” Kendo greeted as she and Reiko returned to the viewing room.

“Congrats, you two!” Pony cheered. “You both awesome!”

“We’re keeping that winning streak going!” Tetsutetsu yelled.

“This makes 12 passing grades,” Monoma commented. “If I recall correctly, Class 1-A only had 15 of its students pass, isn’t that right?” Kendo groaned as Monoma’s face grew manic and wild, a common occurrence when he’s worked up and petty. “Pretty soon, we will overtake those detestable —”

“Give it a rest,” Kendo ordered while chopping Monoma’s neck. “That got old a long time ago. You’ve really got to stop getting so worked up over them.”

“I’ll only stop once I’ve proven us superior,” Monoma groaned. “That all starts here and now. If at least two more groups pass, we’ll win over them.”

“It’s not a competition, so quit bringing it up,” Kendo scolded. “Shouldn’t you and Pony be going to your testing area now?”

“We wanna see all the matches we can,” Pony explained. “Once this match done, then we leave.”

“Alright, but don’t keep Mr. Kan waiting too long.”

“Hey, it’s starting,” Kuroiro pointed out.

“Team Honenuki and Tsuburaba. Practical exam: begin.”

“Alright, keep your eyes peeled, man,” Tsuburaba warned. “If you see Midnight or her gas, back the hell up.”

“Yeah.” Honenuki looked around the rocky testing area of Training Ground Eta, but didn’t see Midnight. “She’s probably close to the exit. Let’s head that way for now.”

“We probably shouldn’t head straight forward. That’ll just be playing right into her sexy, sexy hands. We’ve gotta be a little sneakier.”

“Right… wait, what?”

“Uh, nothing. So, it’ll be hard to get close,” Tsuburaba quickly said. “Both our powers are activated with our breathing. Midnight really is our perfect counter.”

“Yeah, but I’ve got a plan.”

“Oh yeah? What’re we talkin’?”
Those boys sure are taking their sweet time, Midnight thought. Don’t they know it’s cruel to keep a girl on the brink like this? Midnight chuckled at her own double entendre and ripped more of her spandex, letting her sleeping gas spread further around. I’m sure they’ve reached the perimeter of my gas by now and are strategizing. If they hold their breath and run in, they’ll only get one use out of their Quirks before having to take another breath. Midnight checked the ground around her feet and slowly looked over the area. Honenuki can get me from long range if I’m not careful. Tsuburaba is the opposite and may sneak up in mid-air.

Out from the corner of her eye, Midnight finally saw an opponent. Tsuburaba was coming from her left, walking on solid-air platforms that hung almost 20 feet in the air, out of range of her gas. “You must think your quite clever, Tsuburaba,” Midnight called out as she brandished her whip, “but you stick out like a sore thumb!” As her whip flew up, Tsuburaba instinctively took a huge breath. The whip broke apart the platform, sending Tsuburaba crashing onto and rolling down a rocky hill. “Go ahead and take a deep breath,” Midnight offered as she approached her opponent. Tsuburaba got to his feet and went to back up, but backed into the hill he had crashed on. He picked up a rock and lobbed it at Midnight, but it simply crashed by her feet with a loud thud. “Throwing rocks? Is that all you can do?” Midnight prepared to attack the boy again, but before she could, she felt herself sinking. “Softened ground,” she realized, “but where’s Honenuki?” As Tsuburaba ran forward to pass Midnight by, she swung her whip out and snatched Tsuburaba’s leg. “You can’t hold your breath foreve—”

Click.

Midnight froze when she felt a cuff around her ankle. She looked down confusedly and saw Honenuki poking out from the softened ground like a groundhog.

“Team Honenuki and Tsuburaba have passed.”

“So, you softened the ground and tunneled underneath me by to take me by surprise, eh?” Midnight realized. “Tsuburaba was merely a distraction, and the rock he threw was for you to learn my location. I’m quite impressed. You boys… have defeated me entirely.”

“Oh yeah! They did it!” Pony applauded. “Super quick too!”

“I didn’t doubt them for a second,” Monoma added.

“Time for you two to head out,” Kendo instructed. “Good luck.”

“Don’t worry. We’re definitely gonna pass,” Monoma claimed. “We have 14 wins. One more round of winners will bring us up to 16, putting us above Class 1-A.”

“That’s pretty cool,” Tetsutetsu commented.

“Don’t encourage the crazy guy,” Reiko sighed.

“Let’s head out, Pony,” Monoma said. “But first…”

“Don’t play it off like you’re doing something special,” Kendo said with an eye-roll. “You’re just gonna copy me and Tetsutetsu’s Quirks and run off.”

“…Yup.” The copycat quickly reached out and poked Kendo and Tetsutetsu on the arms before rushing out the door with Pony. “Wish us luck!”
“…Hey, Kendo,” Kuroiro began. “Has he always been a, uh… fuckin’ lunatic?”

“Tough to say,” Kendo began. “I’ve hung around him so long that I’m numb to all his weirdness. He’s always been pretty self-conscious and melodramatic when someone else one-ups him, but this… It’s like he’s obsessed. That’s all his mind goes to anymore…” Kendo saw Monoma’s twisted, psychotic face in her mind again and grimaced.

“It must be hard to see him like that,” Ibara commented.

“Sometimes…”

“Almost there!” Pony told boy on her back. With Pony’s speed, they had reached the entrance to the Suburban testing area – Training Ground Iota – in only 90 seconds. Pony galloped through the entrance gate and stopped to catch her breath.

“How’re you doing?” Monoma asked.

“Just fine. I been training, so carrying you is nothing.” After a moment of waiting, they heard an announcement come over the training area.

“Team Monoma and Tsunotori. Practical exam: begin.”

“Alrighty, we’re off!” Pony announced as she ran forward. “How long you have those Quirks for left? Only three minutes now, yeah?”

“Actually, I’ve got more time than that,” Monoma boasted. “Since the Sports Festival, I’ve increased my time limit to nearly six minutes, so I have about four minutes remaining.”

“Badass!” Pony complimented as they tore down the street. Monoma looked closely as they ran, searching for anything red.

“Stay on your toes. Even if Mr. Kan isn’t around, he may have hidden some blood around to grab us with.”

“I’m lookin’!” After another minute of racing through the streets, the fight began before they even realized. As they approached another corner and passed by a storm drain, a giant glob of blood shot out and wrapped around them. “Aaaaagh!”

“Crap!” Monoma yelled as he was thrown backwards. He landed hard on the pavement before Pony landed on top of him and the blood spread out like a blanket, pinning them to the pavement.

“Can’t move,” Pony whimpered. As the students struggled, they saw Kan approaching them from the down the main road.

“I’m surprised you weren’t more cautious, Monoma,” Kan began. “Pony was carrying you, so you should’ve made sure to avoid any traps.”


“I only control my own blood, so any germs and foreign objects don’t get reabsorbed with it. I’d be less worried about me and focus on yourself.”

“Meh. I got this covered,” Monoma claimed before the blood sheet started growing and stretching. It burst part as Monoma’s hand grew to giant size. Now free from the trap, Pony leapt away and
took a fighting stance and Monoma stood back up.

“Your Quirk must be running low on time by now,” Kan theorized as he collected his blood back into his body. “You’ll lose whatever powers you came here with very soon.”

“Then I’ll beat you very soon.”

Kan walked to the center of the main road to block the duo’s path to the exit gate. “Try me.” Pony attacked first and ran at Kan to attack with her horns, but Kan made a shield of blood and deflected the attack. At the same time, Monoma jumped and threw his giant fist at Kan, but he added more blood to his shield and blocked it. Kan’s blood then wrapped around his fist as a spiked gauntlet and he swung at his students, but they leapt backwards in time to dodge.

Shit, Monoma thought. I’ve only got a minute left with these Quirks. Once they’re gone, I’ll be…

no. don’t go there. Think positive, Neito. Just get Pony past him.

“Monoma, the cuffs! They’re gone!” Pony yelled. Monoma looked to his belt and gasped when he saw the handcuffs were missing.

“You mean these?” Kan asked as he tossed the cuffs into the nearby storm drain. “I grabbed it with my blood during your attack. You should be wary of my power, students.”

“Son of a bitch,” Monoma grumbled. How could I let that happen?

“Any ideas, Monoma?” Pony asked.

“Just one. I’ll give you an opening so you can run to the exit. Mind leaving me your horns to attack with once my power runs out?”

“Take,” Pony said as she removed her horns and tossed them to Monoma, who put them in his belt. “What’re you gonna do?”

“Something rash and impulsive,” Monoma claimed as his skin turned to metal. “Fitting, isn’t it?” Monoma bolted at Kan and swung his metallic fist, but it was caught easily by Kan. He threw another punch, but it too was caught. “Guess that won’t work,” Monoma noted as his skin turned back to normal. Once all the iron was gone, both of Monoma’s hands grew and popped out from Kan’s grasp. He swung his right hand, but Kan jumped back to avoid it.

This is my chance! Monoma shrunk his hands and chased after Kan. As his teacher landed, he pounced and cocked his fist. Which do I use? Kendo’s is stronger, but slow. He may block it on time. Tetsutetsu’s is faster, but will I hit him hard enough? Which one? Monoma had no time to think and hastily activated his Quirk. He flew towards a surprised Kan and hurled his fist across his teacher’s face. “Pony, go!”

“Right!” As Pony galloped down the street and Monoma landed, he looked at his fist and gasped. It was giant, but also metallic.

“TWO? TWO AT THE SAME TIME?!” he practically shrieked before his fist started to shrink. “Wait! Turn back! I need more time!”

“It seems your training has paid off,” Kan noted as he cracked his knuckles, “but how will you defeat me now?”

“I don’t have to defeat you,” Monoma said as he pulled out one of Pony’s horns. “I’ve just gotta keep y—” He was cut off when Kan drove his fist into his stomach, sending him flying backwards.

“You have great potential, Monoma, but you squander a great deal of it on your ego and petty
“You must let nothing hold you back like that. As for Pony…” Kan looked over his shoulder as Pony sped towards the exit. Once she passed over a sewer grate, Kan clenched his right hand and a stream of blood shot up at her.

“Kyaaaa!” The blood encircled her body like a net and left her squirming on the street.

“Pony!” Monoma called out. “How much goddamn blood do you have!?”

“Enough to get the job done,” Kan said. Monoma stood to face him and held out his teammate’s horn like a dagger, glaring at his teacher. He stepped forward to attack again, but Kan clenched his left fist and Monoma felt his left foot being grabbed. “This is the end, Monoma.”

Monoma looked down and scowled at the blood that held his leg to the pavement. “Not yet. We can still win. You clench your fists to use your powers, so if I can pry open your hand, Pony can escape.”

“Yet, you cannot escape.” Kan’s words cut Monoma deep – deeper than Kan meant to. The copycat’s shoulders hunched down and Monoma gripped the horn in his hand like a lifeline.

I can’t give up yet, Monoma told himself.

What else can you do? It’s hopeless, Monoma also told himself.

We can still win. Once we do, we’ll finally surpass Class 1-A.

It’s not like you could do that on your own, you weakling.

It’s not about me. It’s not about them. It’s about us. My classmates—my friends.

You’re powerless. There’s nothing you can do.

I can’t give up. Not when they refused to give up.

Why bother? It’s not like you’re as good as them.

…I’m not as good as them. I never will be.

You can’t be. Not when you’re just a shadow—someone who can never win alone.

I’ll never be as good as them, but...

Monoma raised Pony’s horn over his head. Kan assumed he would throw at and prepared to dodge, but instead, Monoma brought it down and stabbed his forearm.

“It’s not about me,” Monoma muttered. “I’ll always be a let-down and a failure, but… I can’t drag them all down with me. I refuse…” The blood from his sliced vein ran down his arm and dripped onto the pavement rhythmically like a metronome. Kan was shaken, almost forgetting the situation and moving to go check on him. What brought him back to his senses was Monoma’s blood moving. It formed a tendril that shot out and sunk into the crevasses of his right fist. “I refuse to hold them back!” Monoma yelled. His eyes were watery and shaky but his mouth became a smile. “My friends deserve better than that!” More blood drained from Monoma’s gaping wound and flooded into Kan’s fist, pushing his fingers outwards.

“Monoma, you’re losing too much blood,” Kan warned. “This isn’t smart, Monoma. You have to stop!” Monoma didn’t answer, but instead dug Pony’s horn deeper into his arm. “At this rate, you may suffer permanent damage! You could bleed out, Monoma!”
“Consider it a donation to my comrades. I can hold out until we’ve won.” Kan looked over his shoulder and saw Pony was nearly free of his blood net.

“You really think you’re holding them back?” Kan asked. “Open your eyes, boy! They already see you as an equal!”

“Even if they think that, I know it’s not true,” Monoma said as he began to wobble back and forth. His skin was growing paler and his voice was beginning to slur. “I deserve to be ignored… to fade into obscurity… to be called a weakling… but they… they…” The blood tendril broke apart and Monoma fell forward into a pool of his own blood. Just after consciousness left him, an announcement came from the exit gate.

“Team Monoma and Tsunotori have passed.”

“Monoma!”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry if that first match was kinda anticlimactic and quick, but Softening is a pretty OP Quirk once you think about all the different stuff he could do. It was hard to drag it out for that long,
The first thing Monoma felt as he woke up was nausea. The second was a pulsing headache. The third was a sharp pain in his right arm. He forced his eyes open and was greeted by the bright lights of the Recovery Girl’s temporary office.

“Awake already?” he heard the school’s nurse say. “How do you feel?”

“Not great,” he muttered as he sat up on his cot, only to feel a cane whack against his shin. “Ow!”

“What you did out there was stupid and reckless,” Recovery Girl lectured. “I won’t be the only one telling you this today, so I’ll leave it at that.”

“Ma’am, what happened after I passed out?”

“Pony ran through the gate and completed the exam, but doubled back when she saw you unconscious. Vlad used his Quirk to put your blood back into your body and rushed you here. I treated your wounds, but there will be some scarring. Vlad also wanted me to inform you that you failed the exam.”

“I’m not surprised,” Monoma answered. As he swiveled to hang his legs over the side of the bed, the office door opened up. He saw Kendo walk in and immediately freeze as they locked eyes.

“I’ll give you two some privacy,” Recovery Girl offered as she shuffled out of the room and closed the door.

“Kendo… I—” Monoma was cut off by a hard slap across the cheek that nearly sent him tumbling off the bed. That single slap hurt more than every neck chop Monoma had ever received before. As the pain hit him, Kendo grabbed his coat and pulled him closer until their faces were centimeters away from each other.

“What the hell is wrong with you!?” Kendo screamed. Her emerald eyes were crumpled with fury and her voice was shaky at best. “What were you thinking!?”

“Kendo—”

“Wait, I know! You weren’t thinking! You did the stupidest thing I’ve ever seen!” Kendo threw Monoma back, but quickly grabbed his shirt again, this time keeping him further away. With this new point of view, Monoma could see Kendo’s nose was red and her eyes were puffy – telltale signs of the tears she had shed earlier. “If that was a real fight, you’d be dead. If Mr. Kan couldn’t control other people’s blood, you’d be dead. You be dead and gone and—” Kendo let go of Monoma and slapped him again, though it didn’t have the same force as before. “What the hell were you thinking?” Her voice was running out of anger, leaving sadness to fill the void.

“…Anything I say would sound like an excuse,” Monoma said. “I just… Kendo, I’m sorry.”

“…Oh, you’re sorry? Great,” she growled as her anger was reborn. “You nearly killed yourself over a test, but at least your sorry. Perfect. I guess we’re done here. Back to normal, huh?”

“Kendo, please—”

clenched her fist and Monoma prepared for another hit, but Kendo turned away instead. “What is it with you and them? You’re obsessed. You nearly killed yourself because your so fucking obsessed with beating them.” Monoma couldn’t see her face, but her voice was enough. He knew that tears where rolling down her cheeks again. “You got your wish, by the way. The last two matches were victories too. That’s 19 of us passing. You must be so happy.”

“Kendo—”

“I don’t want to hear it. I’m done. I’m done with putting up with your constant bullshit.” Kendo stormed out of the room and slammed the door behind her, leaving Monoma alone with his thoughts.

…I really screwed up here, he told himself. I thought I could finally prove myself, but I just messed everything up. Monoma perked up when the door opened, thinking it was Kendo, but instead, it was Pony and Kuroiro. Pony only had one horn on her head and already looked pissed beyond belief.

“Pony—”

“Dummy! Jerk! Stupid! Can’t believe you!” she yelled while hitting him. She paused for a moment, but then launched into a string of English curse words and continued her rant. She was speaking so fast that Monoma could barely keep up and there were a few words he didn’t recognize. He’d have to look up later what exactly being a “cuntpile” meant. After a minute, Pony stopped and tossed her other horn to him, which still had a small film of blood at its tip. “Ain’t puttin’ that on me until you wash it off.”

“Pony, I’m sorry,” Monoma said. “What I did was stupid and I promise not to be reckless like that again.

“You better not! We were super worried!” Pony paced around the room, still worked up over her teammate’s foolishness. “Mr. Kan was freakin’ out. We all were. I thought you was gonna die.”

“Pony, I promise that I won’t worry you like that again.” Monoma chastised himself for sounding like a broken record, but all he could do was keep apologizing.

“Better not,” she grumbled, finally calming down.

“Kendo was definitely the most worried,” Kuroiro added. “She kept screaming at the screen ‘what’re you doing!?’. Once Mr. Kan carried you off, she ran out to see you.”

“I pushed her too far this time,” Monoma realized. “Whenever we fight, she always brushes it off later, but this time, I don’t think she will… I have to make it up to her.”

“I’m not sure if you can,” Recovery Girl interjected as she came back into the office. “That poor girl’s heart broke when she saw you like that. Take it from someone who’s lived a long life – people can only take so much.”

“Well, I have to try,” Monoma said as his own anger gripped him. “I made Kendo cry over me. I… I have to apologize. Even if she never forgives me, I have to do something.”

“You should probably give her a little time to cool down,” Kuroiro suggested. “Yanagi, Shiozaki, and Tetsutetsu are with her now, so let her work out whatever she’s feeling.” Monoma wanted to see Kendo right then and there, but he knew Kuroiro was right.

“Fine.”
In an empty hallway of the testing facility, Kendo sat on the floor, not talking or moving. Just looking down at her feet. On her sides were Ibara and Reiko, who had comforted her when she thought the worst had happened and were still comforting her. Tetsutetsu was close by as well, but felt out of his depth compared to the other girls, so he hadn’t said too much. “I just can’t believe he’d do that,” Kendo repeated. “He’s always been cocky, but he’s never done something that reckless.”

“You did the right thing telling him off,” Reiko began. “You don’t need him in your life if his stupidity keeps giving you grief.”

“Doesn’t that seem a little harsh?” Ibara wondered. “Perhaps Monoma understands what he did wrong. If he regrets his actions and vows to change, he should be forgiven, right?”

“He’s gotten worse since the Sports Festival,” Kendo said. “I wish he could just forget about his stupid grudge. I wish things could go back to how they were before. When he was just a little egotistical and not crazy.”

“He’s not worth your time,” Reiko claimed. “If he’d go that far to prove he’s so much better than 1-A, then he’s a lost cause.”

“Wait, hold on,” Tetsutetsu suddenly said. “Monoma doesn’t think he’s better than them.”

“Have you listened to a word that guy says?” Reiko fired back. “He’s constantly talking about it.”

“I get what you’re saying, but he’s not talking about himself,” Tetsutetsu claimed. “Every time he goes on a rant and gets all crazy, he’s not talking about proving himself better. He always says that he’ll prove our class is better.”

“Does that really make a difference?” Reiko asked.

“…He’s right,” Kendo realized. As tough as it was for her, she thought back to Monoma’s many anti-1-A rants, including his most recent one.

*I’ll only stop once I’ve proven us superior.*

“Monoma’s never said he’s better than 1-A,” she continued. “He says that *we’re* better… Where’s Mr. Kan?”

“Huh?”

“Mr. Kan, where is he?” she asked while standing up.

“I think I saw him go down that hall to the left,” Reiko said. “He’s around here somewhere, but why?”

“I need to know something,” Kendo said before running off with her friends trailing behind her. It took a minute of searching, but they eventually found him. “Mr. Kan!”

“Yes? What can I—”

“I need to know something,” Kendo quickly explained. “When you fought Monoma, after he… near the end, did he say anything strange?”

“…He did, but it seemed personal.”

“Please, you have to tell me,” Kendo pled. Kan seemed unsure, but relented with a sigh.
“I suppose I can tell you, since you two are so close. Monoma was calling himself a let-down and a failure, but he didn’t want to drag everyone down with him by failing. He said that his classmates deserve better than that.”

“He really said that?” Tetsutetsu asked.

“I told him you all saw him as an equal, but he didn’t believe me. He said ‘I deserve to be ignored and called a weakling, but they…’ and then he passed out. That was it.”

“Woah. Tetsutetsu, you were right,” Reiko realized.

“He thinks so highly of us, but not of himself,” Ibara said. “How sad.”

“…That’s him,” Kendo said quietly. “That’s the Monoma I know. The real Monoma.”

*You’re not going out there alone, and I’m not leaving you behind.*

“He tries to act tough and confident, but he’s never thought much of himself.”

*I was just lucky today. I could never do what you do.*

“This whole time… he’s supported us all and tried to help us do our best. He wants people to recognize us, but doesn’t think he deserves it.”

*With this group… we can’t lose!*

“I get it now,” Kendo revealed. “It was an idiotic move, but I understand why he did that. He wasn’t trying to prove that he was the best – he wanted to prove that he was good enough to be with us.”

“Kinda ironic that he’s the only one who failed, in that case,” Tetsutetsu bluntly added.

“He’s still a douchebag, Kendo,” Reiko asserted. “If that’s his reason, then I still say it’s a stupid reason. Just because you know why he did it doesn’t mean you have to forgive him.”

“Maybe…” Kendo was barely listening at this point, as she was lost in her own thoughts. *He never really talked about this, but if he’d go so far…*

“Kendo.” She was shaken from her thoughts by Monoma’s voice. Snapping to attention, she looked and saw him at the corner of the hallway, along with Kuroiro and Pony.

“We’ll… leave you two alone,” Kan offered as he ushered the other students away.

“Monoma—“

“Me first,” he said. “Kendo… I’m sorry. I’m sorry for making you cry over me. I’m sorry for worrying you so much – not just today, but every time I act out. I’m sorry for trying something so stupid to prove myself instead of just talking about it. I’m sorry for making you keep an eye on me all the time. I’m an asshole. I know that. I want to… change, Kendo. I have to. I promise that I won’t make you cry like that again. I don’t deserve your forgiveness, but… please, don’t give up on me just yet.” As Monoma tooth and nail to keep his tears inside, Kendo slowly moved towards.

“I’m gonna hold you to that,” she said. “I’ll need to hear it at least 100 more times before I believe it.”
“That’s better than I deserve.” Kendo stopped for a moment, but then ran forwards and wrapped her arms around Monoma.

“I’m not letting you hurt me like that again,” she mumbled in his ear.

“I swear that I won’t.” The two friends held each other close for a while, but finally separated when their friends came out from around the corner.

“I knew they’d make up,” Tetsutetsu said.

“I’m not convinced,” Reiko stated. “You’re still on thin ice for me.”

“You better keep your promise, Monoma. I’ll be watching you closely,” Ibara warned, “but I’m glad you’ve apologized.”

“I dunno. Still felt half-assed to me,” Kuroiro commented.

“C’mon, let’s go,” Pony insisted. “School’s almost over.”

“Right. Let’s head back to school and change,” Kendo instructed.

“That reminds,” Monoma said as they walked off. “What happened in the other matches?”

“Oh yeah! The other matches!” Tetsutetsu shouted. “They were really cool! Y’see…”
“Dammit,” Rin grunted. He flinched as another bullet hit the concrete pillar he and Shishida crouched behind. “Mr. Snipe could be anywhere in here. There’s no way to get to the exit without him seeing.”

“Maybe, but we have to seize any advantage we have. There’s two of us and one of him.”

“Does that really matter if he has a gun and telepathic control over the bullets?”

“No, but at this point, we’re running low on options and time.” A hissing noise caught the boys’ attention as a smoke bomb started blocking their vision. “I’ve still got his scent for now, so I’ll distract him. You get through the exit gate.”

“I’m on it,” Rin replied. Shishida leapt from his cover and jumped up towards the ceiling where he clung to a pillar. He then jumped across the room behind another pillar.

*Mr. Snipe is still in this area, but the smoke’s masking his scent.* Shishida perked up his ears to search for his proctor and heard boots creeping towards him. *Found you.* Shishida leapt backwards and spun through the air, passing over Snipe. *I’ll keep my movements erratic so he can’t aim for me at close range.* Once he landed, he darted around Snipe, who kept trying to aim at the boy. Once he ended up behind Snipe, he pounced at the teacher with his Spinning Cannonball.

“Sorry, Shishida,” Snipe said as he swung his arm into the attacking boy, creating a stalemate. “Trying to attack like this was a big mistake.” As Shishida’s momentum slowed, Snipe pushed him to the ground and pressed his gun to Shishida’s head. “Now, where’s your partner, partner?”

“Team Rin and Shishida have passed.”

“Past the exit gate, it seems.”

“Heh heh. Alright. Ya got me.”

“Soooo… any ideas?”

“No.”

“C’mon. I thought quiet people were supposed to be smart.” Kamakiri and Yui were just across from the exit gate, but the dirt field they’d have to cross was riddled with giant pitfalls and traps courtesy of Power Loader. Yui picked up a stone and tossed it out into the field, making another pitfall appear.

“We can wing it,” Yui suggested.
“Ugh, fiiiiine. Maybe I can hit him next time he pops up, but there’s no way to know where that’ll be.” Kamakiri would soon regret asking as the ground beneath the pair caved in and they fell down Power Loader’s tunnel towards the pro. “Oh shit!” Kamakiri shot his mandibles down and managed to cut across the arm of power Loader’s mecha suit, but still fell towards his clawed grasp.

“I’ll take Power Loader,” Yui offered. “You go to the exit.” In an instant, Yui grew large enough to wedge herself in the pitfall and stop Kamakiri’s fall. Before the mantis boy could ask what she would do, he was flung out of the pit by his teammate.

“Oh no, you don’t!” Power Loader jeered as he turned back and clawed his way up towards the exit gate. “I won’t let you get away that easy!” It only took a moment before the pro surfaced and located Kamakiri. Not too far away, he was running towards the gate with his mandibles skimming across the ground far in front of him. The blades set off any pitfalls before him, letting Kamakiri avoid the traps. “Clever, but you’re wide open, boy!” Power Loader went to give chase, but felt one of his robotic arms stuck. “Huh?” He looked over the arm and didn’t see anything wrong, but then saw sparks coming out of the tear Kamakiri had left on it.

“This looks important,” he heard Yui say. Poking her head out of the hole in his device was a shrunken Yui, who tore more wires in the machinery.

“Hey! Cut it out! Get out of there! Those’re important!”

“Oh. I was right.” Power Loader batted at his mecha arm to get it working, but before he could fix it, Kamakiri ran through the exit gate.

“Team Kamakiri and Kodai have passed.”

After changing out of their hero costumes and Monoma receiving a lengthy lecture from Kan, the remaining Class 1-B members returned to classroom in time for the end of the day. “First of all,” Kan began, “I’d like to say that you’ve all impressed us teachers today. Even if some of you—”

“One of us,” Kuroiro snarked.

“—didn’t pass, everyone here fought your hearts out. I’m proud of you all. That’s why I’m happy to announce that everyone will be going to the training camp, whether or not they passed.”

“Seriously? Aw yeah!” Pony cheered.

“Really?” Monoma asked.

“Of course. It’s week-long training boot camp, so having any who failed miss out would just widen the gap. You and the 1-A students who failed will be taking extra lessons as punishment, but you’ll be there too, Monoma.”

“Nice!” Tetsutetsu yelled. “It really will be everyone!”

“Extra lessons? Bring ‘em on,” Monoma said with his usual confidence returning. “I’ll take on any challenge you give me.”

“I won’t lie. This training camp will be tough as all hell for all of you. You may wish you were dead by the end. Especially you, Monoma, with your extra lessons.”

“Starting to feel less excited—”
“I’ll leave you these guides for what to pack and what we’ll be doing. Be ready for your toughest training yet. Class dismissed!” Kan left the students to take a guide for the trip and pack up their belongings.

“Man, we need a lot of stuff,” Honenuki commented. “I gotta do some shopping.”

“I wonder if we’ll get to do normal camp stuff,” Awase wondered. “Y’know, sit by a fire, swim in a lake—”

“Panty raid,” Setsuna suggested.

“You’ve got weird priorities,” Kamakiri quipped.

“It’s not a terrible idea,” Tsuburaba laughed.

“Yeah, Setsuna will be our mole. Someone on the inside,” Fukidashi added.

“Yeah, I’m just gonna shut that idea down now,” Reiko said. “Setsuna, I have no problem tying you up if we’re sleeping in the same room.”

“Is that a promise?” the lizard girl cooed with batting eyelashes.

“ Weirdo,” Reiko dismissively said.

“Don’t run away from your feelings,” Setsuna quickly added.

“Looks like everyone’s getting pumped for the camp,” Kendo commented while looking over the class. “You excited, Ibara? …Ibara?” Kendo waved her hand in the vine-haired girl’s face as she was completely focused on her phone with an embarrassed expression.

“O-Oh! Yes. Yes, I am.”

“What’re you lookin’ at?”

“…Wedding dresses,” she explained solemnly. “I did something shameful and the only way I can repent is to marry Tetsutetsu.” It took a moment for Kendo to really process what Ibara had said. By the time she realized, Monoma was snickering in his seat and Ibara went back to her embarrassed wedding planning.

“I… you what?”

“What’s going on?” Setsuna asked as she and Reiko walked over. “I heard ‘marry Tetsutetsu’ and now I need details, like, now.”

“Yeah, same here,” Reiko requested. Ibara looked around her to make sure no one was eavesdropping before leaning closer to her friends.

“After my match against All Might, I was very distraught, but Tetsutetsu was kind enough to comfort me. He was so chivalrous and good-natured. I was overwhelmed with emotion and… I kissed him. On the lips.”

“Scandalous~,” Setsuna commented. “Gonna hold his hand next, you saucy little minx?”

“So, what now?” Reiko asked. “Do you wanna ask him out?”

“Not after I jumped the gun so brazenly,” Ibara explained while cupping her blushing cheeks. “A
first kiss is a sacred event. I don’t regret giving him mine at all, but I practically stole his. Such an indecency can only be repaid by marrying him.”

“…Theory,” Reiko suddenly said. “This is like one of those ‘caveman found frozen in a block of ice’ things, but with a teen girl from, like, the 1800s.”

“I’d buy it,” Setsuna replied.

“Ibara, you really don’t have to be so formal and rigid,” Kendo said, trying to rein in the conversation. “Especially not with someone like Tetsutetsu. If you wanna date him, just ask him out. You can’t pursue a relationship and follow every guideline or go in some order.”

“Are you sure?”

“Of course! It’s like an adventure. Besides, if Tetsutetsu had some problem, he would’ve said so.” Kendo turned Ibara’s head to look at Tetsutetsu packing his things with the same dim smile he always wore. “He doesn’t look upset, so you shouldn’t be. Just ask him out.”

“If you insist,” Ibara said while calming her blush. “I’ll try.”

“Wait,” Setsuna blurted out. “If kisses are sacred… Hey everyone! Bow down to your queen! Sexy Setsuna Tokage of the heavenly smoochies!”

“You are exhausting,” Reiko commented as the other students still in class ignored Setsuna.

“Eh, whatevs,” the lizard girl shrugged. “Anyway, most of the class is gone, so might as well go get some, girl.” Ibara took a deep breath and got up to confront Tetsutetsu.

“Wish me luck,” she murmured as she forced herself over to her crush’s desk. “Tetsutetsu?”

“‘Sup?” he greeted with his usual vigor.

“I… I wanted to… apologize for being so forward earlier. If that made you uncomfortable, please know that was not my intention and I’m very sorry if it did—”

“Nah, it’s cool,” Tetsutetsu assured her. “In fact, it was freakin’ MANLY!”

“P-Pardon?”

“You put yourself out there in a bold way!” he explained. “If that’s not manly, then I don’t know what is.”

“Oh, yes. I forgot about your… Anyways, I wanted to ask you…” The confidence that her friends had given here was beginning to leave Ibara, but she continued on after a deep breath. “Would you like to… g-go out on a… d-d-date with me?”

“Sure!” Ibara was taken aback by the immediate answer, but once it hit her, her blush faded and she sighed in relief.

“How cute!” Setsuna cooed from atop Kendo’s desk. “Reminds me of myself except with less dinosaur-themed panties.”

“That is not information I needed to have,” Reiko commented. “Anyways, I’m gonna meet up with Shinso. Later.”

“Oh yeah! Me and Rin have a date too!” Setsuna hopped off Kendo’s desk and bolted to her
boyfriend’s desk where she jumped into his arms. “Let’s hit the town, dino boyfriend!”

“Why do you always jump in my arms like that?” he questioned.

“Why do you always look so sexy!”

As the remaining members of Class 1-B left, Kendo and Monoma were the only ones remaining. “It took some time, but we really made it,” Kendo mused. “One semester at U.A. is done already.”

“Feels like a blur,” Monoma added. “Then again, I did have… priorities that kept my attention.”

“Yeah…”

“I meant what I said,” Monoma suddenly said. “I’m going to change my behavior. It’ll take time, but I will.”

“I believe you,” Kendo asserted. “I’m glad you’re making an effort and I’ll support you.”

“Thanks… Kendo?”

“Hm?”

“You’re my best friend.” Monoma’s sudden seriousness surprised Kendo, but his genuine tone quickly brought a smile to her face.

“And you’re mine, Monoma.”

Chapter End Notes

ANNOUNCEMENT: I'll be heading back to college tomorrow and classes start on Monday. Obviously, uploads will slow down because of this. By how much? I dunno, but I'll keep you all updated.
A Little More Time

It’s been two days since U.A.’s Training Camp came to a screeching halt. The League of Villains’ Vanguard Action Squad had attacked the students and pro heroes in attendance with the goal of capturing Katsuki Bakugo. They succeeded. 27 students were injured to various degrees in the attack, most of whom were in Class 1-B. One pro, Pixie-Bob, was grievously injured, and another, Ragdoll, disappeared after losing a dangerous amount of blood. Three villains were captured by the police, but this did nothing to ease the absolute disaster of the attack.

As the train pulled into the station, Monoma stepped off and looked up at the night sky. In the corner of his eye, he saw a news bulletin reminding people of U.A.’s upcoming press conference. He then went to leave the station, noticing a handful of people he knew on his way out. Midoriya, Todoroki, Yaoyorozu, Iida, and Kirishima were entering the station. They weren’t that close to him and they seemed to have a lot on their minds, but Midoriya’s gaze did find its way to Monoma’s. The two boys stared for a moment before Midoriya continued on with his group. For some reason, he looked guilty. Monoma felt guilty too, but couldn’t place why until the group was gone. His mind flashed back to a few weeks ago to something he had said to Midoriya after going out of his way to elbow the boy’s head.

I hear you guys rans into the hero killer. I guess the Sports Festival wasn’t enough. You just keep getting attention with one stunt after another, huh, Class 1-A? But now it’s looking like that attention isn’t all it's cracked up to be. It's starting to get dangerous, right? Pretty scary! I’m just worried that one of these days, we’re all gonna get caught up in some of your antics!

Monoma cringed at his memory and twisted his hand around the strap of his bag. What a fool I’ve been. The memory was thankfully hazy from there on because of Kendo’s neck chop, but the thought of Kendo tightened his grip even more. She was in danger and I was stuck inside. She was shot at…

Monoma had spent the previous day and the last two nights in the hospital with his classmates. Not that he was injured – he was well aware of that fact – but because he felt needed. Kendo was also barely injured, but she remained by her friends’ sides. Her parents had begged her to come home and rest properly, but she was resolute in staying. Monoma’s parents had also asked him to come home, just for a little while, so he came to a compromise with them, Kendo, and her parents. She would stay with the others, and once Monoma returned later, he’d bring her some stuff. Food, a change of clothes, and a few other essentials.

Monoma made it to the hospital quickly, but stood outside for a while. The memories of how his classmates had been when he was last there pricked at his mind like needles. The sight of someone as lively as Setsuna lying in a hospital bed like dead weight. The sight of someone as tall and muscular as Bondo with an oxygen mask strapped to his face. His mind flipped through these images like a camera reel, and the last image in his head made him feel sick. He remembered the sight of his pure, innocent, and gentle friend, Pony Tsunotori, hooked up to a life support machine.

…It’s been almost a day, Monoma told himself. Some of them must be awake by now. The voice he forced into his mind was one of optimism and energy – a voice he called upon in his difficult times. Though he’d never really pondered why, the voice in his head reminded him of Kendo.

Monoma walked into the lobby and looked around. He didn’t see anyone he recognized, but he expected that. With the state they were in, no one would be checking out just yet. Most of the class had inhaled dangerous amounts of toxic gas created by a villain’s Quirk. The only ones who weren’t affected by the gas was himself, Kendo, Tetsutetsu, Yui, and Awase. Ibara and Honenuki were
knocked unconscious by it, but they were thankfully given gas masks soon after, so they had woken up sometime last night. Monoma entered the stairwell and quickly ascended to the second floor where his friends were.

Once he arrived, he looked around and finally saw a few familiar faces. Watching TV in a small sitting area was Awase and Hatsume, who had come yesterday afternoon. When she arrived, she had thrown a small fit at Awase for nearly being killed by a monster, but it seemed like she had calmed down since. He waved at the pair and continued forward, finding Kendo sat on a small bench between Setsuna’s and Kuroiro’s rooms. She didn’t notice him walking up. Monoma could already tell how drained she was. Trying to stay positive for two days straight would tire anyone out. “I’m back.”

“Hey,” Kendo greeted. “Bring my stuff?” Her voice was listless and slow, confirming her ragged state to Monoma. With a closer look, he could see even more signs – the bags under her eyes and the greasy sheen over her messy hair. She needed to go home and rest her worried mind, but Monoma knew she couldn’t be convinced yet.

“Yeah, it’s all here,” Monoma said as he handed her the bag. “Your mom said to eat up if you’re not coming home.”

“Right. I’ll go change and then have some.” She took the bag and trudged off to the women’s room while Monoma took a seat on the bench. He sat in silence for a bit before noticing some snoring coming from Kuroiro’s room. He peeked inside and saw Honenuki asleep in a chair near Kuroiro’s bed.

“Well, don’t you look comfy?”

“I told you that I’m fine.” Monoma’s attention was drawn down the hall when he heard Tetsutetsu coming out of his room. He still had bandages around his temples and a few other spots, but he had changed out of his hospital clothes and into a dark blue T-shirt and black shorts. “Doctor said I can leave whenever I’m feeling better.”

“No, you’re still not well!” Ibara was trying to pull Tetsutetsu back into his room, but was just being dragged across the floor tiles. She had also changed into normal clothes – a frilly green blouse and long white skirt – since Monoma had last seen her. “I beg you, please get back in bed.”

“You should be the one in bed,” Tetsutetsu replied. “The doctor said that poison gas is still your system.”

“Tetsu, you were shot. I’d feel much better if you got back in your bed and rested.” Tetsutetsu looked guilty for worrying Ibara, but then noticed Monoma.

“Hey, buddy!” he greeted, stomping over to Monoma with Ibara still ineffectually pulling back on his bicep. “Back already?”

“Yeah, I didn’t want to stay away for long. How’s your head?”

“Should be good. Doctor said my brain isn’t rattled too much and my skull will be all good soon.”

“He has a concussion,” Ibara interrupted. “Please, return to bed.”

“I will, I will. Just let me stretch my legs a bit.” Ibara pouted and relented her grip, figuring that was the best she’d get from the boy.

“You better,” she sighed. Monoma internally snickered at the new couple before seeing Kendo
return, now wearing a clean blue shirt and black shorts.

“Hey, you two.”

“Oh hey! How’re you holdin’ up?!” Tetsutetsu asked.

“I should be asking you that,” Kendo said with a forced chuckle.

“But Kendo, you’ve been here worrying over everyone,” Ibara pointed out. “Surely, you must be —”

“I’m good, Ibara,” Kendo assured her as she sat on the bench. “Just a little hungry, that’s all.” She dug through the bag and grabbed the food her mom had packed, quickly digging in. “That hits the spot.” As Kendo ate, Monoma got up and pulled Ibara out of earshot of the ginger girl.

“Anything change while I was gone?” he asked. “Anyone wake up?”

“No one else yet,” she answered glumly. “I’ve been told that their condition has been steadily improving, though something does worry me.” Ibara motioned across the hospital floor to a wavy-haired doctor talking with a nurse. “That doctor has checked on everyone and assured me they will be fine, but he’s gone into Reiko’s room more than a few times. I fear there’s something he’s not telling me.” Monoma looked at the doctor, experiencing a strange sense of déjà vu in the process, and watched as he walked to Reiko’s room.

“That is worrisome,” Monoma agreed. “I’m gonna investigate.” The copycat slinked over to her room and waited outside for the doctor to exit. “Hey, doc.”

“Yes?” the doctor said.

“What’s wrong with Yanagi that you’re not telling us? You’ve gone in there a few more times than the others.”

“Calm down, kid,” the doctor said with an amused smirk. “Your friend will be just fine with time. I’m just checking on my kid.”

“Your kid?” Monoma took a quick look inside and saw Shinso in Reiko’s room. He was fast asleep, leaning forward on her bed with a hand over hers. Monoma looked at Shinso, then back at the squinty-eyed doctor with wavy, stood-up dark hair, and finally understood the déjà vu he had felt. “Oh. Alright then.”

“Take a chill pill, kid,” the doctor said while ruffling Monoma’s hair. “Your classmates will be just fine. Promise.” Monoma acted flippant as the doctor left, but hearing him say that really did put him at ease.

“That hit the spot,” he heard Kendo say as he returned.

“Already finished?” Geez, you were hungry,” Monoma commented.

“Well, y’know. Hospital food and all that,” Kendo answered. Monoma didn’t buy her excuse for a second.

“If you’re staying here, you have to eat, Kendo,” he sternly instructed. Tetsutetsu and Ibara were shocked at how serious Monoma sounded.

“I know,” she replied, embarrassed. There was an awkward lull in the conversation that was quickly
filled when Yui approached the group. Yui had left the previous night, but returned the next morning, now wearing a white T-shirt and blue shorts. “Hey, Yui. What’s up?”

“Pony just woke up,” she quickly explained.

“Seriously?!” Monoma snapped excitedly.

“That’s great!” Kendo cheered, receiving an energy boost from the news like a shot of coffee would do.

“I knew my prayers would be answered,” Ibara mumbled while wiping a tear away.

“I told her what happened,” Yui continued. “I think she wants to see all of us.”

“Then let’s go!” Tetsutetsu ordered. The five classmates hurried across the hospital to Pony’s room, where the blonde centaur girl waited with a smile.

“Hey,” she greeted before both Kendo and Monoma hugged her.

“We were so worried,” Monoma said in relief.

“It OK,” she assured her friends. “I’m feelin’ good now.”

“We’re so glad you’re feeling better,” Kendo said while rubbing her eyes. As Monoma pulled away from Pony, he saw Kendo sway for a moment before steadying herself on a shelf. The anxiety and nerves that kept her wired with energy were finally loosening their grip. As he eased her onto a chair, Monoma also felt an intense relief wash over himself.

“So, what happened since the camp attack?” Pony asked.

“Not too much,” Tetsutetsu began. “There’s a press conference soon with Mr. Kan, the principal, and Eraserhead about what happened.”

“Then I wanna watch,” Pony insisted. “If things are bad as Yui said, I wanna support them. Reporters are gonna cannibal them.”

“Eat them alive, Pony,” Monoma corrected. In doing something as routine as correcting Pony’s language, he felt a twinge of normalcy enter the room. While Tetsutetsu flipped through the channels and Pony grilled Ibara for more details, Monoma took a seat next to Kendo.

“Now that she’s awake, everyone else may start waking up soon,” he speculated.

“That’d be nice,” Kendo yawned.

“…I think you should go home soon,” Monoma said. “You’ve been here since the incident. You’re running yourself ragged by staying here and worrying.”

“Maybe you’re right, but… I just need a little more time, OK? I have to make sure they’re alright…”

“…Fine,” he sighed. “A little more time couldn’t hurt.”
The press conference went as the students expected. Reporters grilling their teachers for information they didn’t have and asking questions they couldn’t really answer. It was disheartening to watch, but the real kicker was their lack of info on Bakugo’s whereabouts. According to Nezu, they had no leads.

“All we can do is pray for Bakugo’s safety,” Ibara said as Tetsutetsu turned off the TV.

“That guy may be a douche, but he’s tough,” Tetsutetsu complimented. “I’m sure he’ll be fine.”

“It was pretty cool how Mr. Principal complimented you two,” Pony said. “I didn’t know you guys beat up a villain.”

“You bet we did!” Tetsutetsu boasted while flexing. “That wimp was nothin’ but a punk.”

“Don’t try playing the tough guy,” Ibara lectured. “You still have a concussion, now sit.”

“You worry too much,” Tetsutetsu said while flopping down in a free chair. “Things’ll turn out fine. Now that Pony’s up, the others could be up soon too.”

“That stands to reason, but…” Ibara looked at the floor and grimaced before taking the seat next to Tetsutetsu. “I don’t know. Ever since the press conference started, I’ve had this bad feeling. I feel as though something terrible will happen again.” Ibara knotted her fingers around her skirt, but then felt Tetsutetsu’s arm around her shoulders.

“I’m sure it’s fine,” he said. “You’re just worrying yourself too much. Our friends will be find and the pros will get Bakugo back soon”

“…You’re right,” she said while leaning her head onto the iron boy’s shoulder. “Thank you, Tetsu.”

“I forgot you two were couple,” Pony added. “Lookin’ so cute together.”

“Already on nicknames, eh, Ibara?” Kendo asked. “Weren’t you the one freaking out over one kiss.”

“What can I say?” the vine-haired girl answered blissfully.

“I think I’ll turn in for tonight,” Kendo yawned. “Hopefully, things will be better in the morning.”

“Hopefully…” Yui parroted. Kendo slumped back in her seat and felt sleep take her almost instantly. Her rest wouldn’t last, however, as shouting voices stirred her from her sleep not too long after it started.

“Quick! Turn on the TV!” It was Tetsutetsu. The TV was on before Kendo’s eyes could adjust to the room’s lights. Once she was fully awake and stood up to see the TV better.

“If you’re just joining us,” the TV reporter began, “almost half of Kamino Ward has already been destroyed by the fight between All Might and this unknown villain. Many Pro Heroes on the scene have also been defeated. Please stay tuned as we try getting a closer look.”

“What’s going on?” Pony asked. “All Might’s fightin’ someone?”

“It must be whoever kidnapped Bakugo,” Monoma realized. “The mastermind of the camp’s
“How could they destroy so much and still be going?” Kendo wondered. “All Might’s supposed to be unbeatable.” The news footage straightened out and showed a bird’s eye view of the battlefield. From what they could see, Kamino Ward was rubble in every direction. In the center was All Might, who was bleeding and had a torn costume.

“He looks injured,” Pony said. “That villain really hurt All Might?”

“It’s not just All Might,” Tetsutetsu pointed out. Looking closely, they noticed a few other heroes in the background, either injured or defeated.

“Mt. Lady,” Yui gasped worriedly.

“Gang Orca, Best Jeanist,” Monoma listed off. “He took down two heroes in the top 10 and can still fight All Might alone?” The villain in question wore a busted black mask and a black suit. He didn’t seem worn out from the fight so far, but he wasn’t making a move.

“Who’s that guy with All Might?” Pony questioned. The hero she was asking about was a short old man in a yellow and gray costume.

“I’ve seen him before,” Monoma explained. “He was in the footage of the Hero Killer – Gran Torino. He’s a veteran hero.”

“Mr. Tiger is there too,” Ibara noted. “Look in his arms. He has Miss Ragdoll!”

“If they have her, does that mean Bakugo is safe too?” Kendo asked. They had no time to question anymore the villain made another move. From what they could see, the villain shot a giant burst of air pressure at All Might and Gran Torino. The footage went wild as the helicopter tumbled in the dust cloud created by the attack. The students could hear hospital workers and other patients also watching the news outside their room.

“What’s going on?”

“I can’t see a thing!”

“Ya think All Might’s alright?”

As the chorus of worried voices echoed into the room, Monoma looked over his friends worried faces. He felt powerless once again, unable to ease their anxiety. He was barely keeping it together himself. Tetsutetsu’s boundless energy had seemingly evaporated. Ibara bit down on her fist while her other hand gripped tightly to Tetsutetsu’s. Pony was holding onto Yui for support, while Yui held her back, her normal stoicism fading quickly. The worst to see by far was Kendo. She had used up every ounce of positivity in her body long ago. All she could do was watch and wait. This’ll turn out fine, Monoma thought. We just have to keep calm and have confidence... just say that... just tell them... TELL HER IT’LL TURN OUT FINE! Monoma’s words were stuck halfway up his dry throat.

The footage finally returned to clarity as the dust settled. While everyone hoped for the sight of a victorious hero, there was nothing of the sort. The camera zoomed in on All Might, who had changed after that last attack. He looked like a skeleton with sunken eyes and a grim, defeated expression. “D-Does anyone else see this?” the reporter asked.

“What happened to All Might?” someone in the hall asked.
“He’s all skin and bones.”

“Is it over?” Monoma’s heart sank at these people’s words. All Might needed support, but everyone’s confidence wavered once they saw his weakened state.

“Is that… really him?” Tetsutetsu wondered with a heavy gulp.

“Oh god,” Ibara whispered. “All Might…”

“Did he lose?” Pony asked before burying her face in Yui’s chest. “Is it done?”

“What now?” Yui asked. The copycat watched helplessly his friends give into their despair and lose their faith in All Might.

“This… can’t be real…” Kendo whimpered. Monoma shakily reached for her shoulder to comfort her, but before he could reach, she fell to her knees. “I can’t watch this!” she sobbed. Monoma looked back and forth between the TV and his distraught friend, his mind blanking on what to do. “I can’t look… I can’t…”

It’s now or never, Monoma told himself. They’ve all given up. You have to say something. Anything! She needs you! Monoma clenched his fists and turned to his friends with resolve burning in his chest. “What the hell are you all talking about?! It’s not over yet!” As soon as he spoke, the room was quiet. Although he didn’t realize it, he had the attention of everyone in the hallway too. “It doesn’t matter if he looks different! That’s still All Might! He’s still fighting for us! HE NEEDS OUR SUPPORT NOW MORE THAN EVER!” Monoma wasn’t done quite yet. He watched on TV as All Might raise his right arm and grew huge muscles on it, energy crackling around him as his emaciated face twisted into his trademark smile. “Beat this guy, All Might!”

“He’s right!” Pony yelled. “GO ALL MIGHT!”

“KICK HIS ASS!” Tetsutetsu screamed.

“PLEASE WIN!” Ibara begged.

“YOU CAN DO IT!” Yui shouted. Their cheers of confidence spread thought he hospital flor. Pretty soon, all anyone could hear was shouts of encouragement for their hero. As this wave of confidence spread through the building, Monoma crouched down and finally placed his hand on Kendo’s shoulder.

“Get up. Our hero needs support.” Kendo looked back at Monoma and slowly stood back up, wiping her tears away quickly.

“WIN THIS, ALL MIGHT!” Her despaired expression did a complete flip, growing excited as she shouted for victory.

There’s your support, sir. Ironically, the next attack didn’t come from All Might or the villain. Racing onto the battlefield was Endeavor, who threw a fireball at the villain. His shouts couldn’t be made out on the TV, but it seemed to grip All Might’s attention. Just as the villain turned to attack Endeavor, Edgeshot sprang out and attacked.

“Finally, he’s got some back-up!” Tetsutetsu yelled. As the pair of heroes kept the villain at bay, Kamui Woods swung out and snatched the unconscious Mt. Lady, Gang Orca, and Best Jeanist away from the battlefield.

“It’s Mr. Kamui!” Ibara cheered.
“Look! Tiger too!” Pony added. “He’s getting them civilians out!” The camera’s focus shifted to the villain, whose right arm was beginning to grow and change. Metal spirals, bone spears, and other enhancements grew from the now-giant arm.

“Oh shit!” Tetsutetsu yelled. “That’s freaky, but if anyone can beat it, it’s All Might!”

“That’s right!” Kendo agreed. “Go, All Might!” The villain flew down and threw his giant fist towards All Might, who met the attack with a punch of his own.

“This is it!” Monoma yelled. As the attacks clashed and cloud of wind and dust erupted, they could see All Might transfer his power from his right arm to his left. The villain countered by doing the same, aiming for a killing blow, but All Might dodged and moved the power back into his right arm. Although the footage had barely picked up any sound so far, they could clearly hear All Might’s battle cry as he put the villain do once and for all.

“UNITED… STATES OF… SMaaaaaaaaASH!” His punch forced the villain to the ground and caused an eruption of force, creating a tornado. The helicopter shooting footage was sent into a whirl, making the footage hectic and undiscernible. Everyone’s breath stopped in anticipation as they waited to see the aftermath. After what felt like an eternity, they finally saw All Might standing over the villain. He was battered and bloodied, but he was still victorious. He was still All Might. The hero raised his fist triumphantly and muscled out as his last hero job came to a close. This one action sent the entire hospital from motionless waiting into a frenzy of cheers.

“HE DID IIIIIIIIT!” Pony screamed.

“HE WON! ALL MIGHT WON!” Tetsutetsu cried while picking Ibara up in a bear hug.

“That was amazing,” Yui added while wiping away tears.

“I told you,” Monoma began. “You just needed to beli— Huurk!” Monoma was cut off when Kendo pulled him into a crushing embrace.

“That was so awesome!” she yelled. “He really pulled it off!”

“Yeah. Crazy, right? I can’t breathe,” he groaned. As Kendo put him down, they listened in on the celebration in the hallway, noticing a few familiar voices among the cheers. “There’s no way…” Monoma began before rushing outside and cracking a grin. Once he and the others were outside, they saw their classmates among the workers and other patients. Honenuki was supporting a groggy Kuroiro on his shoulder as they cheered with the crowd. Reiko cried in joy in her room’s doorway while leaning on Shinso. Hatsume had already pulled Awase aside for an adrenaline-fueled make-out session. Littered though the rest of the crowd were even more newly-awakened students – Shoda, Setsuna, Bondo, and Tsuburaba from what they could see so far.

“Th-They’re awake,” Kendo began as tears of relief filled her eyes. “It’s a miracle. I-I can’t believe it.”

“With all this noise, how could they stay asleep?” Monoma joked while supporting his exhausted friend.

“It’s almost like a plague has been lifted,” Ibara mused. “The evil has been defeated, as has the curse on our friends.”

“Whatever the reason, it’s super awesome!” Pony cheered. While she, Tetsutetsu, Ibara, and Yui rushed to their friends in the crowd, Monoma stayed with the fatigued Kendo.
“How’re you feeling?” he asked. Kendo rubbed her eyes embarrassedly and leaned against the wall while sighing.

“I feel like I’ve done more than enough crying tonight,” she said. “Don’t worry about me. Now that they’ve started waking up, I can head home happy.”

“Good. You deserve some rest.” Monoma watched Kendo smile brightly and run into the crowd to her friends. “It’s finally over.”

The next morning, Monoma and Kendo woke up to find even more of their friends had come to. By 10:30, every last member of Class-1-B was conscious. As he and Kendo visited them all, Monoma actually began to believe what Ibara had said. It did seem like All Might defeating that villain lifted some sort of curse on them. Once everyone was accounted for, Kendo finally relented and agreed to go home.

Monoma watched as Kendo said goodbye to Ibara and Tetsutetsu. The pair had assured her they’d take her place in watching over everyone’s remaining recovery. “Alright, I’m ready to go,” Kendo said. “The station will probably be packed.”

“Yeah, but I think we missed the initial rush.” Monoma let Kendo go ahead as the pair entered the stairwell.

“…Hang on,” Kendo said.

“Forget something?” They stopped and Kendo leaned forward on a railing, looking away from Monoma.

“No… I just wanted to say… thank you.”

“For what?” Monoma asked. Kendo was never one for serious conversations. Anytime she said thanks, it was done quickly and casually.

“I really wasn’t taking care of myself while I stayed here,” Kendo admitted. “You realized that… and you called me out. You made sure I didn’t forget about myself. And also…” Kendo turned to face Monoma before leaning back more casually on the railing. “Last night, during the big fight, I had nothing left in me… and I almost gave up. You pulled me back to reality. You helped all of us. You were our hero.”

Monoma was stunned. He stared blankly at Kendo, who smiled a little and looked away. It took him a moment to notice, but he saw Kendo was blushing. “It was nothing. I wouldn’t call it ‘heroic.’ I was just helping my friends. That’s all.”

“Well, even if it was nothing to you… it meant a lot to me. So, thanks.”

That’s when Monoma felt it. The weight on his heart. The stirring in his stomach. The shaking in his hands. You can’t tell her, Monoma ordered himself. This isn’t the time. This isn’t the place. You’ve troubled her enough.

“Anyway, that’s it,” Kendo continued. “Let’s get going—”

“Hold on.” Instinctively, Monoma reached out and grabbed Kendo’s arm as she turned away. As she spun back around, he let go.
“Hm?”

Don’t do this now. You’re not ready. You have no idea how she feels. “It wasn’t nothing to me. I… really had to dig deep to say all that stuff, but… when I saw how upset you were, I had to step in…”

“Oh yeah? That’s sweet—”

“Because I love you, Kendo.” Well shit. It’s out there. Don’t say I didn’t warn you. While Monoma bereted himself, both he and Kendo froze, almost like those words had stopped time for them. “You’ve been my best friend for so long that… I didn’t want to ruin it. I kept it buried, but now… now, it’s finally out. Itsuka Kendo, I’m in love with you. And even if you don’t feel the same, I always want to support you, just like you do for me and everyone else.” With his heart and mind finally releasing those words, Monoma felt a strange emptiness. He had cleared out any lingering secrets and was left barren. All he could do was wait for Kendo to react.

“…Is that… how you really feel?” Her voice was blank and stilted. She was too shocked to fully react.

“It is.” After another moment, the emotional stalemate finally ended when Kendo cracked a smile.

“In that case… I wish you had told me sooner.” Kendo grabbed Monoma by the shirt and pulled him forward before locking her lips around his. The copycat’s shock instantly wore off and he wrapped his arms around Kendo’s waist, pulling her closer and returning the kiss. Any doubts, anxiety, or fatigue felt by either melted away in the other’s embrace.
Family Visits

Chapter Notes

To make things less confusing, I switched Kendo to Itsuka for this chapter. She's back to Kendo next chapter

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

With Bakugo rescued and the League of Villains scattered and weakened after their leader’s defeat, U.A. still had a one last problem to face. Their students had been endangered yet again, and this time, there were serious injuries. They had to ensure their safety, so the families of the U.A. students received a shocking notice of U.A.’s new boarding system. Principal Nezu knew his plan was risky and ill-timed, but with how bold villains had been in attacking the students, keeping them under constant supervision was their best option. That’s why he and Kan were visiting the families of Class 1-B while Aizawa and All Might took care of Class 1-A’s families.

For the most part, their meetings had gone smoothly, especially compared to what they imagined. So far, every student they’d met with would be returning. However, once they arrived at the Komori residence, they hit their first roadblock. “…For these reasons, we believe a boarding system would be in the best interest of our students,” Nezu explained. “I know U.A. has had its problems, but we hope you can put your trust in us once more.” Kan and Nezu waited while Kinoko’s father, Takeshi Komori, mulled over the proposal. Kinoko was sat next to him, not saying anything. On Kinoko other side was her mother, Enoki Komori, who had also not said much.

“You keep talking about how safe it’ll be,” Takeshi finally said, “but you’ve always said that U.A. is safe. I don’t see how this will change things. Sure, you’ll have pro heroes always with them, but there were pro heroes present at both attacks, am I correct?”

“You are,” Nezu answered. “By staying close to our students and increasing our security, we hope to stop any attack before they happen, and if they do happen for some reason, a pro will be close by.”

“There’s also the matter of the students getting their provisional licenses,” Kan said. “If they pass the exam, they’ll be able to defend themselves without the law being a problem—”

“Neither of you are addressing my concern,” Takeshi interrupted. “I don’t want Kinoko to have to defend herself. She shouldn’t be facing villains at all. She’s just a student.”

“We wholeheartedly agree,” Kan continued. “We don’t want our students facing villains yet either. We want them to defend themselves should the need arise.” Takeshi stayed stone-faced as he silently thought over what had been said.

“I’m sorry, but… I simply cannot allow Kinoko to return to U.A.”

“But dad—”

“That’s final, Kinoko.” Takeshi immediately shut Kinoko down and stood up. “I appreciate all you’ve done for Kinoko so far, but we’re done here. Enoki, please show these two out.” Before Kan or Nezu could speak up again, Takeshi was already walking away. Kan looked to Kinoko...
disappointedly, expecting her to be sad, but instead, she clenched her hands and shot up from her seat.

“Dad,” she began, trying her best to sound determined through a shaky voice, “I’m going back to U.A.”

“You are not. This discussion is over—”

“No, it isn’t,” Kinoko declared. Kan thought back to how timid and shy Kinoko had been all year and smiled.

_She’s grown quite the backbone._ Kinoko followed her father further back in their house, leaving Kan and Nezu with Enoki. “I’m sorry for my husbands’ rudeness,” she said quietly. “He’s always been protective of Kinoko, so he’s been worked up like this since the incident.”

“That’s understandable,” Kan said. “I hope she can convince him to change his mind. Kinoko is a very bright and caring girl. Excellent hero material.”

“That’s very nice of you to say,” Enoki replied. “I’m actually grateful to U.A. Kinoko’s grown so much in these past few months. I’d love for her to continue to study there, and I’m sure my husband feels the same way deep down. I’m confident Kinoko can convince him with a little time.”

“That’s great to hear,” Kan said.

“In that case, maybe we should take this time to prepare for our next visit,” Nezu suggested. “It will probably be our most difficult one yet.”

“That’s right. Tetsutetsu was nearly killed fighting the gas villain. I just hope his parents are willing to hear us out.”

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“Of course, he can go!”

“…Really?” Kan was shocked at just how easy it was to convince Tetsutetsu’s parents to let him go back to U.A. considering he was shot several times at the camp. Kan’s surprise wasn’t just from that, but also by how much Tetsutetsu’s parents resembled their son. Both had spiky silver hair, eyebrows that circled their eyes, sharp teeth, and seemingly endless energy. Seeing what was essentially a female Tetsutetsu freaked Kan out enough, but their casual attitude to what had happened made it worse. It felt almost like they’d drop the act and scream at him any second.

“I’m honored you’re trusting us with your son again after such a terrible blunder on our part,” Nezu said with a polite bow. “Do you have any questions for us?”

“Nah, we’re good,” they both said. The fact that they had said almost everything in complete sync also freaked Kan out to no end.

“In that case, would you mind if I posed a question?” Nezu asked. “I hope this isn’t rude of me, but how did you think of such a unique and creative name for your son.”

“Oh, that’s a fun story,” Mrs. Tetsutetsu began. Kan was a little relieved to finally hear one of them speak without the other. “We wanted to combine our names when we named our child.”

“Y’see, my name’s Kotetsu,” Mr. Tetsutetsu explained, “and her name is Tetsuko. So, we decided
to name our child Koko if it was a girl and Tetsutetsu if it was a boy.”

“What a fun anecdote. Thank you for telling us,” Nezu said.

*This is the most redundant family I’ve ever seen. It’s eerie*, Kan thought.

“Well, that’s almost all of them,” Kan said. “Based on how many of them were affected by the attack, I assumed this would be much harder.”

“It hasn’t been exactly easy, but we’ve got nearly everyone in Class 1-B,” Nezu replied. “Monoma’s parents were relatively easy to convince, but out last stop worries me. Kendo was in grave danger during the camp. Her parents must be angry at us.”

“Kendo herself has always been very laid-back and casual. If her parents are similar, we may be in for an easy last stop.” Kan and Nezu approached the door to the Kendo family’s apartment, but before one of them could knock, they heard a woman shouting.

“Over my dead body you’re going back to that goddamn deathtrap of a school!”


“Hey,” she greeted embarrassedly. “I guess you heard all that?”

“Just the end,” Kan answered awkwardly. “May we come in?”

“Please do.” Kan and Nezu entered the apartment and looked around warily for the person who shouted earlier.

“Mom, dad, they’re here!” Itsuka announced, prompting a man to come out from the kitchen. He was tall and muscular with cropped black hair and a friendly smile, wearing dark jeans and a black button-up shirt.

“Hello, gentleman,” the man greeted. “I’m Gon Kendo. It’s pleasure to meet you.”

“Sekijiro Kan. Thank you for having us.”

“Principal Nezu. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

“Honey, the U.A. representatives are here,” Gon called back into the kitchen. “Come say hello.” Almost instantly, a metal ladle came flying out at Gon’s head. He caught it without a hassle, almost like he was used to it, and walked back into the kitchen. “Honey, don’t be like this,” Kan heard him say.

“Your mother seems… feisty,” Kan commented.

“That’s a nice way of putting it,” Itsuka said while rubbing her neck sheepishly. After a moment, Gon returned while dragging a woman out of the kitchen with him. She looked like an older, slightly taller Itsuka, and seemed just as angry as her voice had been. She was dressed in a yellow shirt and blue jeans with a white apron and a white bandana over her short ginger hair.

“Sorry about that,” Gon said with a laugh. “This little firecracker is my wife, Natsuka Kendo.” Natsuka didn’t say a word as Kan and Nezu introduced themselves – she only glared. “Anyway, let’s take a seat. Natsuka, would you make the tea?”
“Why make tea? I’m kicking them out right now.”

“Mom, please don’t be rude,” Itsuka requested.

“I’ll be as rude as I want to the shitheads who almost got my daughter killed.” Natsuka didn’t raise her voice a single time, but the venom dripping from her words instantly put Kan and Nezu on edge. It was mostly because they knew she had every right to be angry with them, but also because she was genuinely intimidating. Gon nudged Natsuka and gave her a disappointed look, making Natsuka groan. “…Fine. I’ll make the freakin’ tea,” she growled. She returned to the kitchen as Kan and Nezu sat in there seats across from Itsuka and Gon.

“First of all, we wanted to thank you for meeting with us and working with our hectic schedule,” Nezu began.

“Of course. I know things are pretty crazy right now and you have to meet with 19 other families.”

“How have your other meetings gone?” Itsuka asked.

“Very well,” Kan said. “It took some convincing for a few families, but it looks like everyone will be coming back.”

“That’s great,” Itsuka replied. Out of the kitchen came Natsuka with a tray of five teacups that she placed on the coffee table.

“There. Tea,” she hissed while taking a seat next to Gon. “Drink it and leave.”

“Mom,” Itsuka griped.

“Honey, let’s just hear them out,” Gon suggested. “This is Itsuka’s future we’re talking about.” Natsuka stared daggers at her husband, but relented and sighed.

“I read the letter you sent,” Natsuka began, calmer than before. “I understand what U.A. is going through. I know that if Itsuka were to continue pursuing hero work, it would be safest for her there, surrounded by pro heroes 24/7… but then again, she was with at least six of them when she was nearly shot and killed.” Kan and Nezu knew they had no retort to her point, so they only had one option – bow their heads and apologize.

“You’re completely right,” Kan said. “U.A. is entirely to blame for the incident going as poorly as it did.”

“All we can offer you is our word that we’re trying to make the school the safest it can be,” Nezu added. “It’s a lot to ask, but we’d like you to put your faith in us again and entrust is with Itsuka’s future and safety one more time.”

“I know Itsuka wants to go back,” Gon said. “I’m willing to trust my daughter’s judgement if she feels it’s safe to return.”

Well, that’s one down, Kan noted. All eyes in the room went to Natsuka, who still seemed unyielding.

“Kan, was it?” Natsuka began. “Do you have a family of your own? Children maybe?”

“I do not.”

“Well, as Itsuka’s mother, let me explain something. Ever since Itsuka was born, she’s always been
within my reach. I can protect her when she’s close, so I feel confident that she’s safe. Seeing you kid grow up and strike out on their own can be difficult, but if you trust them and the people around them, then you can still feel that they’re safe. I trust Itsuka. I trust her friends. I don’t trust you.” Kan and Nezu could sympathize with Natsuka’s worries, but her words still cut them both deep.

“I know you don’t want us here, ma’am,” Kan said, “so I’ll make this brief. Every concern you have and every criticism of U.A. you have is completely true. We do not deserve another chance with your child after what’s happened.” As Kan talked, he slowly slid off the couch into a kneeling position. Nezu noticed and quickly did the same. “However, if you can find it in your heart to let Itsuka continue her studies at U.A., you have my word that no harm will befall her on our watch. I’d rather give my life than let my students be hurt again.”

“You have my word as well,” Nezu added. “U.A. will not have another incident like this again and we deeply apologize for all that’s happened.” The pair bowed their heads to Natsuka, who thought over what they said. After a minute, she scoffed and stood up.

“Whatever. If Itsuka wants to go, then fine.” Kan and Nezu raised their heads and smiled, giving each other as subtle fist bump under the table.

*That’s 20,* Kan thought as he stood. Once he was up, Natsuka approached him and grabbed his tie roughly.

“Just one more thing,” she snarled while pulling Kan closer. “If even a little bit of Itsuka’s blood is spilt because of U.A.’s negligence, I will find you and personally drain every last drop of yours. Are we clear?”

“Yes, ma’am,” Kan quickly said with a heavy gulp.

“Good. Now leave.”

“Well, that went smoother than I thought,” Gon commented.

“Yeah, I was sure she was gonna punch one of them,” Itsuka added.

Chapter End Notes

In case anyone was curious, I haven't forgotten to finish the USJ side story. I'll try and wrap that up sometime soon.
With the approval of the Hero Course students’ families, the prelude to their second semesters began with moving into the brand-new dorms – Heights Alliance. Outside of 1-B’s building, the class’s 20 students had gathered. “I’m glad to see you all again,” Kan began. “I know we’ve had a rough go of things, but consider this fresh start. I want to see you stride into this next semester with confidence. I’ll give you a briefing on your new home, but first, I must discuss something that happened on the night of All Might’s fight. Apparently, five students in Class 1-A, who shall remain nameless, were present at the incident and worked to save Bakugo on their own.”

“Seriously?” Kendo asked.

“Yes, and despite succeeding in their endeavor, those students have been reprimanded. In fact, Eraser initially wanted to expel them along with anyone who knew about it before, which was most of the class, but he changed his mind.” Everyone in class glanced at Monoma, expecting a rant, but he limited himself to just a smug snicker. “Anyway, I’m glad you all have some self-restraint and didn’t do something that stupid. That’s all. Let’s go inside and I’ll show you the dorms.” As Kan led them inside, a few students talked amongst themselves.

“I wonder who it was,” Shoda said.

“Kirishima probably. He’s real close to Bakugo,” Tetsutetsu claimed.

“My money’s on Todoroki,” Honenuki began. “If you look back at the footage, you can see a big slab of ice near the battlefield at the start of the fight.”

“You’re both right,” Monoma added. “I saw those two, Iida, Yaoyorozu, and Midoriya at the train station that night.”

“Yaoyorozu too?” Awase asked. “She seems too smart to go along with that kinda plan.”

“Isn’t this the part where you go on a crazy tirade, Monoma?” Kuroiro asked.

“I’m, uh, trying to cut back on those…”

“…Quitter.”

“Shut up.”

After being shown the building by Kan, the students took the day to unpack and decorate their rooms. It was late at night by the time they all finished and convened in the common area. “I’m fuckin’ beat, dude,” Awase groaned as he lounged on the couch.

“I know it’s kinda weird to say because of how we got here, but I think living together will be cool,” Tsuburaba said.

“Yeah, it’s gonna be super cool!” Pony agreed. As the classmates chatted, Kendo, Reiko, and Setsuna came down the stairs and joined them.

“Is this everyone?” Kendo asked. “If we’re all done unpacking, I thought we could all do something fun together.”
“Can we opt out if we don’t like fun?” Kuroiro asked.

“Smartass remarks aside, Yaoyorozu texted me and said 1-A is looking at their dorm rooms and are gonna vote on who’s is best. I thought we could do the same.”

“Hey, that does sound fun,” Fukidashi said.

“I won’t make you participate if you don’t want to—”

“I will though,” Setsuna interrupted. “I’ll make you.”

“—but I thought it’d be a good time,” Kendo continued. “Who wants in?” The whole class raised their hands, though a few were more hesitant. “Alrighty, then let’s get this started. We’ll hit mine first and then move onto the boys.”

“Wait, are you the only girl on the second floor?” Pony asked as the class went up to the second floor.

“Yup. There was an odd number of us girls, so it’s just me down here.” Kendo unlocked her door and the class walked inside.

“About what I expected,” Monoma commented.

“Now this is manly!” Tetsutetsu yelled, making Kendo chuckle embarrassedly. Her room had been painted black and featured metal furniture with a weathered wooden table. Her bed had a plain black comforter over it and the walls were decorated with pictures of motorcycles.

“My mom didn’t let me have stuff like this in my room at home,” Kendo explained sheepishly. “Was the metal furniture too much?”

“Is it at least comfy?” Kuroiro asked as he took a seat on the cold steel couch. “…It is not.”

“Kinda reminds me of a garage,” Kamakiri commented.

“OK, we’ve all seen it, we can go,” Kendo quickly said while pushing everyone out. “Who’s next, huh? Boys?”

“Mine’s next,” Fukidashi spoke up. The class crossed over to the boy’s side and were ushered into Fukidashi’s dorm. “Weeeell?”

“Cooool!” Pony gushed. The room was littered with anime and manga merchandise. The walls were completely covered by posters and almost every surface had figurines on it.

“It’s a real nerdy room, but in a good way,” Kendo commented. “What’s that extra desk for?” She pointed to an inclined desk in the room’s corner that had a few sketches on it.

“That’s my drawing desk,” Fukidashi clarified.

“It’s more like a manga author’s room than a hero student,” Monoma pointed out. “No style at all.”

“Let’s see you do better,” Fukidashi challenged.

“Oh, you will.” The group exited the from room and moved onto Monoma’s next door. “I hope you’re ready to be blown away.”

“…Dang,” Reiko said. Monoma’s room wasn’t even recognizable as a dorm room anymore. It was
Parisian in style with antique white furniture instead of what came with the dorm. The walls were painted a soft pastel blue and the bed was decorated with a fancy white comforter.

“It’s lovely, Monoma,” Ibara complimented.

“Looks comfy,” Tetsutetsu added.

“I didn’t know interior decorating was your thing,” Kuroiro began. “Where’d you find space for that big, gaping vagina you have?”

“Laugh all you want. I believe this proves my room far exceeds anyone else’s.”

“You only think that ‘cause you haven’t seen mine yet,” Kamakiri boasted.

“Bring it, Bug’s Life.” Kamakiri led the class next door and proudly displayed his dorm room.

“Pretty badass, yeah?” His room was lined with weapons. A stand with katanas was near his bed, a rack of knives on top of his dresser, a collection of foreign swords in the corner – it looked like he was preparing for a war.

“Well, that’s… unexpected,” Shishida commented.

“You’re not gonna go postal on us, right?” Tsuburaba asked half-jokingly.

“Nah. I just like collecting sharp things,” Kamakiri commented while casually leafing throw a stack of throwing stars as if they were index cards.

“I’m just gonna leave,” Shoda announced. “I’m too accident prone to be around so many sharp things.”

“Yes, let’s move on,” Kendo instructed. “How’d he bring so many? Did anyone question this?” Next in line was Awase’s room, which he opened hesitantly.

“No judging, OK?” Awase’s room seemed very normal compared to the others. He had a set of dumbbells in the corner and multiple gaming consoles hooked up, but those were the only notable things.

“Why’d we judge this?” Setsuna asked. “We’re still busy judging Kamakiri.”

“Hey, what’s that?” Kaibara wondered, pointing to a moving lump under Awase’ covers.

“…Hatsume,” he explained. “She wanted to see my dorm room and fell asleep… 5 hours ago. Anyway, let’s just go. She’ll be cranky if we wake her up.”

“You are so fuckin’ whipped,” Kuroiro snickered.

“Shut up.” The class ascended to the second floor to inspect the next set of rooms. First up was Tsuburaba.

“Well? Do I have a kickin’ pad or what?” His room very kitsch with a 70’s-type design, featuring a neon pink rug, lava lamps, a record player, and even a disco ball.

“It’s… gaudy,” Reiko said.

“I like it,” Setsuna complimented.
“Figures.”

“Too bright and loud,” Kuroiro complained. “Your weird Boogie Nights style is giving me a headache.”

“Right, like yours is gonna be stylish like mine,” Tsuburaba scoffed. Next up was Kuroiro’s room which was initially too dark for anyone to make out. Once everyone’s eyes adjusted, they saw a very goth room. Candles, skulls, horror movie posters – he had even put in black carpeting. “Oh wow, couldn’t have seen this coming,” Tsuburaba sarcastically quipped.

“At least he’s got good movies,” Reiko said while sifting through a stack of horror flicks. “Mind if I borrow these sometime?”

“Sure thing. Your room’s up next, right?”

“Actually, mine’s next,” Kaibara spoke up.

“Oh great. I get surround sound of you two playing Ticklenuts with each other.”

“Wait, you told him we were dating?” Kaibara asked Tsuburaba.

“I’ve been tellin’ everyone,” the oval-eyed boy explained. “How can I not brag, you hot idiot?”

“…Gay,” Kuroiro said.

“Seriously?” Honenuki asked.

“Let’s just move on,” Kaibara requested as he went to his door and unlocked it. Inside was a fairly normal room, but above his bed was a shelf with several cameras on it.

“You a photographer, Kaibara?” Kendo asked.

“Yeah. It’s just a hobby of mine, but…” Kaibara led the group to his closet and opened up, revealing hanging pictures and a black light. “I did turn my closet into a darkroom to develop pictures.”

“Hey, that’s cool,” Tsuburaba said. “I’ve got room in my closet if you want more space.”

“Sure. Thanks.”

“This place is boring,” Setsuna complained. “I wanna see more rooms themed around one or two personality traits. Reiko, let’s see yours!”

“Fine. Let’s go,” Reiko sighed. The class moved across the hall and were led into Reiko’s room. It was loosely in a Halloween style, having a ghost-themed comforter, a Ouija Board, and spider web curtains, but there were also a few surfer decorations, such as a surfboard in the corner and the setting sun mural on the wall.

“Ooooh, spooky~,” Setsuna cooed while nudging closer to Rin. “Dino boyfriend, you’ll protect me from the scary ghosts, hmmm?”

“I didn’t know you surf,” Kendo said.

“Yeah, I’ve been surfing since I was little. Me and Shinso went to the beach a lot during our off time this summer, so I got plenty of practice this year.”
“Yeahyeahyeah, who cares?” Setsuna said quickly. “Everyoooone~! We’re moving onto my room!”

“Whatever,” Reiko said with an eye roll. Setsuna skipped out of the room and unlocked her own dorm room.

“Feast your eyes on my lizard den!” she announced. Between the dinosaurs plushies and figures, Jurassic Park-themed comforter, Godzilla posters, and the dinosaur tooth in a glass display case, Setsuna’s passion about lizards was on full presentation.

“Well, it’s… exactly what I expected,” Reiko said.

“You mean awesome? Yeah, you do,” the autotomy girl smugly said. “I don’t want any of you trying to set up shop here ‘cause of how awesome it is, so let’s move on. Next floor – who’s up?”

“Yo!” Pony called out. “Mine’s cool!” The class went upstairs and entered Pony’s room next.

“See? Cool, huh?”

“Badass!” Fukidashi agreed. Like his room, Pony had wall-to-wall anime merchandise. Along with that, there were a few pro hero items.

“Amazing, Pony. 10 out of 10,” Monoma complimented while applauding.

“It’s just like mine,” Fukidashi pointed out, “and you said I had no style.”

“…First of all, how dare you? Secondly—”

“Knock it off, you two,” Kendo chided. “Who’s up next?”

“Me,” Kinoko said quietly. She walked to her room and unlocked it, hesitantly letting people in. “It doesn’t have anything cool or unique, but I hope you all like it.”

“Nah, it’s neat. I can dig it,” Tsuburaba said. Kinoko’s room was mostly ordinary, albeit very girlish, but there were a few mushroom-themed items, like her comforter and an ottoman shaped like a mushroom.

“Hey, what’s this look like?” Kuroiro asked while pointing to the ottoman and snickering.

“Heeeheeee, I dunno,” Setsuna said with a goofy grin, “but it’s a pretty inviting seat, huh?” She and Kuroiro busted into a giggle fit while the rest of the class finally understood what they were implying.

“I-I don’t know w-what you’re talking about!” Kinoko said with a huge blush.

“Don’t be gross, you two,” Kendo scolded. “Your room looks great, Kinoko.”

“Yes, don’t listen to those two,” Ibara added.

“Better than mine,” Shoda said.

“Th-Thanks,” she said bashfully. “I’m sure yours is nice too, Sh-Shoda.”

“We’ll see,” Monoma said. “You’re up next.”

“Hehe, I guess so.” Shoda took the class across the hall to the boy’s side and opened up to his room. There wasn’t much in it, but there were a few posters of famous boxers, including a Rocky
poster, and a punching bag. “Not much to show, really.”

“You have a punching bag? I have a punching bag!” Tetsutetsu exclaimed. “Dude, I’m right next door! We should put a hole in the wall!”

“Why?”

“Cause then, then we can fight for glory while in our rooms! Any time we want! Think about it! A glory hole, just between us.”

“…I can’t tell if he’s making a joke or not,” Kamakiri commented.

“I’ll pass, man,” Shoda said.

“Let’s go to mine, everyone!” the iron boy yelled while slipping through the crowd to unlock his door. “It’s super manly!” Tetsutetsu’s room was a mess of different manly decorations, from motivational posters to a punching bag and other exercise equipment.

“Is your curtain made of metal?” Monoma asked.

“Yeah! It’s a workout even if I’m just drawing the curtains! Smart, huh?”

“It’s definitely… something. Anyway, who’s next? Bondo?”

“Yup.” With Bondo being so quiet, no one knew what to expect in his room. Once he opened up his door, they were greeted by an unusual collection littering the shelves – scale models and figures. Wooden planes, ships-in-bottles, and even Lego models.

“Neat,” Monoma said. “I didn’t take you for a model-builder.”

“Mhm.”

“Oh, look!” Pony called out. “Is that the new DBZ Lego set?! The Namek one?”

“It is.”

“Cool! I wanna help put it together!”

“Same here!” Fukidashi added.

“Sure,” Bondo replied with a smile on his jagged mouth.

“Let’s bail before I destroy something accidently,” Setsuna said. “If I stay any longer, I’m gonna trip and ruin it all. Who’s up next?”

“That would be me,” Shishida said. Everyone followed the hairy boy up to the next floor and into his dorm room.

“That’s… a LOT of books,” Kamakiri said. Shishida’s room was practically a library as the walls were lined with books. At certain angles, the others could make out a set of weights and a rather inviting bed, but it was mostly just literature.

“Well, I do like to read. If anyone wants to borrow any, I’ll gladly lend them out—”

“Reading’s for nerds!” Setsuna shouted while holding up a hairy brush. “Also, I found this on your floor and probably caught a disease from it or something. Let’s move on before I die, huh?”
“In that case, I’ll go open my door,” Rin said. Setsuna tossed the brush to Shishida and happily followed her boyfriend into his room, quickly followed by the others. Rin’s room had normal furnishings, but with several items brought with him from China, such as the oil painting of a dragon hung above his bed.

“That’s pretty,” Kendo complimented.

“Yeah. I bought that from a street artist after I found out my name meant ‘flying dragon.’”

“It does!?” Setsuna screamed. “Holy shit, marry me!”

“Uuuuh, let’s finish the room contest first, yeah?” Rin suggested awkwardly.

“Yeah, sure, fine,” the lizard girl grumbled. “I wouldn’t wanna pull an Ibara,” she whispered to the other girls.

“Please stop bringing that up,” Ibara whined. Reiko and Kendo couldn’t help but giggle with Setsuna.

“Yeah, yeah. Honenuki, you’re next.”

“Got it,” the skull-faced boy said while exiting the room. The group moved into Honenuki’s mostly-normal room, immediately shifting their gaze to the one out-of-place item – a massage table.

“So… what’s the deal with that?” Monoma asked.

“It’s a table for massages.”

“…I got that. Follow-up question – why?”

“I’m very good,” Honenuki bragged while cracking his knuckles.

“I can back-up that claim,” Kuroiro stated with a satisfied smirk.

“I’m not convinced,” Setsuna said while stepping forward. “I may need a demonstr—” Honenuki immediately reached out and grabbed her shoulder, rubbing her back with his thumb. “…Holy crap,” she moaned. “You sure you’re taken?”

“He is,” Kuroiro said quickly.

“I don’t care. I’ll be your hag, man.”

“I’ll think about,” Honenuki laughed. “I think I was the last boy to show his room. We’re almost done. Who’s left?”

“Yui and I remain,” Ibara stated. “I’ll show you all to my room now.”

“Yeah, let’s keep it going!” Setsuna cheered. “I’m definitely not running out of energy and really want to sleep… Rin, carry me.” Setsuna didn’t bother waiting for an answer before hopping into Rin’s arms.

“Uh, sure thing.”

“Yaaaaaay.” Rin hobbled along with his girlfriend in his arms, making it to Ibara’s room as everyone entered. Her room had been painted a light green and had many different plants around.
“Wow, that’s a lot of flowers,” Kendo said. “Real pretty, Ibara.”

“Thank you.”

“Did you have to make it so hot though?” Monoma asked while tugging on his shirt.

“Plants don’t like the cold and neither do I.”

“Real hot and stuffy,” Tetsutetsu pointed out. “Makes me wanna work out.”

“That’s nice.”

“OK, who’s last?” Setsuna asked, prompting Yui to quietly raise her hand.

“In that case, lemme run and get something,” Kendo said before rushing off. “I’ll be right back. Start without me.”

“You heard the lady, Yui,” Setsuna said. The group went next door and were let into the quiet girl’s room. It didn’t have any theme or outstanding decorations, but there was a small, pear-shaped doll on her desk that grabbed people’s attention.

“What’s that?” Tsuburaba asked.

“Matryoshka doll,” Yui explained. “I like them.” Yui took the doll and popped it open revealing a smaller copy of the doll inside. “They’re neat.”


“I’m back!” Kendo announced as she squeezed by the crowd into the room. “I kept forgetting to give it to you, but I had Yaoyorozu make something during the training camp.” As Yui put down her doll, Kendo held out another doll just like it, except the top layer looked like Ibara. Kendo popped off the top layer to show the next doll in line, which resembled herself. “Yaoyorozu likes these too, so I asked if she’d make you one that looked like the girls in our class. Cute, huh?” Yui took the doll and set out the different doll layers on her desk. After a moment of staring at them, she turned to Kendo and smiled brightly.

“I love it!”

“Aww, Yui. I’m glad.” The two girls embraced tightly and were promptly joined by the other girls in the class.

“This group hug isn’t big enough,” Setsuna complained. “Get in here, boys!”

“You got it!” Tetsutetsu said as he and the other boys came in and joined the group hug.

“…Setsuna, get your hand off my butt,” Reiko ordered.

“How’d you know it was me?”

“Because I know you.”

“Alrighty, listen up,” Kendo announced in the common room. “You’ve seen everyone’s rooms and your votes have been tallied. The winner of Class 1-B’s Dorm Room King contest is… Juzo
Honenuki!” A round of half-genuine, half-jealous applause went through the room while Honenuki looked around confusedly.

“Really?”

“I convinced the other girls to vote for you,” Setsuna explained. “Now we have leverage to get backrubs.”

“…Cool.”

“Wait, that’s BS!” Monoma declared.

“Yeah, BS!” Fukidashi agreed.

“Recount!” Tetsutetsu demanded.

“I’ll count ‘em again, but they’ll still be for Honenuki,” Kendo explained.

“…Revote!”

“Nah. No revote. Everyone’s tired.”

“Don’t be too jealous,” Honenuki said smarmily.

“Hope your proud of yourself,” Monoma grumbled.

“Hail to the king, baby.”

As Monoma walked off, assuring himself how much better his room was than Honenuki’s, he felt his phone buzz in his pocket. It was a text from Kendo. Monoma was confused, but opened it anyway.

Kendo: Meet in your room in 10 minutes. We have to talk about what happened.

Monoma looked across the room for Kendo, but couldn’t find her. He pocketed his phone and headed for his room, now feeling a pit grow in his stomach. *We couldn’t avoid this forever, *he told himself. *Guess we have to talk about it.*
As time slowly droned on, Monoma paced around his room and watched the clock. He couldn’t stop thinking about what Kendo might say. *Crap. How badly did I screw things up?* he wondered. As he sat down on the foot of his bed, he flashed back to morning after the Kamino Ward incident. He remembered the way Kendo had pulled him into the kiss, the taste of her lips, the way she slept with her head on his shoulder on the train ride home. The problem was that she had avoided mentioning it every time they interacted since then. *Why tonight? Why now? Did she just need time to think about it? Or does she think I won’t cause a scene since the whole class is in the building?* The copy cat was jolted from his thoughts by a knock at the door. He popped to his feet, but took his time going to the door. *This is it.* With a deep breath, he pulled the door open to face Kendo.

“Hey,” she greeted casually before slipping past Monoma.

“…Are you in pajamas?”

“Yup,” she answered while untying her ponytail. “I’ll be real with you – I am super tired, so I just prepared for the very real possibility that I’ll fall asleep on your bed.” With that, the tired ginger girl flopped backwards onto Monoma’s bed. “Man, yours is so cozy.”

“I should be more confused by this, but then again, you have fallen asleep on my couch more than a few times.” Monoma paused awkwardly before looking away from Kendo. “Anyway, what did you want to talk about?”

“I’m not gonna start with you skulking all the way over there,” she said while patting Monoma’s bed. The copycat sighed and walked to his bed, sitting with his back to Kendo. “…Turn around,” she instructed like a mother with a fussy toddler. Monoma relented with another, more dramatic sigh and laid down next to Kendo. They were both on their backs, staring up at the ceiling.

“What’s the point of this?”

“…We did this a lot when we were little. I wanted it to feel like that again,” Kendo admitted. “I don’t want this tension between us, but… I guess I didn’t help that by ignoring what happened. I’m sorry for putting it off for so long. I just… needed to get my head straight, y’know? But now, I think we can talk about our feelings like adults.”

“We could also ignore our feelings like children, but whatever.” Kendo snickered at the boy’s joke, making Monoma crack a smile. That laugh was music to his ears. “So… what now?” he asked. Kendo sighed and stayed quiet, making Monoma think for a moment she had fallen asleep.

“…Did you really mean what you said?”

“I did, but I feel bad for how and when.”

“Oh?”

“You were falling apart worrying about everyone for a couple of days. When I told you, you were emotionally exhausted. I also just blurted it out. I couldn’t restrain myself to an ‘I like you.’ I started thinking I only got that kind of reaction from you because of those factors—” Monoma was cut off by a karate chop to the top of his head. This one wasn’t out of annoyance though – it felt more playful to him.

“As always, you’re overthinking things,” Kendo pointed out with a chuckle. “Don’t forget, I was
the one who kissed you.”

“That you did.” Both teens’ minds went back to their kiss, leading to another long silence. “…Does that mean you, y’know…”

“Hm… I dunno.” Monoma was suddenly glad they weren’t face-to-face as Kendo’s answer made him grimace childishly.

“All that time to ‘get your head straight’ really helped, huh?” he asked sarcastically.

“I guess so,” she laughed. “But seriously, I don’t know how to feel. You’ve been like a brother to me, but now my head’s all in a jumble. I’ve always cared about you, and nothing will ever change that, but us as a couple is… hard to picture.”

“I see…”

“So, let’s try it,” she suggested. Monoma’s face burst into a blush and he nearly choked on his own saliva. “…Not the reaction I expected.”

“Sorry,” he said while clearing his throat. “Just a little surprised… You’re being serious, right?”

“Yep. I can’t really picture it, so the only way to find out if it’s a good or bad idea is to just try it.”

“Makes sense,” he said slowly as he laid back down. “In that case… I’m not really sure what to do now.”

“Me neither,” Kendo answered. “Neither of us have dated anyone before, and since we’ve known each other for so long, the initial ‘getting-to-know-you’ part is kinda pointless.”

“So, should we skip ahead?”

“Well, you already kinda did with your little confession,” Kendo noted. She then rolled over on her side and exhaled while burying her head in Monoma’s pillow. “I don’t think ‘skipping ahead’ is right. Let’s just say we’re going at our own pace. We’ll experiment and see what we’re comfortable with already and what needs to come with time.”

“Sounds good to me,” Monoma replied. “I’m fine with taking my time.” Kendo smiled and scooched closer to Monoma, now resting half of her head on his shoulder. Monoma responded in kind and moved his head to lean on Kendo’s. “I guess this is fine?”

“Mhm… You know what this reminds me of?” Kendo mumbled.

“What?”

“The first time I slept over at your house. Y’know, when we were really little?” Monoma filed through his memories of Kendo sleeping over confusedly. Whenever she had slept over, she took the couch. He thought back further and further, finally digging up something…

Monoma rubbed his eyes and walked towards the door of his bedroom. A soft knocking had stirred him that he guessed was from Kendo. He reached up to the door knob and slowly opened up. “Hm?” Just outside was Kendo, softly crying in the middle of the hall.

“I had a nightmare,” she whimpered while rubbing her eyes. “Can I stay with you?” Monoma was stunned surprised for a moment, but then stepped aside to let his friend into his room. Seeing Kendo like this was a shock to his system. He was used to her being tough and happy 24/7.
“…You OK?” he asked, still having to translate everything in his head.

“Mhm,” she mumbled as she climbed onto his bed. She seemed to be calming down now that she wasn’t by herself. Monoma shrugged and returned to his bed, trying to give Kendo some space. Once he was under the covers, though, Kendo slid over to him and held him close.

“…There, there,” Monoma said awkwardly. Kendo didn’t answer, instead nuzzling closer to Monoma.

“Now that you mention it, I do remember that,” Monoma said. “…Little wuss.”

“Shut up,” Kendo laughed. “I was, like, 6. Nightmares are scary—”

“We were three months old, both of us,” Monoma interrupted, making them both giggle stupidly.

“I was four and five quarters,” Kendo joked.

“I was two and you were 77.” The pair fell apart in a laughing fit, rocking the bed around. It took a minute for the tired, loopy teens to finally calm down. “I do remember that,” Monoma repeated more wistfully. “That was the first time…”

“Hm?”

“The first time… I felt like I was protecting you,” he explained. “To me, you were the badass girl who protected me from bullies. I felt like I was just some guy you hung around with I didn’t really think I could help you in any way until that night.”

“Is that so?” Kendo murmured. It was obvious from her voice that she wasn’t far from a deep sleep. “Well, whatever. We’re here now and… yawn… whatever.”

“Good talk,” Monoma quipped. After about a minute, he felt Kendo’s breathing slow down as she faded into sleep, nuzzled into Monoma’s side. It didn’t take long for Monoma to join her with a content smile on his sleeping form…

The first thing Monoma felt as he woke up was Kendo’s arm draped over his torso. The second was the sunlight coming onto his legs from the window. The third was an extreme need to pee. His eyes fluttered open and moved to Kendo, still fast asleep. In the corner of his eye, he saw his antique clock read 9:43. Should I wake her up? …first things first: pissing. Monoma gently moved Kendo’s arm of himself and rolled out of bed, tip-toeing to the restroom. After relieving himself and brushing his teeth, he came back out to see her stretching. “Morning.”

“Hey,” she greeted while yawning. “Man, I slept good. I’m usually up by nine.” Kendo sat up in bed and grabbed her hair tie, pulling her ginger locks into its signature sidetail. “So, what do we tell the others?” she wondered.

“You can just say Setsuna,” Kendo said as she slid out of bed. She collected her room key and went to the door. I think… I think this’ll work out, she told herself as she entered the hall. As the door shut behind her, she turned to return to her room, but saw Pony, Ibara and Setsuna in her path,
all staring at her vacantly. Kendo’s mind went blank, but she realized the implications as Setsuna’s face slid into a pervy grin.

“I knew it,” she began. “You saucy minx, you.”

“Uh, um, It’s not what—” Kendo’s stammering was cut off when Setsuna wrapped an arm around her shoulder and pulled her close.

“I didn’t know you had it in ya,” the lizard girl continued. “Get it? Have it in ya? Eh?”

“You really did that with Monoma?” Pony asked innocently.

“I know it’s not my place to meddle, but I’m surprised you didn’t wait until marriage, Kendo,” Ibara said. “I hope you two were safe, at least.”

“Hold on, hold on,” Setsuna chimed while on her phone. “I’m sure I have a fisting joke written in here somewhere.”

“It’s not like that, guys!” Kendo blurted out.

“What happened then?” Pony asked.

“Monoma and I had a talk last night after the dorm room contest and I was too tired to leave, so I just crashed on his bed. I just slept over. That’s all.

“What’d you talk about?” Setsuna pried.

“Private things.”

“Private… got it—”

“No, you don’t,” Kendo stated.

“If Kendo says the topic is private, then we’ll leave it at that,” Ibara said.

“Fine, fine,” Setsuna said. She and Pony walked off to the common room while Ibara stayed with Kendo.

“So, you’ve finally discussed what happened?” the vine-haired girl inquired.

“Yeah. We’re, uh, we’re gonna try, y’know, being together. Don’t tell anyone though. It’s a secret for now.”

“I promise not to.” As the girls walked off, they heard people talking in the common room as they passed the stairs.

“What’s up, Pony?” they heard Reiko say. “You and Setsuna see something weird?”

“Nah, not really,” Pony replied casually. “Saw Kendo come from Monoma’s room, but she says they just slept with each other.”

“…Well,” Kendo sighed, “that secret sure lasted.”
“Well, it’s been a while,” Fukidashi began, “but it’s finally time to continue the campaign.”

“I actually missed doing this,” Kendo admitted. “So much has happened lately. Relaxing and playing a game is just what I need.”

“I don’t even remember what we were doing,” Setsuna added. “Hit us with that recap, Fukidashi.”

“With pleasure. When we last left the Howling Scavengers, you had to fight your way out of Jackstone Prison after being wrongfully imprisoned.”

“Most of us were wrongly imprisoned,” Shoda pointed out. “Monoma got caught pickpocketing and was locked up fair and square.”

“Um, how dare you, first of all. Second of all, don’t even, thirdly—”

“I killed a demon!” Tetsutetsu bragged.

“That’s right. In your escape, you discovered that the prison was being used as a demon summoning and feeding ground. You fought and killed the demon before coming face-to-face with a mysterious woman. She escaped from your grasp, but while searching her quarters, you found a letter written in some sort of code.”

“Oh, now I remember,” Kuroiro said. “Now we’re in Tammel Town, right?”

“Correct. You found someone in the town who can translate, but it’ll cost you a pretty penny. You’re low on cash, so you’re trying to raise enough money for the translation. Now…”

In the center of Tammel Town, a group of six adventurers stood around, kicking their feet in the dirt as they brainstormed a way to make quick cash. “I’d just like to point out that none of this is my fault,” Roark said while fussing with his blond hair. “I’m the reason we’ve made it this far and, well, I’ve never done anything wrong in my life.”

“I can’t be the queen of all dragons if I’m poor,” Vodette complained. “I’m too depressed to even bother hitting you. Grog, hit Roark for me.”

“You got it.” Roark didn’t have time to react before the dimwitted goliath’s fist collided with his head. The thief stumbled backward and clung to the nearby tavern wall to steady himself before glaring at his teammates.

“Uncalled for,” he complained. “It’s a long road to 300 gold, but we don’t have time to sit around here doing odd jobs for days on end. We need quick cash—”

“Hey, dumbass,” Xanther began while pressing his black finger into Roark’s chest. “It was 250 gold until you tried charming your way to a better price.”

“How was I supposed to know it was a man?”

“It wouldn’t have worked if it was a woman either! You don’t charm people by saying ‘Hey, your
knockers are looking swell today!’"

“Alright, alright. Assigning blame isn’t gonna help us come up with cash… though, if we are blaming anyone, I blame Valon.”

“Why me?” the gray-haired paladin wondered.

“Because I’d have to blame myself otherwise, and that just doesn’t make sense to me.” As the other members of the group contemplated murder, there final member, Saphro, returned from her conversation with translator. The ginger princess had long since ditched her more royal clothes, now wearing a simple green dress and gray hooded cloak to better hide her identity.

“Well, it took some convincing, but he’s given us an alternate way to pay,” she began. “Apparently, there’s been some strange activity in the northwest and he thinks it’s occult in nature. If we can investigate and stop whatever’s going on, he’ll waive the fee.”

“That’s great!” Roark cheered. “Good timing too. I was just about to suggest prostitution to raise money.”

“That’s disgusting,” Saphro scolded.

“Not you. I was referring to me being a male escort. Though, now that I think about it, no one in this dirtheap town could afford me.” That comment earned Roark a few side glances from the nearby villagers. “…What?”

“Let’s just go.” The group packed up and headed northwest, looking out for anything suspicious on their trek.

“So, question,” Vodette began, “what kind of stuff are we looking out for?”

“Summoning circles, ritual items… suspicious caves,” Saphro listed off. “I’m sure the plot will find us eventually.”

“Yup, the evil plot of the evil people of evil,” Vodette said dramatically. “GOD, they’re evil!”

“That reminds me,” Xanther interjected. “I’m starting to feel like we’re not finding trouble, but more like trouble is seeking us out.”

“How so?” Valon asked.

“Ever since we rescued Princess Whatever-The-Fuck—”

“Saphro.”

“We’ve dealt with crazy shit one after the other. We were just in prison for, like, no good reason, and there just happens to be a demon summoning cult running it. Now we’re searching for more occult shit around these parts. Doesn’t feel like much of a coincidence that this is happening to us.”

“What’s your point?” Grog asked.

“No real point. I just wanted to point out it’s BS.”

“But it’s been fun,” Vodette pointed out. “Remember that time I hired a prostitute? Good times.”

“…Putting that aside,” Saphro began, “I think I see something ahead.” The group picked up the pace and found themselves in front of an ancient-looking tunnel.
“This place reeks,” Vodette moaned. “What even is that smell?”

“Rotting flesh,” Grog casually answered. “Smells pretty fresh, too.”

“…Oh, good,” the bard said squeamishly.

“Hehe, uh, guess we should investigate,” Valon suggested. “Roark, why don’t you sneak ahe—Roark?” The group turned around and saw Roark already walking off.

“Get back here, douchebag!” Vodette yelled while running after the thief with Grog.

“I don’t wanna!” he whined as Grog dragged him back to the tunnel. “If there’s demons in there, then I’m not going in! It eats people! I’m people!”

“Debatable,” Xanther snarked.

“It’s too dark for me anyway. If anyone’s taking point, it’s you, Xanther. You have Dark Vision.”

“I’m too squishy to sneak,” the wizard complained. “My stealth also sucks camel dicks. We should just light up a torch and walk straight in there.”

“…Fine, fuck it, let’s go. But I’m not taking the lead. Grog, you’re our meat shield. You take point.”

“Baby,” Grog teased while lighting up a torch. The gang of adventurers entered the tunnel, huddled behind Grog for protection.

“I can’t believe we’re fighting two demons in a row,” Roark complained. “I almost died last time. Thanks again for that healing, Saphro.”

“Of course,” the princess answered, holding part of her cloak over her nose. “The stench of death is all over this tunnel. How many have died here recently?”

“Too many,” Valon stated. “Whatever’s here, we have to find it and stop it.”

“Or we could run and live,” Roark suggested. “That’s always a good plan, eh? Good old ‘stay alive’ plan. We should do that.”

“If only thieves could steal backbones,” Xanther quipped.

“Bite me, inky bastard.”

“Oh my various dragon gods, HOW DOES IT SMELL EVEN WORSE NOW?!” Vodette cried out.

“I think I have an idea,” Grog said. He lowered his torch to light up the ground, giving the group a good look at a giant puddle of blood. The group slowly looked up to see a giant door across from the, that the blood puddle seemed to have come out from. “We’re getting close.”

“…the ‘stay alive’ plan is looking pretty good about now,” Saphro mentioned.

“That’s two for bailing. Who else?” Roark asked.

“I think there’s writing on these walls,” Xanther said as he walked from the group.

“Don’t ignore me!”
“Grog, can I get some light?” The goliath, with the rest of the group in tow, walked over and shined
the torchlight over the walls. “…Hmmm… looks like a runic array for demon summoning. This
confirms it.”

“UM!” Vodette yelled while gesturing to the giant blood puddle.

“I know, but now we’re 100% sure it’s a demon.”

“Then let’s prepare to kill it,” Valon said as he drew his lance. “We can’t run if people are dying to
feed it.”

“This is bullshit,” Roark whined before sighing. “Let’s get his over with. Grog, bust it down.”

“SMASH THE EVIL DOOOOOOOR!” Grog ran at the door with his hammer and swung, but the
weapon phased right through as if the door wasn’t even there. “…Lemme try again.” Grog swung
again, but the attack still passed right through. “I swear, this never happens to me.” Just then, the
tunnel around them began to change. The door disappeared, as did the blood puddle. The stench of
death was still there, but had greatly lessened.

“It seems we’ve been played right into someone’s hands,” Xanther said as he grabbed his magic
tome.

“You have, but not by someone who wants to fight.” Another light pierced the darkness around the
group, and they saw a man with purple hair ahead of them. “Hey. I’m Gen.”

“Oh shit, we doin’ crossovers now?” Setsuna asked. “Also, hey Shinso.”

“Yo,” He greeted from a nearby couch, his arm draped over Reiko’s shoulders.

“Now that we’re all together, the stories can intersect,” Fukidashi explained. “Your goals will sync
up and eventually, you can all fight together.”

“I vote we call this the ‘Fukidashi Cinematic Universe,’” Setsuna suggested.

“Seconded,” Kendo added. “I’m all for the FCU. By the way, is your character here too, Reiko?”

“Rei’s too tired to role play,” Shinso explained. Looking closely, everyone could see her asleep on
Shinso’s shoulder.

“She’s dead tired,” Monoma joked. “…Don’t laugh too hard, everyone.”

“Let’s just ignore that and get back to the game,” Fukidashi instructed.

“Screw you, that was funny.”

“…Hi!” Grog greeted happily.

“Are you the one who summoned the demon?” Valon asked sternly.

“First, it’s demons. Plural. And no, I didn’t. I did kill the ones who summoned them. Full credit
goes to me.”

“Wait, there’s two!?” Vodette whined. “Son of a bitch!”
“There WAS two. Past tense,” Gen clarified. “My group took care of one already. You schmucks are gonna kill the other.”

“OK, I have a question, no big deal, just a little curious,” Roark began. “Why the hell would we believe a word you say?”

“Because I already translated the letter for you,” Gen smarmily answered. He reached into his bag and tossed out an envelope to Saphro. “It’s accurate, I assure you, but TL;DR, some fucked-up shit is going down.” Saphro gave Gen a confused look before opening the envelope hesitantly. Inside was the coded letter they had left with the translator in town, along with a readable version.

“How did you get this?” she asked. “Who are you?”

“I’m Gen. Already said that. How I got it? Well…” Gen snapped his fingers and his appearance changed immediately, becoming that of a wizened old man. “I was the translator you found. Surprise.”

“OK, what the actual hell?” Xanther complained as Gen undid his illusion. “I’m kinda sick of people jerking us around already, so you’re on my last nerves, Psionic.”

“Oh, you know what that is? Cool. Saves me the trouble of explaining it,” Gen said in relief. “Sorry for leading you on, but I’m trying to recruit strong people. You didn’t turn tail from having to fight a demon, so that tells me you’re good enough for what I’m planning. Of course, I could’ve guessed that since the princess trusts you to keep her safe.”

“Shit! Saphro! He knows who you are!” Grog yelled.

“I can see her face. Anyone who’s ever met her would know who that is,” Gen pointed out. The Howling Scavengers all took a moment to realize how poorly disguised their companion was and turned to her slowly.

“…Not if I do this,” Saphro said bashfully as she pulled her cloak up over her face.

“Plus, I’ve helped her out before,” Gen continued. “Hey, princess. Remember the guard who helped you escape the night your castle was taken over? About 30, brown hair, handlebar mustache? That was me.” Before Saphro could question him, Gen snapped again and transformed into the armored guard he had described.

“I-It is you!” Saphro realized. “How— who— I-I…”

“Let’s not get bogged down by who and why right now,” Gen said as he turned off his illusion. “Just know that I’m on your side and I’m putting together a big group of idiots to save the kingdom. I already had my group kill one demon here and I got that other cabal of dumbasses to go get a special weapon forged. You guys kill the remaining demon and you’ll join this little group of freedom fighters.”

“…Saving the kingdom is my top priority,” Saphro said. “You’ve helped me before, so I’ll trust you, but the whole group has to agree to this.”

“If you can vouch for him, then I’m in,” Valon stated. “I’ll stop any evil that plagues the land.”

“Don’t get too ahead of yourself,” Xanther warned. “We’ve gotta make it through this fight first. I’ll go along with this plan, but only because I don’t care enough to argue.”

“Yeah, I don’t really know what’s going on,” Grog said. “If I can finally smash something, then it’s
“I’m in too, Saph,” Vodette assured her. “Let’s go kick some demon ass. Then, we save the kingdom.”

“I think we’re all forgetting something very important,” Roark pointed out. “What’s the reward?”

“None right now, but think towards the future,” Gen began. “If you save the kingdom, then you’re bound to get some crazy big reward. You’d be rich beyond your wildest dreams.”

“Ohoho, you don’t know my wildest dreams, my man,” Roark replied coyly. His companions knew he was already sold though. They could practically see the dollar signs in his eyes. “I’ll go along with this for now. Howling Scavengers… let’s kill a demon.”

Chapter End Notes

OC contest is over. I'll announce the winners at the end of the next chapter, which I'll put up tomorrow.
Super Moves

Chapter Notes

We're just now reaching 5000 hits! That's fucking crazy and I'm super thankful for all of you. As always, stayed tuned for more to come!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Thank you for seeing us on such short notice, Miss Kendo,” Principal Nezu greeted as Kendo entered his office. “I’ve called you to my office so we may discuss how your class has adjusted to dorm life.”

“Of course,” Kendo replied while taking a seat across from Nezu. “I’m happy to help.”

“Excellent. I’d like to begin with the accommodations. Have they been satisfactory to you and your classmates or do you find them lacking?”

“They’re great, sir. No problems to report.”

“Wonderful. Next question: have you and your classmates felt safe while on campus since the move?”

“Yes, sir. Having our teachers close by at all times definitely helps us feel secure here.”

“I’m so glad to hear that. The safety of our students is our absolute priority right now. Next up would be personal relationships between classmates. Have there been any changes to their interactions since they’ve become dorm mates?”

“Oh, uh…” Kendo stayed quiet and awkwardly scratched her cheek, avoiding eye contact with Nezu. “It’s mostly been good. Same as normal… but, y’know, living together can be… different.”

“I understand what you’re trying to say,” Nezu said. “According to Vlad, your class is very close – almost familial – and families can get on each other’s nerves.”

“Y-Yeah…”

“Which one of you fuckers touched my dino chickie nuggies?” Setsuna angrily asked from the kitchen. “Tetsutetsu, if it was you, I’m chopping off one of your balls.”

“You’ll have to find them first!” the iron boy yelled as he ran upstairs.

“Get back here, dickface!”

“I need to use the microwave,” Kuroiro announced as he opened it and tossed out Shoda’s food. “Move, I’m gay.”

“Holy shit, Tsuburaba!” Kaibara shouted as he entered the common area.
“Oh, hey,” the bug-eyed boy greeted. “Finish setting up you little picture developing area in my room?”

“Yeah, and I made the mistake of shining the black light on your whole room. We’ve been here a week, man.”

“I’ve had a lot of free time on my hands.”

“Yeah, that’s not all you’ve had on your hands.”

“A few spats here and there, but we’re adjusting quickly,” Kendo said. “Nothing you need to worry about, sir.”

“Alright then. What of your relationships with other classes. I know a certain rivalry has existed between our two hero classes. Has this changed at all since you’ve moved in?”

“Certain things, yes,” Kendo began. “I know Monoma and Bakugo still aren’t on great terms.”

“Ah yes. Eraserhead told me about Bakugo’s new dodgeball…”

“Hey douchebag!” Monoma yelled across the courtyard. “I heard you’re costume designer just graduated from preschool!” Not a second later, a dodgeball rocketed into his groin. “OOOUUUGH! ...I think they went back inside me,” he groaned as he held his privates. “Sesame, Buccaneer, come back. Papa needs you.”

“Aside from those two, have you interacted much with your sister class since coming here?” Nezu asked.

“Not as a big group,” Kendo began, “but there are a few interclass friendships.”

“BRO!” Tetsutetsu yelled.

“BRO!” Kirishima yelled.

“YOU READY FOR THIS, BRO?”

“BORN READY, BRO!”

“I DON’T THINK YOU’RE READY, BRO!”

“I’M SO READY, BRO!”

“Excuse me,” Ibara said from the entrance to the stairs, rubbing her eyes. “It’s three in the morning. Could you please keep it down?”

“Sure thing,” Tetsutetsu replied.

“Sorry ‘bout that,” Kirishima added. “Mario Party just gets me so PUMPED!”

“I can’t believe it!” Midoriya squealed. He was in Pony’s room, being shown her America-exclusive All Might figure. “I never thought I’d see it right in front of me. It’s so detailed.”
“Yeah, I got it for my ninth birthday,” Pony explained. “His hero costume from back then was cool, yeah?”

“How much for it?” Midoriya suddenly had his wallet out and looked very serious. “Money is no issue.”

“Uh—”

“$20— no, $30— $35?”

“You keep goin’ up.”

“$50, final offer… $55?”

“You’re no good at haggling.”

“Sorry it’s kinda late,” Fukidashi said as he handed Mineta a sealed folder. “Personal training, y’know?”

“I gotcha,” the short boy said as he peeked inside. “Aaawwww yeah. That’s some good work. You’re positive that you won’t do any drawings of real people?”

“Nah. No real people. It’s creepy. Plus, I can’t really imagine them in an anime style.”

“Whatever.” Mineta looked closer at the lewd drawing and began to pant. “Dude, your art is fantastic. I may get Kaminari in on this. He’s got cash to spare.”

“Sounds good. Hit me up if you or him wanna commission anything.”

“Sure thing. In return, could you change my name in your contacts?”

“Yeah, fine,” Fukidashi said while taking out his phone. “Later, diaper boy.”

“…Better than rat bitch.”

“All in all, I’d say things have improved between us,” Kendo finished.

“That’s great. I think I’ve got everything I need for now. Your training restarts tomorrow, so I won’t eat up your remaining free time. Thank you very much for meeting with me.”

“My pleasure, Principal Nezu. Have a good day.”

After the few days of getting acclimated to their new living space, the hero students of U.A. were ready to dive back into their training. Class 1-B had suited up and were heading for Gym Gamma, where their teachers waited. As Kan led them inside, they were greeted by Cementoss, Midnight, and Ectoplasm.

“I’m sure you’ve all been wondering about the Provisional Licenses I’ve mentioned,” Kan began. “We haven’t had a chance to discuss them in a while. Starting today, we’re gonna kick our training into high-gear to get you those licenses. This will be our first objective of this upcoming semester.”
“Yes, sir!” the class replied.

“This license will allow you to act as a hero when lives are in danger. Think of it as a learner’s permit before you get a driver’s license. That doesn’t mean it’ll be easy, though. The rate of passing examinees is usually very low. That’s why, starting today, you’ll all be coming up with at least two super moves.”

“Super moves?! Aw yeah!” Tetsutetsu cheered. The whole class was buzzing with excitement from the announcement.

“That’s right,” Ectoplasm said. “These will be your unbeatable techniques to use in a fight. A killer move, so to speak.”

“These moves will be your calling card,” Midnight added. “A hero with no super move these days is a rarity indeed.”

“You must find a move that pushes your unique abilities,” Cementoss continued, now kneeling down and using his Quirk to reshape the floor. “That’s why you’ve assembled here – my personal facility where I can create terrain and objects to suit everyone’s needs.”

“Hey, uh, question? Real quick?” Setsuna said. “Why super moves now? What’s the connection with that and the test?”

“This license exam will be a comprehensive test of all attributes a hero must have,” Kan explained. “Insight, judgement, charisma, communication, leadership, and most importantly, fighting prowess. Personally, I believe you all have these traits, but you’ll be up against students from other schools, most of which are a grade ahead of you. With super moves, you’ll have an edge, and if you’re backed into a corner, they can be your anchor to turn the tides.”

“These super moves don’t have to be an offensive move either,” Ectoplasm chimed in. “Vlad’s Blood Net, for example, is a super move for capture. You could use have a move that increases your physical abilities too, or for your hand-to-hand combatants, you could think up some sort of unique strike or combo that involves your Quirk. Be flexible and open-minded. You should also seek out costume upgrades and support gear to help with these moves.”

“The Quirk training at the camp was supposed to end with the creation of your super moves,” Kan continued, “but since that was cut short, we’ll be continuing on from now. Strengthen your Quirks, seek new support gear, and create those super moves. Do all this with Plus Ultra in your heart. Are you ready, my students?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Then get out there!” On Kan’s command, the students rushed forward for their training. Cementoss manipulated the cement floor into many pillars for individual training areas while Ectoplasm created enough clones to personally advise each student. Midnight took a high post to watch over everyone while Kan stayed by the door.

Finally, I can continue working on using two Quirks at once, Monoma thought as he walked to his area. I should start by thinking over possible combinations with my classmates Quirks. I can’t copy Mutation Quirks like Shishida’s or Pony’s, nor any transformation or emission types that really on a pre-existing mutation, such as Bondo’s or Kamakiri’s. Of my 19 classmates, I have 12 options – Awase, Kodai, Honenuki, Yanagi, Rin, Shoda, Kaibara, Komori, Tsuburaba, Tetsutetsu, Setsuna, and Kendo.
“Ready to begin, Monoma?” he heard his clone of Ectoplasm say.

“Yeah, and I know what to do. I’ve recently been able to use two Quirks at once, so I’m gonna use today to experiment with that.”

“Sounds good.” As Monoma began testing his newfound application of his Quirk, the rest of his class tested and theorized for different super moves.

“I’ve been workshopping this move since the training camp,” Kuroiro began as her transformed his hands into portals. “A way to grab precise targets from far away. Could you back up? Maybe 20 feet?” Ectoplasm floated away, watching as Kuroiro pressed his wrists together and held out his hands. “Increasing suction,” Kuroiro announced. The suction on his hand portals grew stronger and swirled around each other, looking almost like a thin tornado with black streaks extending out from his hands. The swirling suction caught Ectoplasm and pulled him towards his student. As he neared Kuroiro, the boy pulled his hands apart, making Ectoplasm fly into his chest portal. “Pretty cool, huh?”

“Very nice,” Ectoplasm complimented as he floated out of Kuroiro’s body. “Let’s practice it to improve your timing and reach. Have you thought of a name?”

“In fact, I have,” Kuroiro revealed while posing dramatically. “The Luring Call of the Ebony Void —”

“…How about Ebony Lure?” he yelled back.

“Perfect!” she responded. Just below Midnight’s perch, Honenuki was busy stretching his legs.

“I thought this up during my internship with Crust,” he told his Ectoplasm clone. “If I soften the ground to trap someone and they see it coming, they can evade easily before they sink. With this, I can grab someone quickly.” Honenuki backed away from Ectoplasm and took a deep breath. He brought his leg up and brought it down in a stomp, softening the ground in a straight line towards Ectoplasm the moment he hit the ground. The softened ground was sent forward in a wave by the stomp’s strength, hitting Ectoplasm’s legs and trapping them.

“This takes considerable leg strength. A very impressive super move,” Ectoplasm complimented.

“I wouldn’t call it a super move,’ Honenuki began. “At least, not at that level. I’m gonna try for a stronger version where I jump up and send out a wave of ground in all directions. I call that one Planet Waves.”

“I see. Then let’s practice that.”

“I also wanna try travelling through the ground after softening it, but I’m gonna ask Togata in 3-B to tutor me with that before testing it here. I should also work on pulling the ground up to make a wall.”

“It seems you have much you want to learn.”

Not far away from Honenuki, Ibara was having her own discussion with Ectoplasm. “So, these super moves don’t have to be damage-dealing attacks? That’s good to hear.”

“Your fighting style is based around binding your opponents, correct? In that case, think about the most powerful techniques you already use.”
“Hmm… I suppose the attack I used to defeat Kaminari in the Sports Festival would be my strongest, where I attack from below and keep my opponent suspended in the air.

“Then let’s start there,” Ectoplasm began. “We’ll work on making your vines dig through the ground more quickly.”

“Alright then,” Ibara replied. “If that shall be my finishing move, then I shall call it… Last Roots.”

“…I get it!” she heard Setsuna yell from across the room. Back near the center of the gym, Monoma used Tetsutetsu’s Quirk to turn his skin to steel while also trying to use Rin’s Quirk.

“It seems two transformations affecting the exact same thing – skin in this case – is more difficult to pull off than two transformations that work differently, such as combing Tetsutetsu’s and Kendo’s Quirks.”

“How about we try fighting with them for a little bit,” Ectoplasm suggested.

“Oh yeah. Sure. Let’s do that.” Monoma and Ectoplasm sparred for a little bit, but Monoma’s attention, along with all the other students’, was drawn to the entrance by a familiar figure.

“I’m back.” Though it was in his skinny from that still felt foreign to them, it was still All Might walking in.

“Hey, All Might!” Kendo yelled from atop her training area. She hopped down and went to greet All Might along with some other nearby students.

“Hey, everyone. I am here,” he greeted casually.

“Good to see you back on your feet!” Tetsutetsu bellowed.

“How are you feeling? How’s your arm?” Ibara asked.

“Oh, this? It’s nothing,” All Might said while moving around his casted right arm. “It should be fine soon enough.”

“We’re all glad you made it out of that fight alive, even if you’re retiring,” Kendo said.

“That’s nice to hear. It’s great to see all of you again, but you should get back to your training. I’ll come around in a bit and advise you each.”

“Yes, sir!” Everyone replied. As the crowd of students dispersed, Monoma stayed behind and approached All Might on his own.

“We’re happy to have you back here, sir,” he said politely with his left hand outstretched. All Might waited for a moment before chuckling and shaking the boy’s hand. *That’s weird. His Quirk…*

“Can’t copy it, eh? You must think your slick,” All Might teased.

“Sorry. I just wanted to see what it was like, but I’m not getting anything. Even if it was something like a mutation, I’d feel something. I got nothing just now.”

“Would you believe me if I said I was Quirkless?” the pro laughed. “You’re a smart kid, Monoma. It’s a long and kinda private story, so let’s just say my Quirk ran out of juice and leave it at that. OK?”

“Ran out of… that doesn’t make any… I-I should still… sorry,” Monoma stammered. “I won’t pry
if it’s something personal. I’ll get back to my training now, sir.”

“Good man. I heard you’ve recently been using two Quirks at once. Is that right?”

“Yes, I have been. I’m still experimenting with it, but I should have a handle on combining Quirks very soon.”

“That’s great to hear. Fighting multiple powers in one opponent can be tricky, so I’m sure this new ability will be of great use.”

“Right! Thank you, sir!” Monoma quickly bowed to All Might and ran back to his training area to continue his sparring. I’ve got a lot of work to do. The license exam is mere days away, but I swear I’ll be ready! We’ll all be ready!

Chapter End Notes

Here are the five winners of the OC contest and their characters! I know I said three before, but I bent the rules because I had trouble picking just three (and I didn't come up with as many on my own as I had planned)

Creator/OC

BlackDragonFish/Gou Yonaga
Casually_Of_A_Fandom_War/Kobayashi Hanatsu
MintyMilka/Daisuke Saitou
DragnKitty/Miru Kimi
Sample_Text/Nasuka Binsho
You'll see them slowly trickle into the story from Chapter 50 onward, but they'll all get a moment to be cool/useful
“Get Those Licenses!

“Listen up! I’m only gonna say this once!” Kan announced. Class 1-B was on the bus heading to the testing site for their provisional license exam and were nearly there. “This exam a comprehensive test of everything you’ve learned and all of your fighting skills, but you’re taking it earlier than most other schools. It’s true that U.A. sending first years has spurred a few other schools to do the same, but most of your foes will still be second and third year students. They will have powerful Quirks you’ve never seen, gear you don’t understand, and skills you haven’t even thought of learning.”

“No pressure or anything,” Reiko snarked.

“I know this sounds daunting, but think of all you’ve been through. What you’ve seen and what you’ve felt. If I were a betting man, I’d say you’re more prepared for this test than any of your opponents. Keep their advantages in mind, but don’t lose confidence. Understood?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Hey, we’re here!” Setsuna said as the bus stopped. The students followed their teacher off the bus and saw many groups of other students out on a lawn, but no arena. The only structure they saw was a wide metal column in the ground. “Wait, are we here?”

“We are,” Kan clarified. “Look up.”

“…WHAAAAAT!” the class shouted together. Perched on top of the skyscraper-tall column was a giant stadium.

“Welcome to National Bespin Sky Arena, also known as Cloud City. The tower in the ground supports it somewhat, but what mainly keeps it in the sky is the anti-gravity tech developed on I-Island.”

“Yeah, you just keep saying words, but all I hear is me falling to my death,” Shoda nervously squawked.

“Are we super sure that’s safe?” Pony asked.

“It is, now look alive,” Kan sternly instructed. “Not only are you among rivals, but while we’re here, you represent U.A. Quit gawking and act dignified—”

“Is that Vlad King I see?” Those words made Kan freeze up immediately, gulping loudly and breaking into a cold sweat. The students turned to see the source of a voice – a tall woman with straight black hair – coming towards them. She was dressed in a short pink kimono, reminiscent of a stereotypical female ninja outfit, along with a long purple scarf, black shorts, and ninja sandals.

“She looks kinda familiar,” Kendo quietly noted.

“I thought that was you,” the woman greeted. With some effort, Kan slowly looked to her, but wasn’t making eye contact. “It’s been a while, hm?”

“…Y-Yes… It has,” he nervously agreed.

“These must be your students. Class 1-B, correct?”

“Yes, that’s, er-hem, that’s right,” he stammered awkwardly.
“It’s nice to meet you all,” the woman politely greeted. “I’m an old friend of Vlad’s from when we were both rookie heroes.”

“Oh hey! I recognize you!” Setsuna said. “You’re the Kunoichi heroine, Hakkenden!”

“That’s me, but you can all just call me Aisa. Has Vlad talked about me to you?”

“Nah, I recognized you from the Top 10 Most Beautiful Heroines list. You’ve been on there every year you’ve eligible. Respect.”

“Ah, yes. It’s always an honor to be chosen,” Aisa said. “I’ve gained quite a few admirers from that… though Vlad here had always been my most enthusiastic suitor.”


“Please don’t,” Kan quietly begged Aisa, who pretended not to hear him.

“Were you two a couple?” Pony asked innocently.

“No, but for a long time, Vlad tried his best to woo me. He’d send bouquets of flowers to my office—”

“Please stop.”

“He’d write poetry for me—”

“Please stop.”

“Oh, there was this one time where he got a white horse—”

“I think we’ve heard enough!” Kan suddenly snapped. Aisa flinched, but smiled innocently, as if she had no idea what she was doing.

“Aw, did I embarrass you, Vladdy?”

“Wow, Mr. Kan,” Kuroiro chimed in from the back. “I had no idea you were such a cringelord in the past.”

“That’s some top-tier cringe,” Setsuna commented.

“So, uh, when’s the test starting, Mr. Kan?” Kendo asked quickly, hoping to help save her teacher from further embarrassment.

“The test begins in 25 minutes,” he explained, happy to change the subject. “Once I sign you in, you’ll take the elevator in that tower to the arena and change into your costumes.”

“Good luck out there, kids,” Aisa said. “Oh, here’s an idea. Why don’t I introduce you to my students? Gaikoku Academy class 2-A. I’ll go grab them.”

“Gaikoku?” Kamakiri asked as Aisa walked off. “Never heard of it.”

“Really? It’s pretty famous,” Rin said. “It’s apparently on level with schools like us or Shiketsu. They tried scouting me before I chose U.A.”

“They tried scouting me too!” Pony added. “They’re supposed to be a really diverse school with almost half its hero students from other countries.”
“Wait, why didn’t I get scouted?” Monoma wondered. “I’m a foreigner too. Did they not think I’m good enough?”

“Please don’t ask them that,” Kendo requested. “Let’s put our best foot forward and be friendly, guys.”

“Here they are!” Aisa said to her students as she brought them over. “U.A.’s Class 1-B. You guys make friends while I go sign us in. C’mon, Vladdy.” She grabbed Kan’s forearm, making him blush, and led him away from the two student groups.

At the front of the Gaikoku class was a girl that Kendo assumed was their class representative. She had blonde hair curled into ringlets and accented with a white bow. Her lips were curled into a smirk, but what drew everyone’s eyes was the frilly white eyepatch over her left eye. “Hello,” Kendo greeted with a smile. “I’m Itsuka Kendo, the class representative.”

“Good afternoon,” the blonde girl replied politely. “My name is Victoria Hope. I am the representative of my class.”

“Nice to meet you.” Kendo outstretched her hand to Victoria, but the older girl just looked down at it without moving. “…What’s wrong?”

“Oh, nothing at all. It’s just… I’m not used to shaking hands with peasants.”

“Oh shit,” Monoma mumbled from behind Kendo. “This isn’t gonna end well.”

“E-Excuse me?” Kendo asked confusedly.

“I make it a point to not involve myself with the lower class on such a personal level,” Victoria explained. “I’ll learn your name, at the very least, but neither you nor one of your weakling classmates have any credence to shake my hand.”

“It just keeps going downhill,” Monoma murmured as he back away from the two girls.

“Gou, inform them of our superiority,” Victoria ordered the boy to her left, who had just chugged an energy drink. He was well over 6 feet with slicked-back black hair, pale skin, and bloodshot green eyes with bags underneath.

“We’re gonna tear you apart,” he slurred, as if he hadn’t slept in ages. “Gaikoku is gonna come out on top, U.A.”

“Well done,” Victoria commended.

“Hey, um, can I ask something?” a short girl in the back of the Gaikoku class asked. She had dirty blonde hair in a braid and a beauty mark on her left cheek. “If you’re from U.A., does that mean you know Present Mic?”

“Uh… yeah?” Reiko answered hesitantly.

“That’s so cool!” the girl replied energetically. “Present Mic is my all-time favorite!”

“You obviously haven’t met him in person,” Reiko quipped, thinking back to the headaches his lectures would give her.

“I want to!”

“That’s enough, Greta,” Victoria instructed. “Come along, all. Let’s get going.”
“Hey, hold on a sec,” Kendo insisted. She was trying to keep her friendly smile, but her eye was beginning to twitch in anger. “You’re being pretty rude, y’know? I wanted to be friendly with you —”

“Well, I don’t,” Victoria responded before looking over Kendo and chuckling to herself.

“What’s so funny?” Kendo asked with a strained rage creeping onto her voice.

“It’s nothing, really. It’s just amusing seeing someone so… unfeminine in that uniform. Like a grown man on a tricycle. It just doesn’t fit. Oh-hohohoho!”

“Man, this is just getting worse and worse,” Monoma sighed to himself, now at the back of the group.

“We’ll be off now. Good luck out there, Itsuka,” Victoria said with a venomous lilt in Kendo’s name. She turned on her heel and walking off with her class in tow. “Mitch, get in one last dig.”

“Uh, yeah, you got it.” The boy she was ordering around was a short, skinny boy with a mane of black spikes in place of hair. Both Pony and Fukidashi were reminding of Raditz from Dragon Ball by it. “Hey butch! Why no custom uniform?! Couldn’t get something in flannel?! Ah-hahahaha!”

“Well, that was… something,” Reiko commented.

“Flannel! AH-HAHAAHA!” they heard the spike-haired boy laugh from far away.

“That bitch did the Ojou Laugh,” Setsuna pointed out. “Never trust a bitch with the Ojou Laugh.”

“She kinda reminded me of Monoma, but worse,” Kuroiro remarked, “and also girly… girlier.”

“Kendo, are you alright?” Ibara asked worriedly. Kendo wasn’t moving and her eyes were hidden behind her hair.

“I’d back away, Ibara,” Monoma warned. “Something very dangerous has been unleashed.”

“What you mean?” Pony asked.

“There’s not a lot that can make Kendo angry,” Monoma explained, “but she does have at least three distinct anger points – people who think they’re better than everyone else, insults towards her friends, and people bringing up her femininity.”

“That bothers her?” Reiko asked. “Seems like she wouldn’t care about that last one.”

“Kendo says that she’s ‘a mix of both,’ so she doesn’t like when people call her girly or boyish,” Monoma explained. “If just one anger point was prodded, she’d get over it quickly, but all three of them were hit within the same conversation. That fool has released something I had hoped I’d never see again…”

“Kendo?” Ibara repeated cautiously. There was finally a reaction when Kendo clench her fists and grew a scowl. Her hair moved as well, putting her furrowed glare on full display.

“That bitch,” she seethed. “I’m gonna destroy her.”

“Angry Kendo,” Monoma said fearfully.

“…Oh, I just got it,” Kamakiri suddenly said. “hehehe… flannel.”
Once Kan had signed them in, Class 1-B took an elevator up to the arena to prepare. Monoma and the other boys had finished changing and were leaving the locker room, heading for the testing room. *I doubt Kendo’s let go of what happened by now. I’ll have to stick with her during the test if I can. Getting worked up like that can lead to stupid mistakes.*

“What’cha thinkin’ about, buddy?” Tetsutetsu asked.

“Nothing. How’re you doing?”

“I’m pumped! We’re gonna kick so much ass! Plus, we get to see our pals’ new moves and gear!”

“Oh yeah. Some of us got some upgrades,” Monoma remembered as he looked behind him, noting his classmate’s improved costumes and support items. Awase had added a metal breastplate to go with his shoulder and knee pads and also sported a pair of Hatsume’s Capture Guns holstered at his sides. Bondo had a chunky metal mask over his eyeholes that had barrels like a gun. Apparently, they moved with his line of sight and would help him hit distant targets with single streams of glue, but Monoma had yet to see it in action. Kamakiri had finally gotten around to getting retractable arm blades similar to Setsuna’s claws so he could fight up close, but his were large scythe blades that would come over his hands when activated, furthering his resemblance to a mantis. Honenuki didn’t have any new gear, but he now wore a red jacket and black gloves over his normal costume. Kaibara had two new items, neither of which Monoma had seen in action yet, but ones that Kaibara seemed excited to use – a bulbous red gauntlet around his left forearm and a strange, rectangular metal bar strapped to his back.

“Yo!” Setsuna called out as the 1-B girls joined up with the boys. None of the girls had any new support items or big changes to their costumes, but there were a few differences. Kinoko’s cloak had been traded out for a hoodless, poncho-like shawl that ended just past her elbows. Setsuna’s body suit was missing its short sleeves, now baring her arms and legs completely, and she had added a green domino mask to her ensemble.

“It’s time to kick butt, guys!” Pony cheered. The class filed inside the giant testing room, which held well over 1000 hero students from around the country.

Looks like I was right. Kendo’s still pissed, Monoma noted. He stuck close to her and observed her intimidating glower as she scanned the room for Gaikoku Academy. “Are you feeling OK?”

“I’ll be fine,” she answered calmly, surprising Monoma.

Maybe she can keep her cool, he thought. I’ll try and stay close anyway. Can’t be too careful. Especially here and now.

“OK, it’s time to get started,” a voice said over the loudspeakers. “Don’t make me wait or I may fall asleep again. My name is Mera and I’m with the… yawn… Heroes Public Safety Commission. Honestly, I could go for a nice coma right now. I’ve got vacation days saved up…”

Maybe they should’ve gotten someone more… awake to do this, Monoma thought.

“Actually, it’s a little erroneous to say that I’m Mera. Truth is that we’re so understaffed that they hired someone with a cloning Quirk to clone me so I could host all of these tests all over the country today. The real me has been so busy lately. I just kinda want to stop existing at this point.”

They’re that understaffed?! everyone thought.

“Well, I’ll just start the explanation of the test,” Mera continued. “There’s about 1600 of you here
today, so the first phase is a big free-for-all battle or whatever. There’s a lot of pro heroes around right now, and the general opinion about heroes has been kinda shaky since that whole ‘Stain’ incident. Thing is, risking your life to save someone deserves some reward, so we pay heroes a salary. That’s just how this works, OK? Anyway, where was I? Oh yeah. We have a lot of pros, so we’re gonna be looking for the best of the best. In hero work, a speedy job is the norm, so people who can resolve incidents quickly is what we’re looking for. First 100 of you to complete the first test will advance, while the rest fail.”

“Only 100 out of 1500?” Kendo repeated. “That’s pretty daunting.”

“That’s about 6%,” Monoma noted, “and it’s not even how well you complete it – It’s how fast. Plus, I’m sure even more will fail in the phase after.”

“Kinda crappy, but that’s life,” Mera said. “Here are the rules. You examinees will get three targets to put somewhere on your body. It can be anywhere as long as it’s exposed. You also get six special balls. If you hit a someone’s target with a ball, it’ll light up. If all three of your targets light up, you fail. Whoever hits the third target gets the credit for taking down the opponent. You pass by taking down two people… God, I need coffee. Uh, we’ll pass out the targets and balls now while we open up.”

“Open up?” Kendo parroted. As soon as she said that, the walls and ceiling of the room they were in began to unfold and fall away, revealing the real testing sight the examinees were in the middle of. Around them was a city area, a highway area, a mountain area, an industrial area, and a forest and lake area.

“This seems… excessive,” Monoma said.

“I thought it just looked big from the outside, but now it seems even bigger,” Kendo added.

“I’m sure you kids have preferred or disliked terrains,” Mera announced, “so pick somewhere that suits your abilities and fighting styles best. It’s an entertaining reveal, but it took so much time and energy. So much energy. Anyway, get ready with your targets and we’ll begin soon enough.”
The U.A. Crush

*Looks like they’re passing out targets,* Kan noted as he walked through the stadium’s seats. *I think I see my students, so I’ll sit here and keep an eye on them.*

“Oh, hi there, Vlad.” Kan froze again and shakily turned his head to the familiar voice. He was standing right next to where Aisa was sitting. “I guess you wanted to sit near me, hm? Same old Vlad.”

*Must escape!* Vlad told himself.


*Don’t! You’ll say something stupid and embarrass yourself and your class! Escape now!* Kan was jolted from his thoughts when he realized his was already sitting two seats away from Aisa. *How’d this happen!?*

“So, tell me,” Aisa began. “Do you think your class is prepared for this test? They barely have a semester under their belt. I hope this doesn’t sound insulting, but I honestly don’t think that’s enough time.”

“…It’s true that they’re all rookies compared to their competition,” Kan replied. “They know the material they’re being tested on, but only at a basic level. However, I have faith in my students. They have a laser focus on their goals and two exceptional students to lead them – one who can ignite their competitive spirit and another to build their confidence and strengthen their bonds. To answer your question… they’re ready.”

“That’s quite the vote of confidence, Vladdy… Hey, remember that time you invited me to karaoke and tried to serenade me?”

“Why are you doing this?” Kan asked while face-palming.

“It’s funny.”

“Everyone! Let’s stick together and fight as a group!” Kendo instructed. Class 1-B headed off towards the city area, where they had the most experience fighting. “Monoma, any strategies in mind?”

“Yeah, I’ve got one. I also have an idea about how this test really works,” the copycat began. “They’re giving us an ultimatum to psych us out and make us rush, but rushing will make us uncoordinated and sloppy. They’re also presenting the test as if we’re supposed to throw the balls, but that’s a bad strategy. Our best bet is to incapacitate people and touch their targets when they can’t move.”

“Oh, I get it!” Tetsutetsu yelled. “We wait and defend until later in the test. Once we know what our opponents can do and they’re tired, we strike ‘em down and make sure we hit their targets.”

“That’s the ideal plan here,” Monoma agreed. “It’s not just about fighting though. In this test, the most useful Quirks are ones that get people stuck without blocking their targets.”

“Stuck?” Setsuna asked.
“Think back to the Cavalry Battle of the Sports Festival. Todoroki froze a few teams in place, which took them completely out of the running. We also had to be wary of Mineta’s… hair… grape… ball things.”

“So, it’s smarter to get people immobilized immediately instead of knocking them down repeatedly and wasting time,” Kendo agreed.

“Correct. That means our most valuable members for taking people out are Bondo, Awase, Ibara, and Honenuki… and me, of course.”

“Of course,” Kuroiro repeated sarcastically.

“We’ll need to focus on defense at the beginning, so for that, we need Tsuburaba, Ibara, Komori, and Kuroiro. The beginning of this test will be pretty chaotic for us.”

“Why’s that?” Pony asked.

“So, Vlad… did you tell them?”

“My students are smart. They’ll figure out the dangers before it’s too late.”

“Your class didn’t do so hot during the Sports Festival, so it may not cross their minds, but a good number of them still showed off their powers. They may not have had the spotlight, but a perceptive person can still watch it and get information on what they can do.”

“You’re talking about your own students, correct?”

“That’s right. Vicky made sure to watch every one of them in preparation for today. Besides, even if the other schools didn’t do the same, it’s still a tradition. U.A. gets crushed right out of the gate.”

“They’re gonna jump us right at the start?!” Shoda yelped in a panic. “Why are we heading to the city area where everyone will be?”

“There’s plenty of areas to hide and duck away if we need to. Going somewhere wide open means we’ll be attacked from all sides and have nowhere to escape too,” Kendo answered. “More than that, I believe in our strengths. If we stick together, watch each other’s backs, and give it everything, we can beat anyone. We beat All Might, remember?”

“That’s right. Defense, get ready,” Monoma instructed. As the class neared the entrance to the city area, running alongside the elevated highway area, a buzzer went off.

“The first phase will now begin.” Just as the announcement kicked off the test and 1-B reached the city entrance, hordes of competitors jumped out at them. They attacked from all sides, from the windows of the buildings, from above them on the highway area, even from behind in the open area 1-B had come from, and a storm of testing balls were launched towards the class.

“Here they come!” Monoma yelled. “Tsuburaba, now!”

“On it! Cover us!” Tsuburaba, backed up by Monoma, breathed upwards and began creating a solid air dome around the class.

“Fukidashi, back me up!” Kendo requested as she faced the attacks from the highway above the group’s western side. The ginger girl grew her hands to maximum size and clapped them together,
sending a blast of wind forward. “Thunderclap!”

“Fwoooosh!” With assistance by Fukidashi, their combined wind force sent the balls flying backwards and kept their enemies at bay.

On the southern side, facing towards the city area, Ibara’s vines shot forward and shaped into a giant wall to keep competitors and attacks away. “Shield of Faith!”

Class 1-B’s eastern flank was protecting by Komori, who spread the spores in her hair out in front of her. As the attack balls flew towards her, the spores grew into giant mushrooms that walled off the group. “Iron Shrooms!”

Facing down attacks from the class’s northern side was Kuroiro. “What a pain,” he grumbled as his chest became a portal. “Pull of Darkness!” As their opponents’ attack balls rained down, Kuroiro’s suction was kicked up to max strength, sucking them all into his body.

“There’s a ‘sucking balls’ joke here somewhere,” Setsuna noted as she watched Kuroiro.

“Tsuburaba, you almost done!?” Above their classmates, the solid air user and the copycat had just completed an air dome around 1-B.

“Done and done!” Tsuburaba announced. “Suck on my Air-icade!” After a moment, the competitors stopped throwing their balls once they saw the dome held up against it.

“The idea that this test will go by quickly is stuck in the minds of the people who tried attacking first,” Monoma noted. “They don’t want to waste time breaking through our protection, so they’ll turn to the other schools.” Just as Monoma finished his prediction, the competitors who had been attacking them turned their attention to each other. The battle began anew, but without 1-B.

“Hey, you’re right,” Pony realized. “They ain’t botherin’ to break it down.”

“They aren’t, but we’re not out of the woods yet,” Reiko said. “Look above us.” On the rooftop of the building closest to 1-B was a trio of familiar faces. “It’s Gaikoku Academy.”

“Hey butch! I see ya!” The first one they saw was the spike-haired boy called Mitch. His costume was a maroon bodysuit with a dark gray, fur-lined jacket. “Vicky wants you for herself, so try not to lose too quickly! Ah-hahaha!”

“Go ahead and hit ’em, Mitch,” the hulking Gou instructed. His hero costume was a mobster-style black suit with a purple scarf and gray jacket. He also looked more tired than before with his hair disheveled and his eyes even droopier.

“We’ll tear through their defenses and throw them to the wolves,” the final member of the trio declared. It was a short, pale girl with black hair in massive pigtails and a gothic-lolita style costume – a black dress and stockings, purple boots and gloves, and a dark blue shawl with a light blue water drop pattern.

“You got it!” Mitch shouted as he turned around, pointing his spike-hair down at 1-B. Dozens of spikes shot off his head, rocketing down and staking into the solid air barricade. None made it through to the class, but the dome was cracked.

**Mitch Zellner (New York). Quirk: Porcupine. Instead of hair, he has metal spikes that he can shoot out at high speeds. They’re pretty durable and quick to regrow.**

“You’re done for, U.A.!” Gou announced as he jumped for the rooftop with the short girl not far behind him. He fell towards the dome with his fists cocked and slammed them into the cracked
 barrier, shattering it apart. “I’ll kick all your asses… and finally go back to sleep!”

Gou Yonaga (Japan). Quirk: Sleepless Strength. The longer he stays awake, the stronger he becomes, though it goes back to normal if he falls asleep.

With the dome gone, Mitch sent another wave of spikes down at 1-B, making them fall back and dodge. Gou and his female companion landed in the middle of the group, where the tired competitor slammed the ground with his fists, causing a tremor to separate the class further. “Smash ’em, Namida!”

“With pleasure,” the girl responded while she, oddly enough, began to cry. The tears streaming from her eyes began pooling up around her cheeks and quickly grew into giant tendrils of water coming from her eyes. “You’ll all see the power of our school!”

Namida Kanashi (Japan). Quirk: Tear Control. She can control her tears, usually making them into big limbs to attack and grab with.

The tear arms swung around the area, forcing the already-fleeing 1-B to jump further back. Spikes rained down on them, debris flew around, and the schools from before had returned to try sniping them with their attack balls.

“Crap! They planned to split us apart!” Monoma realized. “All we did was make sure we couldn’t run away!”

“Great googily moogily, it’s all gone to SHIT!” Setsuna yelped.

“Looks like Gou, Mitch, and Namida succeeded in splitting them apart for now,” Victoria noted from the highway area, where she and other Gaikoku students had set up. Her hero costume was a muted pink jacket over a frilly white blouse with burgundy pants, white gloves, black boots, and a pink cloche hat with a white band. “I can see Itsuka Kendo. She’s coming closer,” Victoria purred. “Kaikaina!”

“Need me, big sis?” a pink-haired girl asked as she came to Victoria’s side. She had deep tan skin and her hero costume was a blue sleeveless bodysuit, almost like a swimsuit, with a long floral-print sarong.

“Be a dear and snatch up my prey, would you?”

“You got it!” Kaikaina chirped. She came to the edge of the highway and, after spotting Kendo below, reached out her right arm. Her forearm and hand began to transform, now resembling a fishing rod with a three-pronged hook at the end.

Kaikaina Lawai’a (Hawaii). Quirk: Fisher. Her arms can transform into fishing rods, letting her to grab things from a distance, swing around by hooking onto buildings, or use them like whips.

“She’s in my sights!” Kaikaina announced. She flung her hook down and swirled it around as it approached Kendo. Once it was on level with her, Kaikaina pulled the wire and caught Kendo in a secure tie before yanking her up.

“Kendo!” they heard Monoma yell.

“What the heeeeeeell!!?” Kendo screamed as she was pulled up. Kaikaina grabbed the wire with
her free hand and pulled roughly, sending Kendo flipping over her and onto the highway. “Oof!”

“We meet again, Itsuka.” Victoria greeted with a laugh.

“You,” Kendo growled. She attempted to enlarge her hands, but felt the wire that bound her netted around her hands, keeping them from growing.

“Such a simple Quirk. I knew all your tricks at just a glance during my research,” Victoria explained while pulling out a testing ball. “As long as we caught you off guard, you’d have no options.”

“Try me,” Kendo dared as she wriggled up onto her knees.

“Don’t bother struggling, Itsuka. It’s not ladylike.” The blond girl crept menacingly towards Kendo, assured that she’s stay helpless, but suddenly stopped. A pressure lodged itself in her stomach and she doubled over with a sputter. With her head down, she saw Monoma phasing through the cement road with a steel fist in her torso.

“You shouldn’t drop your guard. It’s not ladylike,” Monoma mocked with a cocky smirk. Victoria jumped back next to Kaikaina as Monoma floated away, landing in front of Kendo. “Are you hurt? Did they hit your targets?”

“No, but I can’t move,” Kendo explained. “I need you to get that other girl to loosen her grip.”

“Yeah, that sounds fun and all,” Monoma said coyly, “but I’d rather leave that to the others.”

“The others?” Victoria questioned.

“Uh, big sis?” Kaikaina said nervously. “We’ve got company.”
“You’re damn right, you’ve got company!” Monoma boasted as five figures rose up over the highway. So, Kaibara took Hatsume up on her offer, huh? I was wondering what that was. During Monoma’s escape to help Kendo, he had seen Kaibara take the mysterious metal bar off his back and hook it onto his right wrist. Now that he saw Kaibara in the air, grinning like a maniac, he realized it was a propeller. Hanging onto Kaibara’s legs was Pony, who swung herself forward and landed on the highway. Kaibara slowed his rotation and landed next to Pony, making Victoria and Kaikaina begin backing away. Descending next to Pony was Reiko, who looked more worried about Kendo than from the nearby enemies. The last two classmates who had come to help were Fukidashi and Kamakiri, who had made it by using Kamakiri’s mandibles to pole-vault up. They had stretched to their limit, but the pair flipped over onto the freeway and joined the fight.

“How irritating,” Victoria complained. “We’ll need back-up on our own.” She made sure to say this while looking at Kaikaina, who’s eyes had somehow turned a glowing red.

“We’re not letting you get away now,” Monoma declared. “We’ll beat you long before any… is that a forest?” Monoma looked behind Victoria and realized a dense thicket of trees had somehow grown on the highway where the pair of Gaikoku students were backing towards. “That… wasn’t there when the test started.”

Inside the forest that had mysteriously sprung up on the highway, a pair of glowing red eyes seemed like they were staring off at nothing in particulate. In actuality, those eyes saw exactly what Kaikaina was seeing. “Looks like Vicky and Kaikaina are in trouble,” the owner of these eyes noted as they turned from red back to their normal brown. They belonged to a short girl with a tangled mess of black hair, dyed brown at the bottom, who wore a blue bodysuit with armored sleeves and a swirl pattern, along with a black domino mask over her face. “They’ll need back-up. Nasuka, Greta, Bruce, go help them out. I’ll check in on how the others are doing.”

Miryu Kimi (Japan). Quirk: Clairvoyance. She can see what another person sees, no matter how far away they are, as long as she’s seen their face in person within the past 24 hours.

“Why me too?”

“Because I said so, dumbass. I’m our mission control, or did you forget?”

“Dang, you’re pissy today.”

“What should we do, big sis?” Kaikaina asked.

“You could start by letting go of Kendo,” Monoma smarmily suggested. He looked to Victoria for any move she’d make, but she was too busy analyzing her new opponents.

“What now? We fight, Kaikaina,” Victoria said.

“I was hoping you’d say that,” Kamakiri quipped as his new arm blades unfurled over his hands. The mantis boy jumped towards Victoria and swung his blade down, but instead of dodging, she crossed her arms to block it. The scythe came down and collided with her arms, but nothing was cut
and the blades bounced off with a clang. Victoria swung her arm into Kamakiri’s ribs, sending him skidding backwards, but she had to block again when Pony ran and kicked her. Her hooves sent Victoria flying backwards, crashing into a tree.

“Sis!” Kaikaina called out as she rushed to Victoria’s side.

“BOOM!” Fukidashi set off an explosion at her feet, knocking Kaikaina forward. Her grip was loosened for a brief moment, but that was all the time Kendo needed to free herself. She slipped out of the wire and joined her friends.

“Thanks, you guys.”

“No need to thank us,” Fukidashi replied.

“Actually, thank us more,” Monoma requested. “Tell me how cool I am.”

“Kamakiri, could you figure out what her Quirk is?” Kendo asked.

“I think it may be something like Rin’s or Tetsutetsu’s. Her skin was hard enough to deflect my new scythes. On the other hand, she could be wearing some armor under her clothes.”

“I guess we’ll find out,” Kendo said while her hands enlarged.

“Don’t get so comfortable, Itsuka,” Victoria warned. “My classmates and I will enjoy tearing—” She stopped her taunt when Kamakiri’s mandible shot out and stabbed into the tree near her face.

"Say again?” Kendo mocked, watching for Victoria’s reaction. She was expecting rage, but her opponent looked more scared of the attack than anything. She turned her head and looked at the blade near her face with wide-eyed fear.

“Big sis? You doin’ alright?” Kaikaina asked.

“…I’m fine,” she insisted while regaining her composure. “In fact, I’m great. I can hear our reinforcements not far away.”

“Shit, they’re already here? They must be using that forest as a base,” Monoma realized. “Kendo, we should retreat and regroup with our class.” He turned to Kendo for an answer, but she said nothing. Her gaze was firmly locked on Victoria, and in an instant, she dashed ahead with her huge fist cocked. “Kendo!”

“BRING IIIIIIIIT!” Tetsutetsu ran and threw his fist straight at Gou, who responded by doing the same. For a brief moment, their clashing fists matched strength, but Gou quickly overpowered Tetsutetsu and sent him flying backwards.

“I’ll destroy you weaklings!” Gou announced proudly. As Tetsutetsu got back up, Rin joined him and the pair ran to fight together.

“You go high, I’ll go low,” Rin instructed.

“GOT IT!” Tetsutetsu leapt forward and threw a punch at Gou’s cheek, but it was blocked by his opponent’s forearm. Rin went low and jabbed Gou’s stomach, but it didn’t faze him. He swung Tetsutetsu into Rin and they went sailing backwards, landing in a tumble.

“Oh man. Strength enhancers are tough to fight,” Rin commented. “We may—”
“Get down!” Tetsutetsu grabbed Rin and dove behind a pile of rubble, narrowly dodging a few attack balls. “These Gaikoku jerks are starting to piss me off. We can’t even fight at full power as long as those other schools are trying to snipe our targets.”

“They definitely know how to mess with us,” Rin agreed. “They’re making sure to split us into groups so they can beat us or other schools feel confident enough to fight us.”

“We’re running low on allies in the area, but there’s still a few left,” Tetsutetsu noted. Not far away, Ibara’s vines were clashing with Namida’s giant tear tendrils with Honenuki as back-up. Her vines seemed to be absorbing the water, but fell apart soon after, forcing Ibara to grow more.

“The salt in your tears are killing my vines quickly. It seems we’re evenly matched,” Ibara complimented. “However, it is my responsibility to receive a provisional license. I won’t let my classmates or my school down.”

“Don’t talk to me about responsibility,” Namida fired back with a venomous tone. “Not after U.A. dashed Gaikoku’s only chance of—” She cut herself off when she felt her feet begin to sink into the ground. Honenuki was behind her and had softened the ground to trap her.

“Thank you for the opening, Honenuki,” Ibara said as her vines dug into the ground towards Namida. “Now, Last Roots!”

“Don’t bother!” Namida’s water arms pushed against the ground and pried her from the softened ground, allowing her to dodge the vines that nearly snatched her. “Tear Bombs!” She swiped her tendril through the air, sending softball-sized tear drops at Ibara and Honenuki. They both jumped back to dodge, but Namida sent her left tendril at Honenuki and grabbed him. “I won’t let you continue troubling us. Begone!” With a quick swing of her tendrils, Namida sent Honenuki flying down the city block.

“Honenuki!”

“Holy fuckin’ woah!” Tsuburaba yelped as Shishida skidded to a halt under the highway. The bug-eyed boy fell forward off his back while his co-passenger, Setsuna, had braced herself and hung on.

“I apologize for the rough exit,” Shishida said while sniffing around the area for enemies. “I remembered what Monoma had said about prioritizing defense early on, so I found it prudent to keep you safe.”

“Really? Uh, thanks, then.”

“Is that why you grabbed me too?” Setsuna asked. “You think I’m important?”

I was more just in a rush and grabbed whomever was closest, Shishida thought. “…Yes. That is exactly why I saved you.”

“Oh, aren’t you a dear,” Setsuna complimented while patting his head. “Kinda looks like shit’s going down back there.”

“Seems like they could use some back-up,” Tsuburaba commented. “Let’s—”

“Oh shit, uh, uh, over here,” Setsuna said, pointing to a rocky area under the highway with many nooks and crannies. The trio hopped into the bumpy alcove and hid among the rocks as a set of opponents came into view.

“Stay down,” Shishida whispered while sniffing the air. *It smells like there’s only eight coming straight towards us, but what about the other four? …They’re lurking in the area, but aren’t part of this group. So, these eight must be their prey…*

“Those three from U.A. must be around here somewhere,” they heard. “Search around.”

“Dude, I don’t think we lost those four weirdos. It’s like they know exactly where we were.”

“Quit complaining. I don’t even wanna think about that. I nearly got my ass blown up.”

“Did you see that weird lizard one? She froze me in my tracks!”

“That weird gas gave me the creeps. What d’ya think it does?”

“Don’t know. Don’t care. Just search for—”

“SHIT! INCOMING!” The trio from 1-B looked up over their hiding space and saw a group of missiles heading for them. Tsuburaba made a small dome around them while Shishida and Setsuna ducked down for cover. The missiles landed and rocked the ground, but the barrier was thankfully undamaged.

“What a powerful attack,” Shishida commented. With the solid-air dome around him, he couldn’t sniff for his competition, so the hairy boy settled for peeking over the rock pile they hid behind. There was a huge cloud of dust and dirt, but Shishida could make out the silhouettes of his pursuers, noticing they were looking around nervously.

“It’s them! I knew it!”

“We have to bail!” As the competitors began to panic, the 1-B students heard something coming up closer. It was music from a radio. “It’s that freakin’ song again!”

*It’s close to midnight*

*Something evil’s lurking in the dark*

*Under the moonlight*

*You see a sight that almost stops you heart*

“I love this song,” Tsuburaba whispered as he and Setsuna shimmied around on the ground. After a moment, the brown dirt and dust in the air was replaced by a translucent pink mist.

“Stick together!” one of the competitors shouted. “There’s strength in…”

“Hey! Hey! What’s wrong!?”

“Ahh! It’s that freaky gas again!”

*You try to scream*
But terror takes the sound before you make it
You start to freeze
As horror looks you right between the eyes
You’re paralyzed

As the gas finally cleared away, Shishida finally saw the competitors, but they had changed. Their eyes and mouths had become gaping black voids and their skin had turned chalk white. They were stumbling around, moaning and randomly using their Quirks. “They’re like… zombies.”

‘Cause this is Thriller
Thriller night
And no one’s gonna save you
From the beast about to strike

Across from the group of zombified students, Shishida saw the source of both the music and the gas. On top of a hill was a boy with a creepy smile and grey-blue hair. He wore a lavender gas mask and black overcoat with red tubes running over his arms and a radio strapped to his waist.

You know it’s Thriller
Thriller night
You’re fighting for your life
Inside a killer Thriller tonight

“Sekigai, they’re ready,” the boy grunted while bobbing his head to the music.

Romero Fujimi AKA Thriller. Quirk: Zombie Virus. He releases a pink gas from his body that zombifies whoever inhales it. The zombies are stronger and more durable than normal people, but have no real cognitive function.

“Excellent work for once, Fujimi,” a girl with white hair said as she climbed over the hill. “Now, please turn that song off.”

“Firstly, what d’ya mean by ‘for once!?’ Second, hell no!”

“Fine. Just be on your guard,” the girl instructed. She wore a black body suit with white legs and lines, along with a red visor and a black screen strapped to her forearm. Out of the screen, a holographic chart projected above it and she looked it over closely. “These eight opponents have been successfully zombified, but they weren’t alone. It seems there are another three nearby that escaped your attack.”

Kashiko Sekigai. Quirk: Chart. She can project a holographic chart that can track and give data on people she’s seen or gotten close to.

“Huuuuh?! How come it didn’t affect them?!”

“I don’t know, but get to work controlling the zombies. Habuko, Tadan, please come join us.”
“I-Is it safe?” a shy, girlish voice asked from behind the cliff.

“It’ll be safer once we pass!” Fujimi responded. “Get your asses out here!”

“R-Right.” Climbing out over the hill was another girl, but this one had the head of a snake along with unruly red hair. Her costume was a blue bodysuit with a yellow sash and yellow lenses over her eyes. “Do you need me to paralyze them, Fujimi?”

“Nah, I’ll practice my control.” Fujimi held his arm out to the zombies, who paused there shuffling. “Line up,” he commanded. The zombies slowly trudged together and formed a line in front of their controller. “Sweet. Hey, Tadan! Get down here and help Sekigai find those others!”

“OK! Sorry!” The last of the four climbed out onto the battlefield, wearing a mechanical battle suit with many missile silos for his costume. It had a yellow top and arms, a green midsection, red gauntlets, and blue legs, leaving his simplistic face and tuft of red hair the only part not covered.

“They’re just over this way,” Sekigai explained. “If you can hear me, you should know we’re prepared to attack if prompted. If you’d prefer to leave instead, I’ll allow it. You have 10 seconds to make your choice.”

“What’re we doin’?” Setsuna asked. “Think they’re telling the truth, Shishida?”

“…They seem powerful and we’re outnumbered. Fighting is not our best option. They already have enough subdued opponents for all four to pass, so they may be honest…”

“We’re out of time. I say we take the offer,” Tsuburaba suggested. Shishida didn’t have time to think of a different way to escape, so he rammed his fist through the barrier and shattered it, allowing the trio to stand and face their fellow test-takers.

“We’ll go without a fight,” Shishida said. “Thank you for you letting us leave—”

“Hold up,” Fujimi ordered. “I recognize you. The Sports Festival, yeah? You’re from U.A…” The declaration of their school seemed to anger him even more than he already was.

“U.A.? I wonder if they know Tsu,” Habuko quietly pondered.

“Sekigai, we should take them down now,” Fujimi suggested.

“We’ll have to kick your asses, in that case,” Setsuna boasted.

“We already have enough defeated opponents to gain points from, Fujimi. Don’t lose track of our goal,” Sekigai ordered. “You can all leave.”

“You’re seriously doing this?!” Romero shouted. As his anger grew, his face changed to become more simplistic and creepy, looking more like a mask. “What the hell happened to make you forgive them?!”

“Forgive us?” Shishida asked. “Pardon my asking, but have we wronged you all in some way?”

“No. I apologize for Fujimi’s rudeness.”

“C’mon! I know you’re still upset!” Fujimi declared. “If these U.A. brats weren’t so weak, then your—”

“Enough!” Sekigai lashed out and slapped Fujimi across his cheek, silencing him.
“Oh gosh,” Habuko gasped.

“Oh no, oh no,” Tadan muttered. Sekigai looked furious for a moment, but quickly regained her calmness.

“As I said,” she continued while turning to the U.A. students, “you may leave now. But know that if you try to return and ambush us, I will see it coming.” She summoned the holographic chart over his wrist again, showing her opponents a map with their faces on it. “I can track you anywhere in this arena, so a sneak attack is impossible. Goodbye.”

“Right. Later. See ya,” Tsuburaba quickly said as he jogged off with Shishida and Setsuna in tow.

“So, did we do something?” Setsuna asked. “That felt like some personal shit right there.”

“First Gaikoku, and now them. We certainly have powerful enemies,” Shishida noted. “I don’t know what their connection to U.A. is, but something weighs on my mind. Something about that girl’s Quirk seems… familiar.”

Chapter End Notes

Just an FYI, the Training of the Dead OVA did not happen in this story. This is the first interaction between Isamu and U.A.
“Kendo!” The ginger girl ignored Monoma’s shouts and raced towards Victoria with her giant fist pulled back.

“Don’t be foolish, Itsuka,” Victoria sarcastically advised. “You shouldn’t fight a battle you can’t win!” Kendo slammed her fist into Victoria, who blocked and skidded slightly backwards, but still didn’t seem phased. Suddenly, the blonde girl grabbed Kendo’s wrist and pulled them closer before punching Kendo across the cheek. For a reason Kendo couldn’t place, her fist felt jagged and bumpy under her glove. Kendo shrunk her fist and slipped from the grasp while her left hand rocketed towards Victoria’s face. She expected to finally land a solid hit, but on contact, a sharp pain made her recoil.

“Shit!” she yelped while clutching her hand. “…So, that’s why you haven’t taken damage yet. I couldn’t tell since your clothes kept your skin covered…” She looked and saw Victoria’s face had grown a set of crystals over her skin, forming a scale-patterned armor over her cheeks, forehead, and the bridge of her nose. “You can generate crystals from your skin.”

“They’re not just crystals, Itsuka,” Victoria haughtily explained. “They’re diamonds. Your pitiful strength simply cannot pierce my defenses. In the future, when people think of Gaikoku Academy, the first name that comes to mind will be Diamond Queen!”

Victoria Hope AKA Diamond Queen (England). Quirk: Diamantine. She can form diamonds out of her skin, though they’ll disintegrate if they leave her body for too long.

“Kendo, we should go now! There’s more coming!” Monoma warned.

“Not until I crush her!” Kendo shouted as she ran at Victoria again.

“Oooh, scary,” Kaikaina said while scooting closer to her “big sis.”

“It’s already too late to run,” Victoria claimed as she covered her ears with her hands. “Greta, now!” Gaikoku’s counterattack was kicked off by a blast of sound erupting from the forest. The blast was aimed for Kendo, who clenched her eyes and covered her ears as she was blown off her feet. If she hadn’t been temporarily deafened by the sound, she would have heard Victoria’s next command. “Nasuka, your turn!” While Kendo soared backwards from the sound attack, she was kicked in the stomach and forced onto the ground. When she unclenched her eyes, the first thing she saw was a testing ball heading for her targets.

“Get off her!” she heard Kaibara yell. She looked back at her classmates and saw Kaibara point his new gauntlet at her attacker while spinning his arm. The speed and power of his spinning sent a twister of air pressure out of the gauntlet, which made Kendo’s assailant jump away to dodge.

“Was that a tornado gun?!” she heard Pony yell as she got up and backed away from the Gaikoku students. “That’s badass!” Kendo finally got a good look at her assailant – a tall and fairly muscular boy, who was now focused on Kaibara. He wore a black motorcyclist bodysuit with lightweight red armor, white gloves and boots, and a red motorcycle helmet. She could see wheels coming from the boy’s wrists and ankles, along with a smaller set on the elbows and knees of his costume.
“That was pretty close,” the boy commented nonchalantly. “Mind if I take that dude, Vicky?”

“I doubt I could make you do otherwise, Nasuka. Do as you will,” Victoria sighed.

“Sweet,” Nasuka replied while taking off his helmet, revealing silver eyes and gray hair in a disconnected quiff. “Hear that? I’m your opponent, big guy. That Quirk of yours is gettin’ my wheels spinning.”

**Nasuka Binshou (Japan). Quirk: Wheels. He has functional wheels growing from his wrists and ankles.**

“Nasuka’s getting excited,” Kaikaina noted. “Pretty rare.”

“That’s just the problem!” a voice from the forest called out. “We all need more energy! We’ve gotta pump this crowd up!” Climbing out of the thicket was a blonde girl the U.A. recognized from their first encounter with Gaikoku – Greta. Her hero suit was a dark blue bodysuit, black boots, and a red visor. In her arms was a cherry-red electric guitar that was plugged into the back of her neck. “Let’s rock!” She ran a pick across the strings of her guitar with lightning speed, which sent a sound blast out of her mouth. “Tonight, I’m gonna rock you tonight!”

**Greta Shrika (Switzerland). Quirk: Amplifier. She can amplify the sounds of whatever’s plugged into the auxiliary jacks on her neck, sending out powerful sound blasts from her mouth.**

“Great. Two more weirdos to worry about,” Monoma griped.

“You can make that three weirdos, city boy!” Everyone looked to the sky once they heard the voice of another Gaikoku student. Descending towards them was a muscular, light-skinned boy with a pale-yellow mullet. His hero costume was fairly casual with brown pants, yellow boots, an unzipped green-yellow vest that left his chest and stomach bare, and a red and yellow trucker hat. Coming out of the boy’s right hand was a huge black balloon, about the size of Kendo’s hands when enlarged, which seemed to be slowing his descent. “Howdy, folks,” he greeted with a deep southern drawl. “The name’s Bruce.” He landed with his fellow Gaikoku, students while the balloon shrunk in his hand. “I have a trucker hat.”

“…You sure do,” Kamakiri awkwardly answered. “Is that everyone? I can’t keep up with all these new people.”

“For now, yes,” Victoria said. “However, if we are still somehow backed into a corner, I can always summon more.”

“Looks like we’re fighting after all,” Monoma grumbled. “Yanagi, can you do me a solid?”

“What’s up?”

“That forest seems to be serving as Gaikoku’s base. Can you check around and see how many are still in there?”

“Sure,” Reiko replied as she phased through the ground. “Don’t be stupid while I’m gone.”

“Important safety tip. Thank you, Yanagi.” With Reiko’s exit, the match-up was six U.A. students against five Gaikoku students.

“Kamakiri, you’re with me and Monoma,” Kendo instructed.
“Sure thing.”

“Kaikaina, support me from behind?” Victoria requested

“Got it, sis.” The 11 test-takers waited in a standoff, watching for either side to make a move and start the fight.

“Oh, Bruce,” Victoria said while removing her gloves, revealing more diamonds in her skin. “See the one with the horns? She told me that trucker hats are terrible.”

“What?!” Bruce screamed.

“Did not!” Pony claimed. Her response fell on deaf ears as Bruce held his right hand out towards Pony, showing a small hole in his palm. Out of the hole came a black balloon that swelled to beach-ball size before popping off and flying at Pony. “Woah!” Pony sidestepped the quick projectile, but it popped at her side and sent out a wave of air pressure that sent her flying.

“I’ll teach you some respect and knock your ass all the way ‘cross the Mason-Dixon Line!”

**Bruce Frey (Arkansas). Quirk: Balloon.** He can form black balloons from the air pipes in his arms. He can shoot them off and hit people with the force of a cannonball or send out a blast of air pressure by popping them on command. They’re also good for floating around if he hangs on.

“Pony!” Kaibara yelled as she flew over his head. He was about to run to catch her when Nasuka sped towards him and threw a kick at his face. Kaibara blocked it, but Nasuka pivoted off his arm and went over his head. He landed on his ankle wheels and spun them to immediately throw another spin kick. This time, his attack landed across Kaibara’s back, knocking him forward.

“C’mon and show me somethin’ fun,” Nasuka slyly requested.

“BOOM!” Nasuka zipped away just in time to avoid an explosion at his feet.

“Greta, can you deal with the weird speech bubble guy?” he requested

“I’ve got him!” Greta strummed her guitar again and blasted Fukidashi with a sound wave, pushing him away from his classmates. “Let’s see what you got, little man.”

As her classmates began their battles, Kendo continued her assault on Victoria, this time with Kamakiri at her side. *She reacted strangely when Kamakiri attacked her last, Kendo thought. Hopefully, I can get her to slip up again.* Victoria finally took her own combative stance and rushed to meet Kendo head-on. She ducked underneath Kendo’s giant fist and tried for an uppercut, but Kendo enlarged her other fist to block it and push Victoria to the ground. Kamakiri’s mandible shot down at her, but she blocked it with the back of her diamond fist. She aimed up at Kamakiri with her other hand, which shot small diamonds from her fingertips.

“Gem Shot!” Kamakiri crossed his arm blades protectively, but was still forced back by the painful projectiles. Victoria was still trapped under Kendo’s crushing hand, but she swung her leg across the ground and struck Kendo’s calf, making her groan and drop to one knee. She pushed against Kendo’s hand got back on her feet, but was then hit across her left side. As she fell to the right, she saw Monoma phasing out from the ground, once again with steel skin.

“You can’t let her get to you,” Monoma advised. “Calm down and think rationally, Kendo.”

“I am calm—”
“You aren’t. She’s in your head. Take a deep breath and—”

“What’s the matter, Itsuka?” Victoria prodded. Her voice alone made a vein in Kendo’s forehead begin to bulge. “You need to rely on your boyfriend for a simple test? How adorable.”

“Monoma,” Kendo began, “just shut up and let me do this.”

“You’re playing right into her hand.” Monoma couldn’t continue his talk as Kaikaina attacked with her fishing lure. Monoma hardened his arm and blocked the hook, but the wire wrapped around her wrist and yanked him away from Kendo. “Just stay alert!”

“Oh, I will,” Kendo snarled. “Kamakiri?”

“I’m ready,” the mantis boy assured her as he stepped forward. His mandibles shot at Victoria, who deflected the stabbing attack with her diamantine arms, but he retracted them and jabbed again. Pretty soon, his blades were jabbing at high speeds and pushing Victoria back. “Multi-blade!”

“Pitiful!” Victoria jeered. “These pathetic tactics won’t work on me! I am unbreakable!” That was the last thing she could say before the sharp attacks finally hit something. Something Important. Kamakiri’s blade flew past her arm and skidded across the gems on her face. Her Quirk protected her from damage, but after a moment, she realized the string keeping her eyepatch in place had been cut. Kamakiri halted his attack as all three students watched the patch flutter to the ground. Kendo gasped and felt regret pool in her stomach as she remembered her initial plan of action.

A lightbulb of understanding clicked on her mind once she saw what had been hidden by the eyepatch – a red, jagged, ugly scar over a permanently-shut eyelid. Victoria was missing her left eye, and from the coloration of the scar, Kendo could tell it was recent – about six months from what she could tell.

“…You saw, didn’t you?” Victoria asked as she fixed her hat and hair to cover her scar.

“…I did,” Kendo answered, not sure how to feel anymore. Every insult Victoria had slung at her was now competing against her sympathy.

“Then I know what I must do,” Victoria claimed. “I’ll break you so badly that you’ll never tell a soul.” With the renewed declaration of war, Kendo felt her competitive spirit being stirred again, but this time, she kept her cool.

“Try me.”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this chapter took a while and was a little on the short side. College got me, boi
ANDWE'REBACK!
With 6000 hits! Love you guys!

For such a small forest, there’s a shit ton of trees, Reiko thought as she stumbled through the Gaikoku’s hideaway. There isn’t any dirt under the trees either, so it must be a Quirk that can summon them in some way. I should be mindful of my Quirk’s limit and only phase for emergencies or for quick instances only. Reiko phased through a thick bundle of trees and immediately untransformed, looking over her shoulders for anyone. It seems like they sent everyone off to fight, but there may be some stragglers or non-combatants.

"You look lost.” Reiko flinched and turned around, seeing a Gaikoku student staring at her, leaning back causally with his arms crossed and a sour look on his face. He was tall and lanky with pale skin, tired dark red eyes, and maroon brown hair. His hero costume looked like normal civilian clothes, with a cream-colored long sleeve shirt and a maroon vest and shorts, but he also had two BB guns at his side.

“So, what if I am?” Reiko responded as she readied herself for a fight. “Gonna attack or what?” Her question seemed to depress the boy, as he sighed and slumped down instead of making a move.

“Wish I could,” he murmured. “Just gotta leave it to the others, maybe go for your targets… life is sucky.”

What’s his problem?

“Miru, can you just get in here?” he asked while sliding onto the floor. “You or Kobayashi can have her targets, I guess.”

There’re still two more? Reiko heard rustling behind her and jumped to the side, barely avoiding a punch. The one who attacked was Miru, who kept her physical attacks coming, but Reiko phased backwards through a cluster of trees to temporarily escape.

“Good job. Really gave it to her,” the boy snarked from his seat on the floor.

“I might’ve if you didn’t say I was here, Daisuke,” Miru complained. “If you’re not gonna help, then get out of here.”

“Let me see the violence, at least. Not like I can join in with this fuckin’ Quirk,” he whined.

Reiko waited behind a tree and listened for attackers, but Miru and Daisuke weren’t coming for her. So, that boy’s Quirk isn’t suited for combat. That’s one less person to worry about. I should try and figure out this girl’s Quirk, and the Quirk of this “Kobayashi” person he mentioned. Once I know if they’re threats or not, I can report back to the others. Hopefully, they can handle things on their own. She kept waiting, and as soon as she looked around for anyone else, Miru dove out and swung her leg at Reiko’s head. She phased back through the tree in time to avoid it, but Daisuke was now at her side with a testing ball in hand. Reiko tried dodging, but he was able to hit one of
her targets. Dammit!

“That’s one down,” Miru noted.

I don’t know how, but this girl’s Quirk seems to let her know where I am. I’ll have to bust out a Super Move to escape for now. Reiko transformed again and began floating, but after a moment, she also turned completely invisible. Ghost Recon. It shortens my time limit of staying transformed, but now, I can sneak unnoticed. Reiko silently phased through a few trees, making sure Miru and Daisuke weren’t following with their eyes. Looks like it was a success. My time limit’s almost up. Gotta find a place to safely recharge. Reiko made sure she was hidden as her body forcibly untransformed, but once she was visible, Daisuke was suddenly behind her and he grabbed her in a bear hug. How!?

“Go ahead and get her targets,” Daisuke instructed while turning around, presenting the struggling Reiko. Miru approached slowly and grabbed Reiko’s kicking leg while holding out her testing ball. Reiko seemed to panic for a brief moment, but quickly regained her composure and glared at Miru.

“I wouldn’t piss me off any further. Us ghosts can really hold a grudge.” Reiko lurched forward, then rammed her elbows back into Dismuke ribs, making him cough for air and loosen his grip. She phased down into the ground while wriggling her ankle free of Miru’s grasp. “Phantom Pain!” she called out while slamming Miru’s forehead into the concrete. Reiko flew up and away from the Gaikoku students as her time ran out again, but she felt confident in her safety this time.

“You really couldn’t see that coming?” Daisuke said as he helped Miru to her feet, her forehead dripping with blood.

“Bite me,” Miru growled before Daisuke, for some reason, slapped her wound.

“We’ve gotta keep going. Her phasing seems to be timer-based,” he noted while readying his testing balls. Miru did the same as her forehead wound quickly healed, as if it had never happened.

So, that’s the reason that boy can’t fight. He has a healing Quirk, Reiko realized.

Daisuke Saitou (Japan). Quirk: Healing Hits. Whenever he tries hurting someone, they’re healed and given an energy boost instead. He can’t heal himself and loses energy whenever he does heal someone.

The Gaikoku pair attacked Reiko again, forcing her to jump away each time and use her Quirk to escape, giving her no time to recharge it’s time limit. “Kobayashi, now!” Miru yelled. Reiko whirled around to find the third opponent but saw no one. Instead, she felt her lower body being constricted. She looked down and saw a cluster of young trees growing rapidly, entrapping her between the wood. Daisuke went behind her, ready for any attempted escape, while Miru approached to hit her target. “No escaping now!” Miru claimed. Reiko watched and waited for the very last moment before Miru’s attack connected. When she was barely a centimeter from her target, Reiko suddenly phased upwards and shot towards the top branch of the nearest tree. Her transformation gave out just as she reached it, but for the moment, she was safe.

That was way too close, Reiko thought. So, this Kobayashi person has a Quirk that makes tress grow rapidly. That explains the forest. Reiko was jolted from her thoughts when the branch she stood on snapped away. As she fell, she looked to the tree she was on and realized it had somehow died. It took everything she had, but just before she reached Daisuke and Miru, she transformed and swerved her path away before being forced back to normal. She tumbled across the pavement into another tree, knocking her head. I am so done with today, she internally moaned. Reiko forced
herself to her feet to face the Gaikoku students, but with her back turned, she didn’t notice the third student sneaking up behind her.

“Boop.” She jumped when she heard a voice right behind her and realized another target had been hit. Reiko dashed away and instinctively protected her remaining target before turning to see the last opponent. The student was a girl about her height with short brown hair, wearing a light green bodysuit with a brown Oak tree pattern around her torso, blue shorts with black stripes on the sides, and hiking boots.

"Kobayashi, I’m guessing,” Reiko questioned.

“I didn’t want to age that tree so quickly, but this is a test,” Kobayashi noted, ignoring Reiko. “I’ll find a park and plant another one after this test.”

**Kobayashi Hanatsu (Japan). Quirk: Growth. She can speed up the growth of plants, turning seeds or saplings into their grown counterparts.**

“Forget about the fucking tree and focus on the enemy,” Daisuke grumbled. “It’s three against one. We can get that last target easy.”

“Let me see if I’ve got this right,” Reiko began. “You’ve got a healing Quirk, you’re Quirk controls the growth of plants, and you…” She paused when she reached Miru, who glared at the ghost girl. “You always knew where I was, even when I turned invisible. What’s your Quirk?”

"Like I’d tell you,” Miru scoffed.

“Whatever it is, it’s no threat in a fight.” Reiko pulled her mask down and stuck her tongue out childishly at her opponents before phasing into the ground. “It’s been fun, but I’m gonna bail. See ya.”

With Reiko gone, the trio of Gaikoku students were left dumbfounded and without an challenger. “Did she seriously just leave?” Kobayashi asked Miru, who activated her Quirk to see through Reiko’s eyes.

“Yup. She’s leavin’,” Miru growled.

“…Motherfucker!” Daisuke shouted.

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“AH-HAHAAHAHAHA! Ya can’t keep this up forever, ya dickhead!” On the city’s street, close to Tetsutetsu, Rin, and Ibara, Bondo was busy keeping the spike attacks away from his friends. On the roof closest to them, Gaikoku’s resident loudmouth, Mitch Zellner, kept his seemingly-infinite spikes coming with another round of attacks. “Take another Spike Storm up your asses!” As the sharp projectiles rained down towards him, Bondo put his new aiming mask to use and began shooting little globs of glue out, nailing each spike before they could hit his classmates.

“Splattergun!” he called out as his glue clashed with the spikes.

“You’re gonna run out soon enough!” Mitch jeered.

“That’s what you think,” Bondo quietly said. “I don’t have to outlast you. I just need to stall you.” He snuck a peak at the side of the building, where he saw Awase scaling the wall by fusing his hands to the wall as he climbed.
“Here comes some more! Try blocking these, ya dickhead!” Another round of spikes came, but Bondo’s Splattergun kept them at bay once again.

“Hey, asshole!” Awase yelled as he reached the roof. Mitch saw him and backed away from the ledge, standing with his spike-hair pointed at his new opponent.

“Come any closer and I’ll fill ya with holes, douchebag!” Mitch shot a few spikes at Awase, who ducked behind the roof’s doorway for cover. Thinking quickly, Awase tore the door of his hinges and vaulted over the entryway, slamming it down on Mitch. “Aw, fuck,” Mitch groaned.

“High ground is for wimps,” Awase claimed as he pulled the door back for another swing. “Why don’t you fight like a real man!?” Awase batted Mitch off the roof and dove after him.

“Shiozaki! Gimme a hand!” he requested.

“Shit! Namida, catch me!” Mitch yelled. Both boys were caught by their teammates and placed on the ground near them.

“You nearly gave me a heart attack,” Ibara complained. “Please, don’t be so reckless in the future.”

"Eh. I knew you’d catch me,” Awase shrugged. “Now we can fight without worrying about what’s above us. It’s time for the U.A. counterattack!” Before she could scold him further, Ibara was attacked by Namida’s tear arms once again, forcing her vines into action.

“Shield of Faith!” Her vines blocked the water attack while Awase dove around the side and took out his Capture Gun.

“Plus, now I can back you guys up from a distance!” Awase declared as he shot out the net and entrapped Namida. She lost her balance and fell to the ground, giving Ibara enough leverage to break apart the water tendrils and attack with her vines. “Nice one!” Awase cheered.

“Not quite,” Ibara said. “I don’t have a grip on her. There’s something else—” She was interrupted when spikes shot out from the encircling vines, making her and Awase duck for cover behind some rubble. After a moment, they looked and saw Mitch had protected Namida and cut her free from the net.

“We’re just gettin’ started, assholes!” Mitch yelled.

“Gou, get over here! We’ll take them together!” Namida instructed. The pair of Gaikoku students looked to Gou, surprised to see Rin and Tetsutetsu holding their own against him.

“Go low!” Rin directed. Tetsutetsu ducked under and punch from Gou and drove his iron fist into the boy’s stomach. Meanwhile Rin, dipped around him and jumped up before kicking him across the back. Gou lurched forward while Tetsutetsu circled around and grabbed his arms.

“Here’s my Metal Lock!” the iron boy announced while pulling the dazed Gou’s arms back. Rin jumped up and flipped in the air before delivering a diving stomp into Gou’s face.

“Dragon Dive!” Gou was pushed back, flipped over Tetsutetsu and slammed onto his stomach.

“Think this’ll stop me!?” Gou slurried. “Not on your life!” He swung his fist at the two boys while climbing to his feet, but they both jumped back to dodge.

“To the left!” Tetsutetsu shouted. He ran to Gou’s right side and elbowed his ribs, sending him stumbling into Rin’s grasp. The dragon boy pulled Gou around and redirected him into Tetsutetsu’s
incoming attack.

“IRON APOCALYPSE!” A flurry of metallic punches flew into Gou’s torso and face, making him fall backwards towards Rin. Just as he leaned back to fall, Rin jumped up and delivered a Dragon Dive into his chest, flooring him.

“Don’t mess with the Armored Brawlers of 1-B,” Rin warned.

“Yeah! We don’t mess around!” The boys shared a fist bump over their defeated opponent before sauntering towards Namida and Mitch. “Who’s next?” Tetsutetsu asked.

“This looks bad,” Namida noted. “We should retrieve Gou and escape before he can fall asleep.”

“Sounds good to me— Shit, behind you!” Namida and Mitch dove to the side, just avoiding a glue attack from Bondo. Namida summoned another pair of tear tendrils and batted away the glue attacks as the pair ran to Gou.

“Faster, Mitch! One hit and we’re stuck!” Namida warned as she desperately fended off Bondo’s attacks.

“Wakey wakey, shit-for-brains!” Mitch yelled while slapping Gou across the face. Namida grabbed the boys with one of her water arms before using the other to vault into the city.

“We’ll get you next time!” she claimed as the trio escaped.

“How much you wanna bet they won’t?” Awase joked.

“Alright! We won!” Tetsutetsu cheered.

“But we didn’t get a single point,” Bondo pointed out.

“…Oh yeah! Forgot we were doin’ that.”

“Now that we aren’t being attacked, we should go and help the others,” Rin suggested. “When we were being split up, a lot our classmates rushed to the freeway area. They may be battling other Gaikoku students right now.”

“Then let’s make haste,” Ibara said, “and pray no one’s been eliminated yet.”
Meteor Sledgehammer

Chapter Notes

Since my schedule has become more erratic due to school and this arc features a lot of OCs, I made a reference sheet for the Gaikoku students on my Tumblr now that they've all appeared


Hope this helps!

“Can’t dodge forever, city girl!” Pony had to dip and duck around as Bruce’s balloons kept flying at her. As soon as they passed by, they’d pop and either send her flying off her feet or force her to hold still against the wind pressure.

“Bet’cha I can!” Pony yelled back. She galloped towards Bruce, aiming for a headbutt, but a balloon sailed into her head and popped, making her tumble back. “Once I get close in, I can take him down,” she told herself. “Just need an opening. Maybe I should try helping the others first and get back-up.” She snuck a peak over her shoulder to check on her nearby classmates. Just behind her was Kaibara, who was struggling to keep his eyes on Nasuka.

“Can’t keep up, eh?” Nasuka asked as he speed circles around Kaibara. “Guess I’m too fast for you!” Kaibara spun his left arm and shot a cyclone of wind from his gauntlet, but Nasuka slipped out of the way, almost like he was dancing. “I already saw that! Show me somethin’ new.”

“If you insist,” Kaibara growled. He ran at Nasuka with his right arm spinning and swung his arm down, but Nasuka rolled back to avoid the punch. Just as Kaibara’s fist was about to hit the concrete, he opened his hand and jumped into a handstand. “Spinner Swing!” With his arm gripping the concrete, the rest of his body was spun around in the air and a devastating kick landed on Nasuka’s side, sending him flying back. Kaibara smirked as he stopped his spinning and watched Nasuka slowly get back up.

“Lucky shot,” Nasuka said, brushing off the attack. “You won’t get another.”

“Kaibara!” Pony said while trotting to his side. “Cover me from behind. I’ll get him to hold still.”

“Sure thing.”

“Hol’ up, city girl! I ain’t done with ya!” Bruce shot out a balloon at Pony, but Kaibara dove in the way and held it back.

“Go!” he yelled as it popped in his arms. Pony dashed at Nasuka and he speed her way, eager to clash. As they reached each other, Nasuka attempted to elbow Pony in the face, but she sidestepped the attack while sweeping a hoof under him. He jumped up and avoided the attack, but as he did, Pony shot her left horn out and nailed him in the chest. Nasuka’s armor protected him from serious damage, but the force of the shot sent him flying across the highway. As he went flying, Pony and Kaibara switched opponents again.
“Don’t go runnin’ now!” Bruce yelled as Kaibara ran after Nasuka. He shot a balloon at him, but Pony shot her right horn and popped it, propelling Kaibara forward. With the wind at his back, Kaibara jumped and grabbed Nasuka’s leg, spinning his arm and Nasuka by extension. As he fell, he threw Nasuka towards the pavement, but a giant balloon from Bruce cushioned his fall and greatly reduced the damage.

“So close,” Pony griped. Kaibara landed and took a fighting stance while Nasuka rolled back towards Bruce.

“How’re ya holdin’ up?”

“Been better,” Nasuka replied.

“Kaibara, let’s stick together and take ‘em both down,” Pony said while putting her horns back on her head.

“Sure, but first, we should try helping Fukidashi too. That girl is countering him too well.” Pony looked across the highway to Fukidashi, who was struggling to stand against Greta’s sound blasts. She watched him try and make an explosion, but his shout could barely be heard over hers and it came out as a small pop near his feet.

“She drowning out his sound!” Pony realized.

“Yeah. Try and keep these two away and I’ll assist him.”

“You go it.”

“Ya think we’ll jus’ sit back and let’cha?” Bruce asked.

“You’d be better off,” Pony boasted. “Go on, Kaibara.” With a quiet nod, Kaibara went to assist Fukidashi, but Nasuka was ready to give chase.

“Get back here!” Pony saw the boy race towards Kaibara and shot towards him with amazing speed. She dodged Bruce’s balloon attack and swung her hoof down at him, but he zipped out of the way just in time.

“Nice try,” Nasuka mocked. Pony used her momentum and turned herself to face Nasuka before launching herself and landing a headbutt into his chest.

“Actually, that was my nice try,” Pony mocked back. She whirled around once she landed and saw a giant balloon flying her way. Thinking quickly, she dashed around the projectile, making sure she was in a straight line between it and Bruce before galloping towards him. Just as he had done before, he popped the balloon once she avoided it, but this time, she used the wind pressure to close the distance between the two of them. Bruce realized how screwed he was instantly and tried making another balloon, but Pony was too quick. She broke off her horns and drove them into the concrete in front of her opponent before pushing off. Her hooves flew up into his chin and sent him flying. “Bronco Uppercut!”

Just across the freeway, Kaibara had alerted Fukidashi that he was coming to assist and the boys ran towards each other. Fukidashi ducked behind Kaibara as he shot more swirling wind from his gauntlet, matching strength with Greta’s sound blast. As she strummed away at her guitar, Kaibara grabbed his classmate by the collar and hurled him over the clashing attacks. Now free from the sound that drowned him out, Fukidashi aimed down at Greta and readied a big attack.

“BOOOOM!” An explosion rocked the girl and she was blown off her feet, being pushed back further by Kaibara’s tornado gauntlet. “Sorry to cut you off, but your solo ends here B)”
“Think you’re funny, little man?” Greta asked angrily as she got up and circled around to their left side. “Who needs a solo when the band’s all here?” The clopping of hooves caught the boys’ attention and they saw Pony join them on their right side. Bruce and Nasuka were following her and joined Greta in surrounding the trio.

“You’re acting like you’ve got us outnumbered,” Kaibara said.

“This may be a three-on-three battle,” Fukidashi continued, “but…”

“You guys are super out of your league!”

As the battle continued for those three, across the highway, Kendo, Monoma, and Kamakiri continued with their fight. Kendo grabbed Victoria’s wrist and pulled her close, hurling her giant fist into the girls’ torso, but with her diamond armor underneath, Victoria shrugged the attack off. “Is this all you can do, Itsuka!?” She asked while punching Kendo in the stomach.

“I’ll break you soon enough,” Kendo assured her. She enlarged the hand gripping Victoria’s wrist and picked her off the ground, throwing her into a tree. The wood cracked and bent from the force, but Kendo’s opponent was still undamaged.

“Gem Shot!” Kendo ducked away from the projectiles, but before Victoria could land a good hit, she was hit in the back through the tree. Monoma’s metallic fist had phased through and sent her flying forwards. Kendo jumped at the opportunity and tried to slam her hand down at her, but Victoria rolled away and got back on her feet. That’s when Kamakiri dove out from the forest and slashed at her with his scythe gauntlets. Victoria raised her arms and blocked each slash from the gauntlets and the stabs from his mandibles, but this gave Kendo an opening to punch her in the side. She skidded across the highway, but still seemed undamaged.

“Still nothing?” Kendo asked in frustration.

“Not quite,” Monoma said. “It may not seem like it, but we’ve got her on the ropes. Look closely.” Kendo took his advice and observed Victoria as she took a fighting pose again, realizing her arms and legs were shaking. “Even if she isn’t bruised or broken on the outside, all of the force behind your punches is still going through her body. She’ll run out of steam very soon.”

“In that case, I’ll finish this here and now,” Kendo declared.

“I don’t think so!” Kendo and Monoma both whirled around and dodged out of the way from Kaikaina’s fishing hooks whipping at them. “You’re going down, U.A.!”

“Multi-blade!” Kamakiri shot out his mandibles and parried the hooks’ whipping, keeping his classmates safe. “If you can end this, then do it! I’ll keep this one here!”

“Right! Thanks!” Kendo said. “Monoma, back me up?”

“You got it,” Monoma replied as he phased down, disappearing from the battle.

“You think I can’t see your tactics for a mile away!?” Victoria shouted. “You stupid first-years can’t win! I am indestructible! A flawless diamond!” In her rage, her hat and hair had been moved, letting her scar show again.

“Just shut up and fight!” Kendo ran at Victorian with both hands at giant size.

“Gem Shot!” Sharp diamonds flew at Kendo, but instead of dodging, she dashed straight into the assault, aiming squarely for Victoria.
“I… I am… indestructible!” Her ranting was interrupted when Monoma phased up through the ground, his arm transformed into a fishing line with Kaikaina’s Quirk. He hooked it onto Victoria’s ankle and pulled, yanking her leg forward. As she fell backwards, Kendo clenched her giant hands together and jumped forward in a front flip.

“Meteooooor…” She brought her fists down and smashed Victoria into the concrete, shattering the diamonds protecting her body. “SLEDGEHAMMEEEEER!” Victoria was pounded into the cement and fell into unconsciousness, lying motionless in a crater shaped like herself. The Gaikoku students watching had become still like statues with their leader’s defeat.

“S-Sis!” Kaikaina yelled.

“Vicky lost?” Greta asked.

“Looks that way,” Nasuka answered. “I didn’t think that girl was strong enough to break diamonds.”

“Should we bail?” Bruce asked. What drew their attention next was many vines gripping onto the side of the highway.

“Yeah, let’s bail!” Greta yelled. Bruce made a balloon and jumped towards the forest while Greta hopped onto Nasuka’s back.

“Hey! No passengers!” Nasuka complained.

“Just go! They’ve got more coming!” Just then, five figures soared up to the highway, pulled up by vines – Awase, Tetsutetsu, Bondo, Rin, and Ibara. Fukidashi attempted to hit the fleeing Gaikoku duo with an explosion, but Greta blasted him with a sound wave, which also sped up their getaway. As they approached the forest, she blasted Monoma and Kendo too, allowing Kaikaina the chance to grab Victoria and flee into the forest with them.

“Not so fast!” Kamakiri yelled as his mandibles rushed at the, but the tress blocked his attack and the Gaikoku students escaped. “Dammit! They got away!”

“Not for long,” Monoma declared. “Now that we’ve got back-up, we should press our advantage and give chase.”

“I wouldn’t if I were you.” As the U.A. students grouped up, they heard Reiko’s voice and saw her phasing up from below the highway.

“Reiko, your targets,” Kendo said in shock.

“It’s fine. They didn’t get all three,” Reiko assured her. “Even if we have reinforcements now — hey, guys—”

“’Sup,” Awase greeted.

“—It’s still a bad idea to give chase.”

“Why? Who else was in the forest?” Monoma asked.

“Three of them. One could control the age of plants, so she could control that forest’s terrain. Another could somehow keep finding me, even with Ghost Recon activated. Lastly, there was a boy with a healing Quirk.”
“A healing Quirk? Those are quite rare,” Ibara noted.

“In that case, you’re right,” Monoma said. “If they can heal each other and control the terrain, we’d lose the battle if we chased them through the forest. We should head for the city, try and find our classmates, and take out stragglers from other schools. How’s that sound, Kendo? …Kendo?” Everyone looked to the ginger girl, who was staring at her feet dejectedly. “OK, what’re you guilty about?”

“Hm?”

“That’s your guilty face,” Monoma sighed. “What’s wrong?” Kendo looked like she wanted to deny the claim, but she relented and sighed.

“We had a lot of close calls in this fight and wasted a lot of time here. I kept the fight going when we could’ve escaped because of my grudge.”

“Hey, hey, don’t beat yourself up,” Pony said. “You got pulled up here and we came to help you. It’s Gaikoku’s fault.”

“They may have started it, but I kept it going and forgot about the test… and all of you. So, I’m sorry.”

“No one blames you, Kendo,” Reiko added, “but if it’ll make you feel better, then we forgive you.” Everyone else nodded in agreement, making Kendo smile.

“Thanks, you guys. Now, let’s go pass this test. I’ll make sure every one of you passes before I even try for points.”

“If that’s all settled, let’s get out of here before another swarm of assholes comes out of nowhere,” Awase suggested.

“I’ll try and spot our classmates from the air,” Reiko offered.

“Good idea,” Kendo replied. “With any luck, some of them may have passed by now.”
“Yeah, they definitely went this way.” One of the test takers knelt down among the rocky outcrop near the highway and traced his fingers through the drying puddle of blood. “The trail leads around the corner.”

“Could be a trap,” one of his classmates suggested.

“One way to find out. Move in!” The group of 10 students dashed forward, turning the corner to follow the blood trail. That weaved through the rocks and eventually found the trail stopped at a dismembered arm.

“Holy shit! Someone lost their arm!?”

“Calm down! It’s probably just a Quirk at work,” the leader explained. “This is a trap. Be on you guard. Watch all our sides—” He paused his orders as he turned around and realized the group’s numbers had been cut nearly in half. “Where’d— Where are the others!?”

“Oh shit! Guys?” The six remaining students carefully retraced their steps and were shocked to find their friends trapped in glass boxes. They were trying to break them down from the inside and talk to their classmates, but no sound could escape. “What happened?”

“My Air Prison is pretty sweet, huh?” The six still free turned and saw Tsuburaba standing above them on a boulder.

“Quick! Hit his targets!” They threw there testing balls towards Tsuburaba, but all bounced off a shield of air in front of him.

“Nice try, but we’ll be taking your points instead,” Tsuburaba revealed. As if on cue, a giant ball of orange hair leapt out from the rocks behind the group and slammed into them, knocking them away from each other.

“Spinning Cannonball!” While Shishida knocked everyone down, Setsuna pounced on the leader and quickly tapped her ball on his targets before hopping to the nearest one to do the same.

“Beep beep, ‘scuse me, sorry, gettin’ your points,” she loudly proclaimed. “Aw yeah.”

“Block off the exits! We’ll flush those shrimps out one way or another!” On the second floor of a building in the city zone, Shoda and Kinoko hurriedly ducked into a maintenance closet to avoid the five opponents searching for them.

“Crap,” Shoda whispered. “Looks like we’re on our own, Komori.”

“I hope the others are alright,” Kinoko said. “Any ideas, Shoda?”

“…The leader said to seal the exits, so escape will be tough. We’ll probably have to fight no matter what.”

“That’s true. At least we have the element of surprise on our side.” Kinoko pondered a course of action and quickly started gathering spores in her hand. “I have a Super Move that will incapacitate someone, but I’ll need some help pulling it off.”
“What is it?” Shoda looked into her hand and saw the large number of spores condensing into a small white mushroom.

“If you can hit them in the stomach, I can pop this into their mouths.” Kinoko started making more of these small mushrooms, enough for each of their opponents. “Psycho Shrooms. I was able to make a mutated, weak strain of Psilocybin mushrooms after our Super Move training. They can cause hallucinations to someone who ingests it, meaning they’ll be out of commission if I can get it in their mouths. The effect only last for 10 minutes, but they’ll take effect once they hit someone’s tongue.”

“Really? That’s powerful move. Perfect for capture if you can—” Shoda suddenly stopped talking and held his breath when he heard loud stomping coming towards the closet. “Here they come,” he told Kinoko. “I’ll try and hit their stomachs, but we have no clue what their Quirks are. He may have something defensive—”

“Shoda.”

“He may know are location already. His Quirk may have let him hear our plan. We could be walking right into a trap—”

“Shoda!” Kinoko jostled his shoulders roughly, bringing him out of his neurotic rant. “Do you trust me?”

“H-Huh?”

“Do you trust me?” She leaned in close, and with his eyes finally adjusted to the darkness of the closet, Shoda saw her eyes for the first time. They were large and resembled cross-sliced shitake mushrooms, fittingly enough. Kinoko’s eyes captured Shoda’s attention completely. “Because I trust you, Shoda.”

“…Yes. I trust you, Komori.”

“Then get ready. Here they come.” As the door swung open, Shoda pounced at the hulking student and rammed his palm into his stomach. The opponent doubled over and coughed for air, giving Kinoko the opening to flick a mushroom into his mouth and shut his jaw with her hands. After a moment, the boy fell to the floor like dead weight, groaning and drooling on himself. “One down,” Kinoko noted.

“Let’s move before they surround us.” The pair ran from the closet and hurried down the corridor, seeing another test taker walk out across from them.

“They’re down here!” Their opponent’s arm popped off his torso, connected to a chain, and he flung it the pair of U.A. students. Shoda blocked the attack and absorbed the kinetic energy into his body before dashing forward and striking his stomach. Kinoko made her move and fed him a mushroom, taking him out of the fight.

“I see them!” Shoda and Kinoko ducked around a corner to avoid another opponent, who shot balls of fire at them.

“Get on my back,” Shoda instructed. Once Kinoko was holding to him tightly, Shoda jumped around the corner and fired his stored energy from his foot. He flew down the hall and elbowed his opponent, sending him crashing into the wall in an unconscious heap.

“I’ve got you now!” From his right side, a girl with a giant reptilian tail slammed Shoda into the wall. Kinoko hopped from his back just in time to avoid it and leapt onto the girl’s back.
“Who wants snacks?” She asked while shoving a mushroom in her mouth. “You do!” The tailed girl slumped forward, letting Shoda out from the wall. “One left,” Kinoko stated.

“Found you!” Kinoko was suddenly pushed into the wall by their last opponent, who immediately cornered Shoda. As she got back to her feet, Kinoko saw this colossal opponent unload a furiously quick barrage of punches, aided by the rocket thrusters in his elbows and the steel knuckles he wore. “I'll pound you into paste, little guy!”

“Shoda!” Kinoko yelped. The student finally stopped his onslaught when it looked like Shoda had fallen unconscious in the dented steel wall.

“Don’t worry. I didn’t forget about you,” the brutal student growled. He turned to face Kinoko, who started backing away, but he was stopped by a small hand grabbing his wrist.

“One more round,” Shoda grumbled as he pushed himself from the caved-in wall. Every hair on his head stood on end and crackled with bright silver energy. “I didn’t hear no bell.”

“How the hell are you still up?!” his opponent roared. He threw a massive right hook towards Shoda’s head, but the shorter boy took a fighting stance and sent all of his stored energy into his arms. He threw a lightning-fast flurry of palm strikes that all landed within a single second.

“STORM IMPACT!” Once all of his strikes had landed, the test taker flew down the hall, passing out long before he crashed at its end.

“Shoda… that was incredible!” Kinoko cheered while jumping onto Shoda, hugging him tightly.

“Well, I mean… I guess. A little bit.” Shoda couldn’t continue to humbly brush off his victory as Kinoko planted a big kiss on his cheek, making his mind go blank.

“C’mon. Let’s go hit their targets,” Kinoko said. “Shoda? Hellooooo~? Anyone home?”

Yui ran through the third floor of the city area building, making sure no one was following her. As she passed by the wall of windows, she looked down at the wild battle in the street just in case any of her classmates were down there. As she searched, an explosion shook the building and shattered a few windows further down the hall. Yui was startled, but quickly recovered and continued her search. There was no one she recognized, so she continued running until she reached the small room where the duo she had found earlier had holed up. “How is he?” she asked.

“I’ve been better,” Honenuki groaned as he struggled to move his arm.

“Did you find anyone else?” Kuroiro asked. Yui shook her head, making the white-haired boy seethe to himself. “Crap. We can’t find our class, we’re running out of time, our strongest fighter is hurt, and some shithead enemies can pop out from nowhere at any time.”

“Look on the bright side,” Honenuki suggested.

“…And that would be?”

“I don’t know, but we should find one.”

“Now’s not the time, Juzo,” Kuroiro grumbled. “Can you stand?”

“Yeah, just help me up.” While Honenuki got to his shaky legs, Yui stared blankly out the destroyed across from the doorway, still looking for the others.
“Still no sign of Kendo,” Yui stated. “I hope she’s OK.”

“I’m sure she’ll be fine,” Kuroiro said. “With Juzo hurt, you’re our muscle, Kodai. We need to find a manageable number of opponents and take them down.”

“Yeah, you seriously don’t wanna be outnumbered here,” Honenuki pointed out while rubbing his shoulder.

“Shouldn’t we wait for the others?” Yui asked. “Kendo may be looking for us. We should try finding her before—”

“Oh my fucking god, STOP TALKING ABOUT KENDO! FOR ONCE!” Kuroiro suddenly snapped.

“Dude, are you OK?” Honenuki asked.

“No, I’m not!” Kuroiro barked as a vein in his forehead bulged out. “You just got thrown across a city block and got jumped, and now the only person we have who can fight is the most dependent person on the goddamn planet!”

“Shihai, calm down!” Honenuki yelled back, trying to rein in his boyfriend. “Don’t start berating her because you’re stressed. Take a deep breath and calm down.” Kuroiro glared at the floor, but then closed his eyes and took a few deep breaths. After a minute, his features softened and his grip on Honenuki loosened.

“You’re right,” Kuroiro relented. “I went too far. Kodai, I’m sorry for snapping at you like that.” The boys looked to Yui for an answer, but she wasn’t reacting. She was just facing the windows with her back to them.

“…I forgive you,” she began, “but still… you’re right.” The vulnerability in her voice was palpable, but she didn’t seem upset at Kuroiro. It felt more to the boys like she was having an epiphany of some kind. Like something new was worming it’s way into her mind. “I’ve always been this way. Passionless. The people I look up to are the ones who’ve shaped my life. Always…”

“Big brother! Come look!” Yui bounced up and down on her bed, waiting for her sibling to arrive.

“What’s up?” he asked.

“Look! Look!” Yui clenched her tiny muscles and started humming, trying to focus. After a beat, her body began to shit and grow even larger than her teenage brother.

“Oh wow! Look at you!” Yui lost her focus and shrunk back down, but was then scooped up in a hug by her brother. “With that kind of power, you’re definitely be a great hero!”

“Think so?!?”

“I know so, Yui.”

“It was my brother who first told me I could be a hero,” Yui revealed. “He was my whole world when I was little. The only family I had. I always believed in him… even after he disappeared. Since then, Kendo was the first person who believed in me that I could believe back.” Yui turned away from the window and looked at the boys. For once, they didn’t see an stoic face, but one with
profound emotion and resolve. “I know that I can be dependent sometimes. On Kendo, Mt. Lady, our teachers… but I want to strike out on my own. I’d like to carve my own path alongside the rest of our classmates. Because… you’ve all become my family.”

“Kodai…” Kuroiro was too shocked for words. He still felt a pit of guilt from what he had said, but it was outweighed from the shock of seeing Yui like this.

“I’ll create a distraction. While I do that, you can grab people with your Ebony Lure.” Yui strolled to the broken window and looked out over the battle in the street. “Also, please… call me Yui.” With that one request, Yui leapt from the window towards the street. Her body grew rapidly to her new 33-feet limit and fell onto her hands and knees. While the other test takers were stunned from her sudden appearance, Yui drew her hands up and started striking the concrete with her palms.

“Titan Tremor!” Her palm strikes shook the ground beneath them and toppled many contestants, giving Kuroiro the chance to snatch them up.

“Ebony Lure!” Yui continued her assault on the ground as Kuroiro grabbed opponents, but she felt attacks start hitting her back. As pain shot up her spine, Yui did not falter. Instead, she gritted her teeth and sped up her Titan Tremor, sending people flying away and breaking apart the ground.

“Yui, shrink!” she heard Kuroiro yell. With her new control over her Quirk, it only took Yui a single second to return to her normal size, allowing Kuroiro to grab her with his Ebony Lure. She was pulled up from the ground, allowing her to see the extreme damage she had caused. In the past, this wouldn’t have made Yui feel anything, but now, with her hero career on the line and friends by her side, she was overjoyed to see how strong she was.

*I hope you’ll see me now, big brother. Wherever you are. Today is the start of my new life. A life with a big, happy family. Today… is my rebirth.*
“OK, that’s 71 people who’ve passed,” Mera announced to the contestants. “Let’s hurry this along, people.” As the remaining U.A. students hit the ground below the highway, Kendo surveyed the area and made sure they weren’t already being preyed on by other test takers.

“Looks like we’re clear for now,” she announced. “I can hear fighting in the city, so we should head that way.”

“It should just be stragglers by now,” Monoma theorized. Just above, everyone saw Reiko descending from her scouting.

“Good news,” she began. “I saw the others. They passed. We’re all that’s left.”

“That’s great!” Kendo cheered.

“Setsuna, Shishida, and Tsuburaba we’re entering the anteroom when I checked. Kuroiro, Honenuki, and Yui were just exiting the city area. Shoda and Kinoko were about halfway between… and they were holding hands.”

“Aww, that’s sweet,” Pony cooed.

“So, it’s just us?” Awase asked. “Then we won’t have to search around for them and can head straight for the action.”

“Let’s move out!” Kendo instructed as they headed for the city area.

“Any plans, buddy?” Tetsutetsu asked.

“I’ve got one cooking,” Monoma replied. “If we use our full force, we can take out as many people as we need and scare anyone else off. We just have to make sure 24 people get stuck so we can all pass.”

“WE’VE GOT THIS!” the iron boy screamed.

“Hell yeah, we do!”

Deep in the city area, at a four-way intersection, many small groups from different school were locked in a frenzy of combat. On the top of a building on the southwest corner of the intersection, Bondo, Fukidashi, Reiko, and Monoma stood in wait for their friends to reach their positions.

“Looks like we’re almost set,” Monoma said. “Bondo, you ready for this?”

“You can count on me.”

“Fukidashi, while he’s on offense, you make sure he’s defended. Got it?”

“I’m on it, my dude!”
“Yanagi, if you want to sit this out until the end to protect your last target, that’s fine, but if you want to come with me, I’m happy to have you.”

“Uuuuuh… Yeah, sure, I’ll tag along.”

“Looks like everyone’s ready,” Fukidashi said. “Monoma, you wanna get everyone’s attention? You seem to have a knack for getting people to hate you immediately.”

“Well, you know what they say,” Monoma began as he stepped onto the roof’s corner, looking out over the battling students below. “Do what you love… HEY, FUCKFACES!” The copycat’s obnoxious shout caught everyone’s attention almost immediately, drawn by the sheer annoyance it exuded. “Yeah, all of you can suck it! Class 1-B is the greatest class to ever come to U.A. and none of you can hold a candle to us! AHAHAHAHAHA!” The test takers below all took out their testing balls and aimed squarely for Monoma, eager to take him out. “Fukidashi, blind them!”

“Solar Flare! SHIIING!” Fukidashi poked his head over the side and activated his Quirk, blinding everyone in the streets below with his shining speech bubble head. “Now you, Bondo!”

“Splattergun!” As glue rained down on the test takers, who were still blinded by Fukidashi’s attack, the ones who weren’t immediately stuck signaled for a retreat.

“We gotta go or we’ll get trapped!”

“This way! It’s a blind spot!” A group of people ran to the southern street, which Bondo couldn’t aim for, but this exit was blocked off by two U.A. students.

“Better stay the fuck back!” Kamakiri warned as he slashed his mandibles at his opponents like scissors. “Bitches get stiches, hear me?!”

“All too well. Such foul language you use,” Ibara grumbled as her vines dug into through the street. The vines popped out under her opponents’ feet and pulled them towards the ground, pinning them. “Vine Entombment: Three Days Grace!”

“That street’s blocked!” one of the other schools’ leaders yelled. “Double back and head north!” As that group ran away from Ibara and Kamakiri, another pair blocked their way.

“Pony gonna kick all your asses!” The centaur girl ran through the crowd and pounded people back with powerful kicks, giving Bondo an opening to nail them with his Splattergun. As she attacked, Tetsutetsu was at her back, blocking any attacks and flooring people with his iron fists.

“I thought you upperclassmen were supposed to be strong! SHOW ME SOME GRIT!” he screamed.

“These guys are fucking crazy!”

“Let’s head east!” The number of opponents was quickly thinning, but a sizable number was still trying to escape to the east. However, Kendo and Rin held the line and kept them in range of Bondo’s glue.

“Sorry, but we’re in a rush!” Kendo said while swiping people back with her giant hands.

“There’s nowhere to run!” Rin added.

“T-Try the west!” another school decided. As they ran close by the building Bondo was on to avoid his glue, they were suddenly beaten back by Kaibara and Awase.
“We’ve almost got them all! Keep it up!” Kaibara yelled while pushing people back with his Tornado Gauntlet. A couple of students were able to get past him, but Awase saw them and pulled out his pair of Capture Guns, shooting them both. Once they were trapped in the nets, he pushed them down and fused them to the street.

“You fuckers ain’t gonna beat us!”

“We’re trapped! There’s nowhere to run!” one of the students in the middle yelled.

“Just one. We go up!” The few people with flight-based Quirks tried escaping into the sky, but were met by Monoma and Reiko.

“Sorry, but U.A. controls the skies too!” Monoma announced while swatting a few down with an enlarged hand. Reiko kicked down the rest, letting Bondo hit them with this glue and stick them to the ground. Before long, everyone still in the intersection was either glued to the ground, fused to it, or was pinned by vines. The U.A. students converged in the middle, making sure no one was trying to come after them from down the streets.

“Looks like anyone on the outskirts that we didn’t hit was scared off,” Reiko noted.

“Rightfully so,” Monoma added. “Now, let’s hit some targets.”

“Yes! Yes! Did you see that!?” Kan cheered from his seat. “Those’re my kids out here! Everyone in my class has passed!”

“You must be so proud,” Aisa commented indifferently.

“Of course, I am! Just goes to show how powerful they are! No matter what, they have each other’s back!” While Kan continued his excited cheering, Aisa scanned the stadium for her own students.

Where are you, Vicky?”

…Where… am I? What happened? As memories of what she had been doing went into her mind, Victoria’s eyes shot open. She pushed herself up off the concrete and looked around, realizing she was in Kobayashi’s forest. “Is anyone here?”

“That’s 88 people passing,” she heard announced. “We’re almost done with this round, people.”

88… so, the test is still going.

“Finally up?” She was jolted from her thoughts by the voice of Daisuke on her right. “I healed you right away, but we weren’t sure if you’d wake up in time to pass.”

“Daisuke? Where’s everyone else?”

“Anteroom, by now. I should be heading there too.” Victoria looked over her classmate and saw his targets were glowing blue.

“Students who have passed should head to the anteroom immediately,” his targets aid.

“I heard you, shitty voice!” Daisuke barked at his targets. “Anyway, Gou, Mitch, and Namida brought defeated opponents for us noncombatants, so everyone’s passed so far. They grabbed a pair for you too.” He gestured to Victoria’s other side, where two unconscious people from another school where laying. “Go ahead and hit their targets.” Victoria stood up and took out a testing ball,
but didn’t make a move. She just stood there, staring at the ball. “What?” Daisuke asked in annoyance.

“…Should I?” Victoria wondered out loud. “I lost the fight. If you didn’t heal me, I would still be out cold and I’d fail.”

“Vicky, this is seriously not the time for this,” Daisuke angrily claimed. “Just hit the stupid targets. If you really want to, you can throw the next round, but for now, just hit the fuckin’ things.” She didn’t make a move, despite his prodding. “What the hell happened to your goal? You want to help fix Gaikoku’s reputation, right? Then you have to do this!”

“…He’s already been defeated. I can’t fix our reputation, and now… my mistakes can’t be forgotten.” She instinctively moved her hand to her scarred eye, where she felt another eyepatch over it, like her first one. “You had a spare?”

“I always have a spare,” Daisuke said matter-of-factly. “Just hit the targets. Our classmates are waiting”

“…Fine.”

Chapter End Notes

Just a quick chapter to wrap up the first phase. Next chapter, we'll get some answers.
“That’s 100! The first phase is officially done! Woohoo!”

“He’s certainly gotten energized,” Monoma commented. He and the remaining 1-B students had made it to the anteroom to regroup with their classmates. As they entered, they were quickly pounced on by Setsuna and Tsuburaba.

“Finally! You guys really took your sweet time!” Setsuna greeted.

“That’s everyone. Looks like we all passed,” Tsuburaba said while counting the group coming in. “Yo, we got everyone!”

“Alright!” Honenuki yelled from a bench across the room.

“Good to see everyone,” Shishida greeted. “If anyone is hungry or dehydrated, they have a snack table. Nearby is the key to take off your targets—”

“Food!” Awase and Tetsutetsu cheered together before running off. The others slowly headed off too, leaving Kendo, Monoma, Setsuna, Reiko, and Shishida near the entrance.

“How were things on your end, Reiko?” Setsuna asked.

“Kendo got caught by some Gaikoku weirdos, but we helped fight them off. Apparently, Kendo went wild on that bitchy leader girl.”

“Yeah, I kinda lost my cool for a second,” Kendo divulged with an embarrassed chuckle.

“Yeah, we found some weirdos too,” the lizard girl said. “It sounded like they had beef with us too. Also, one of them had a snake head and I’ve been kinda watching her from afar.”

“Shocking,” Reiko quipped.

“Did they say what it was about?” Kendo asked. She scanned the crowd for a snake head and found Habuko across the room, sticking close to Sekigai.

“Not sure, but it’s something complicated with that white-haired chick. Right, Shishida?”

“That’s correct.”

“Attention, all. Attention,” they heard over the loudspeakers. “Our losing contestants have almost finished leaving, so keep your eyes on the monitor and we’ll continue soon.” The attention of the five U.A. students was then drawn to the entrance, where they saw Daisuke and Victoria enter alongside the last of the winning students. As soon as Kendo saw Victoria, their eyes met and a palpable tension grew.

“Oh boy, here we go,” Reiko commented.

“Maybe she won’t come over,” Shishida hoped. He was immediately proven wrong when Victoria slowly stomped their way. “Or not. Kendo, if you’d like, I can deal wi—” Kendo ignored the hairy boy and walked to meet Victoria halfway. “I don’t like where this is going.”

“Who knows? Maybe those’re friendship glares,” Setsuna suggested. The random students who had come in beside Victoria all filed away as they sensed an argument coming. No one was close by
when the two girls reached each other.

“Itsuka Kendo,” Victoria growled.

“Whatever you have to say to me, I don’t want to hear it,” Kendo responded quickly. “I don’t know what your problem is with us, but I want nothing to do with you.”

“That’s not how this is going to work, Itsuka.” Victoria was seething, turning red from her hot emotions. “I won’t let your school embarrass ours again. I don’t even care that no one in your specific class was involved. The mere fact that it was U.A. has sealed your fate beneath my heel—”

“So, it isn’t even us?! It’s just our school?!” Kendo yelled, starting to match Victoria in anger. “You’re just taking out your anger on us?! Is that it?!”

“Very justified anger, I assure you! Gaikoku’s reputation can never recover after what U.A. has done, so I will take revenge!”

“I don’t care about your school’s reputation! What the hell did U.A. do to make you hate us anyway?!”

“Kendo, calm down,” Monoma said while quickly coming to her side. “Don’t let her get to you.”

“You really want to know?!” Victoria snarled.

“Yeah, I wanna know!” Kendo growled back, now being held at bay by her boyfriend.

“Because of some random U.A. first years, I can never fight the Hero Killer again!” The shouting of that name brought the whole anteroom to a silence. The silence didn’t last as a multitude of powerful explosions shook the ground below them. On the monitor in the anteroom, everyone could see the many testing areas they had been fighting in being bombed.

“What the hell’s happening?!” Setsuna asked.

“Are we under attack?” Reiko wondered.

“Good timing,” Monoma said under his breath. Everyone watched as the buildings toppled, the mountains crumbled and fell, and the highway sank onto a slope. Before long, the arena was in shambles.

“The situation is this,” Mera announced. “A large-scale villain attack has occurred. The final round of the test will have you rescuing the victims.”

“We’re doing rescues?” Reiko asked. “OK, but who are we rescuing?”

“Look, in the rubble,” Shishida pointed out. Crawling out into the debris fields was little kids and old people, spraying fake blood on themselves.

“These will be the civilians you will be rescuing,” Mera began. “Professional persons in need – the Help Us Company, or H.U.C. for short. Your goal? Find the H.U.C. victims scattered around the arena. From now on, we’ll be scoring you on a demerit system based on how well you do. You all start with 100 points, but drop below the benchmark and you fail. You start in 10 minutes.”

“10 minutes,” Kendo repeated. The monitor turning off flipped her attention back to her argument, but she found Victoria already walking away with Daisuke.

“Don’t bother going after her,” Monoma recommended.
“She was talking about Stain,” the ginger girl said to herself. “She fought him?”

“She did.” The U.A. group’s attention was drawn another Gaikoku student coming towards them.

“It’s you,” Reiko said. “You name is Miru, right?”

“Yeah. Name’s Miru Kimi. I figured Vicky wasn’t gonna finish her little ‘explanation,’ so I’ll tell you the rest.”

“Now I remember you guys,” Monoma said. “I heard about your school online. Gaikoku Academy was the school Stain attended that made him think all pros were selfish and greedy.”

“That’s us,” Miru confirmed. “Our teacher was in his class and recognized him long before his arrest. She knew how bad things would be for us if he kept up his crusade. Vicky wanted to catch him herself in order to mitigate the P.R. nightmare that would come from his personal history coming out. She wanted to prove Gaikoku wasn’t like what Stain saw.”

“She went after him alone?” Kendo asked. “So, her eye…”

“Yup. It happened a couple of weeks before this school year started…”

In a dark alley, far away from the city streets, the Hero Killer looked over his latest handiwork. The fight had come out of nowhere, but it was a quick victory nonetheless. He looked down at the young girl at his feet, blood draining from her head and pooling on the cement. “I won’t… be beaten… so easily,” she claimed. The girl looked up at him with her one remaining eye and glared, tears still streaming down just one side of her face. “You will… no longer… tarnish Gaikoku’s… legacy.” She struggled to move, but Stain’s Quirk kept her immobile. He raised his sword over the girl and brought it down through her shoulder, making her cry out.

“You’re here because of that school?” Stain asked. “You’re angrier about that collection of fakes’ reputation then my purging?” He roughly pulled his sword from her body and lowered it by her head. “You’re just like my old classmates. Greedy. Wrathful. You don’t understand what true heroism is.” He kicked her onto her back and brought his sword up, radiating a killing intent. “Your death will be another step to a world of true heroism, child. Goodbye.” He watched the child’s face twist into mortal fear, but before he could finish her off, a series of needles were thrown into his arm. Stain instinctively jumped back and saw his new opponent across the alley, recognizing her as Aisa Sarutobi, AKA the ninja hero: Hakkenden.

“Get away from her!” she yelled. Stain considered fighting for a brief moment before feeling his arm go numb. He realized they must’ve been coated in a tranquilizer and decided to retreat. As he fled to the rooftop, he heard the ninja hero calling out to her student, desperate to keep her awake and alive.

“She’s trying to save that lost child?” he pondered. “How useless. Someone like her is a blight to society.”

“After her fight with the hero killer, Vicky changed,” Miru revealed. “She was quiet for a while. Then, once she heard Stain was held off by U.A. first years, and then defeated by the U.A. alum Endeavor, she really went off the deep end.”

“So, she was envious of those students getting to fight against him and help bring him down?” Monoma asked.
“Yup. It only got worse once Stain’s history came out. Gaikoku’s been receiving a lot of flak ever since.” Miru shrugged indifferently and began walking away. “I don’t really care about you guys or Stain or our schools. No skin off my ass, but having your class rep acting like that is weird, y’know? See ya.” With Miru gone, the U.A. students were left to process all this new information.

“Kendo,” Shishida began. “We should start preparing for the next phase. I’ll show you all where the key to remove your targets is.”

“…Right,” she finally replied. “This has nothing to do with us. I won’t let it distract me. We have a test to pass.”

“Well said.” Shishida led the group across the anteroom to the key to remove their targets. As Kendo finished taking hers off and formulating strategies for the next phase, the group was approached by another pair of students.

“Excuse me. You’re from U.A., correct?” Everyone turned to see Sekigai speaking to them, with Habuko hiding behind her. “My name is Kashiko Sekigai. I represent Isamu High School. It’s a pleasure to formally meet.” Kendo was taken aback as the white-haired girl bowed slightly, which she awkwardly copied after a moment.

“Y-Yeah. Itsuka Kendo, class rep. Sorry, but It’s a surprise to have a friendly greeting today.”

“That’s understandable, especially after what just happened between you and that girl from Gaikoku,” Sekigai replied. “We had a small run-in with your classmates that may have given the wrong impression of us, so I wanted to extend a friendlier greeting and make a proposal.” Before Sekigai could continue, Habuko tugged on her sleeve as a reminder. “Before I do, my classmate wanted to ask you a question. Go on, Habuko.”

“O-OK.” The snake-headed girl stepped out from behind Sekigai and shyly bowed in greeting. “My n-name is Habuko Mongoose. I-I was wondering… if you’re from U.A., d-does that mean you know Tsu— I mean, Asui?”

“Asui? Oh yeah, we know her. She’s in the other class,” Setsuna explained. “She’s really friendly and popular with her classmates.”

“Th-That’s good to hear. Thank you f-for telling me.”

“Oh my god, you are so fucking adorable,” Setsuna said in complete seriousness. “Can I just— can I— I’m gonna—” The green-haired girl slowly wrapped her arms around Habuko, who was frozen in shock. Everyone else was silent as they watched. “Snakes are cool,” she mumbled while finally letting go.

“…Anyways,” Sekigai continued, “I wanted to propose an alliance between our schools. I’m afraid that very few of us from Isamu have made it this far – just four, to be exact – and rescuing civilians is always a team effort. My Quirk is well suited to keeping track of many people, so I was hoping we can stick together and all pass.”

“You know, that sounds great,” Kendo immediately replied. “After fighting other schools for so long, having some cooperation would be amazing.”

“Hold on,” Reiko interrupted. “While I agree, I don’t trust you guys completely yet. Setsuna said you may also have a grudge against us. If that guy in the back is your classmate, I’m inclined to agree.” Sekigai looked over her shoulder and saw Fujimi glaring over at the U.A. students, making her groan.
“Dammit, Romero,” she said to herself. “…It’s true that I had a low opinion of U.A. students not long ago, but only for a brief time. I assure you that my intentions are as stated.”

“I believe you, Sekigai,” Kendo began, “but if we did something to you, I’d like to know so I can apologize.”

“That may not be the case, Kendo,” Shishida said. “Miss Sekigai, I hope not to pry, but I noticed your Quirk of keeping track of people seemed very familiar.”

Keeping track of people, Kendo repeated in her mind, and brief grudge against us not long ago… Just then, a lightbulb went off in Kendo’s mind, and she couldn’t stop herself from blurting out “Ragdoll.” She regretted this immediately when Sekigai’s smile drooped.

“…You’re correct,” she answered. “Ragdoll is my aunt. Our Quirks are very similar, so she had trained me a lot when we were younger. After the fiasco with the League of Villains…and what happened to her… I became embittered against you all for a brief while. I thought of you all as too weak to defend yourselves, and that’s why she was…”

“I’m really sorry about what happened,” Kendo said. “I can’t imagine how tough it must’ve been.”

“Nonsense,” Sekigai assured her. “You’ve had it much worse, Miss Kendo. My resent wasn’t logical, so I dropped it quickly. It wasn’t helping me to better myself, so there was no point in keeping it. I’ve since promised to continue Ragdoll’s legacy as a support-based hero. Honestly, meeting here feels a little like fate. I can finally put this fully behind me by cooperating with you all and take my first real step towards that goal.” Sekigai took Kendo’s hand and gave her an earnest grin. “I hope we may work well together, Miss Kendo.” The students of Isamu and U.A. had become so drawn in to Sekigai’s story that most of them, besides U.A.’s resident copycat, had failed to notice a certain blonde Gaikoku student eavesdropping, hearing every word of the Isamu representative.

“That sounds good to me, and please, just Kendo is just fine.”

“I’m happy you’ll have us,” Sekigai said while Habuko waved Fujimi and Tadan. “In that case, this is Romero Fujimi and Dadan Tadan, our other students who’ve passed.” Tadan waved at the U.A. students while Fujimi scowled. “I’ll explain our Quirks in detail if you’d like.”

“Sure. I’ll introduce you to the rest of our class.” As Kendo and Shishida led Sekigai and the others over to where 1-B was, both Monoma and Fujimi had stuck to the back of the group.

“You don’t look too thrilled,” Monoma noted.

“Sekigai may have forgiven you guys, but honestly, I haven’t,” Fujimi declared. “For two whole days, when Sekigai thought the worst had happened, we were there to comfort her. And then, once she found out what exactly happened to her beloved aunt Tomoko, we stayed by her side. After seeing her so destroyed… I can’t help but dislike you guys for being too weak to help yourselves.”

“…We’re not the cause of what happened,” Monoma replied with anger on his tongue, “and none of us could’ve done anything to help her. Don’t talk about this like you were there. You weren’t.”

“I get what you’re saying, but every time I see you, all I can think of Sekigai weeping. Even if my anger isn’t logical, it’s still how I feel.”

“I can understand that. Just don’t make trouble for your class rep if you really care this much. Your top priority should be your allies, not your ‘enemies.’” Monoma’s advice put Fujimi in a contemplative silence as they reached the rest of 1-B, who were looking over Honenuki worriedly.
“Do you think you can still compete?” Kendo asked.

“I’ll be fine,” Honenuki assured her with a toothy grin.

“He got thrown down the street and was jumped by a bunch of enemies,” Kuroiro explained to Kendo. “I hate to say it, but he may be on the sidelines for the most part.”

“It’s a good thing we’re not fighting in this phase,” Shishida pointed out. “It’s just rescue exercises.”

“Yeah. I’ll stay in one place and work on treating the wounded,” the skeleton-faced boy said. “Seriously, I’ll be fine.”

“Then get up,” Kuroiro challenged. Honenuki laughed off the dare and tried to stand, but his damaged legs couldn’t support himself and he flopped back down in his seat. “Yeah, you’ll be a huge help.”

“Well, now what? I’m not sitting out and failing, you guys.” As everyone tried thinking up a way to help him, two people started coming through the crowd.

“’Scuse me, coming through, move it or lose it.” Pushing his way through the 1-B students was Daisuke, who approached Honenuki. “This him?” he asked Namida, who was crouching behind him. She peeked her head out and nodded, having a very guilty expression on her face. “Alright then.” For a moment, no one made a move, but Daisuke suddenly reeled back and punched Honenuki across the face.

“What the fuck?!” Kuroiro shouted. “You lookin’ for an ass-kicking that badly?!”

“Wait, hold on!” Reiko quickly interrupted. “He’s helping us. He has a healing Quirk.” Everyone looked to her confusedly, but then saw Honenuki stand up.

“She’s right,” he said. “I feel totally fine. Hell, I feel better than ever.” Before he could thank the Gaikoku students, Daisuke pivoted around and began to walk off.

“Everybody gets one,” he claimed. Namida looked back at Honenuki, wanting to speak, but she settled for an apologetic bow and scurried away.


“Attention, students.” Everyone heard Mera’s voice abruptly come over the loudspeaker. “You have one minute left. Finish up your preparations and get set for our second phase. Do me a solid and take care of it quickly, OK?”

“We have no time to think about them,” Kendo instructed. “Are you and your classmates ready, Sekigai?”

“We are. You can all count on us.”

“Then get ready, everyone.” While Kendo rallied the class, preparing them for the next phase, Monoma quietly slipped away and followed Daisuke and Namida to the opposite corner of the anteroom where Gaikoku had set up. The students he had trailed joined a conversation between most of the other students about rescue tactics. On a couch nearby, Gou was being awoken by Kobayashi and Miru.

“Stay awake, you dolt!” they both yelled while smacking his head. Monoma quickly located Victoria, who stood alone at the edge of the group.
“I know you heard that Isamu girl’s story,” he bluntly began. Victoria didn’t react, but Monoma knew she heard him. “This last phase won’t be a battle. You know as well as I do that everyone in this room will need to cooperate.”

“…So, what if I do?”

“Just wanted to say so,” Monoma replied. “I like hearing myself talk, you see. I also know that Kendo is very sympathetic and doesn’t hold grudges easily.” Before Monoma could continue, he saw the anteroom begin unfolding and coming apart, just like the room at the start of the exam. “That’s all.” He rushed back to his class in time for the first wave of test-takers to run off.

“Alright, is everyone set?” Kendo yelled. “In that case, let’s get to work!”
“Over this way!” Kendo directed. “There’s bound to be plenty of civilians in the urban area.” The students of 1-B, along with their new allies from Isamu, ran into the heavily wrecked city area in their search for civilians.

“I suggest we split into smaller groups,” Sekigai suggested. “If we all go to the same place, there are bound to be idle hands.”

“Good idea,” Kendo replied. “Everyone, let’s group up and head different ways, but stay close. Try and build your groups around people who can easily search – Reiko, Monoma, Shishida, and Ibara. Sekigai will be our coordinator.” The class quickly split off into groups, one of which was comprised of Kendo, Ibara, Awase, Honenuki, Kuroiro, and Tetsutetsu.

“Waaah! Help meeee!”

“This way,” Kuroiro said, leading the group to a crumbled-in house with a crying child in the center.

“M-My mommy! She got crushed! Waaah!”

“Oh shit!” Tetsutetsu yelled.

“Oh shit?! That’s really what you’re gonna say at a time like this?!” the child asked sarcastically. “Have some control over what you say! You’re supposed to assure me that things will be alright and check my condition! Minus points!”

“Uh, sorry!” Tetsutetsu quickly said. “It’ll be OK, little buddy! We’ll find your mom!”

“…Waaaaaaah!”

So, we’re being graded by the H.U.C. members, Kendo realized. I’ve gotta watch myself and be super careful.

“I’ve located a woman trapped in the rubble beneath us,” Ibara revealed as her vines snaked through the cracks below her. “There isn’t anyone else underneath.”

“Good job,” Kuroiro complimented. “Can you check the rubble in the surrounding area? Once we make sure there’s no one else buried nearby, Juzo can softened the ground into something more stable and we can mark off this are as a safe zone—”

“I wouldn’t be so sure. This area is very unsafe.” Kendo gritted her teeth when she heard a familiar voice coming up behind them.

“What do you want?” she growled, turning to see Victoria, along with Greta, Mitch, Gou and Kobayashi.

“Look behind you. That building is unstable.” Everyone looked around and saw the apartment building behind them was indeed leaning a little in their direction. “If it’s not secured, any additional shock to it could make it fall. This area is very dangerous, so it must be evacuated as soon as possible.” Kendo grunted while looking over the building, then back at Victoria.

“Sekigai!” she called out. “Tell Bondo and Kinoko to help stabilize that apartment building, then get the rest of his group to check the building’s inside! See if Reiko and Monoma are available!”
“On it!”

“Kobayashi, go assist in stabilizing the building.”

“Sure thing.” As Kendo and Victoria delivered their instructions, Ibara and Kuroiro had pulled a woman out of the rubble that the child identified as his mother.

“I think my arms broken,” she wheezed.

“Got it!” Awase called out as he began wrapping the arm in bandages.

“You forget to get a splint!” the woman chided. “Minus points!”

“Oh, uh, uh…” Awase looked around and tried think of something to splint the arm with, but then saw Mitch approaching him.

“We could work. Let’s see.” Awase held the spike to the woman’s bandages and fused it to them, making the arm they held stiff and immobile. “Perfect.”

“Hey, there’s an old guy under this rubble over here!” Tetsutetsu exclaimed. “Someone help me lift it!”

“I gotcha,’ Gou slurred as they approached the cement slab over the old man. “I’ll lift, you pull him out. One, two, three!” Gou raised the slab up with ease, allowing Tetsutetsu to get the man out of harm’s way. “H-He dooosn… mmlmn…”

“Huh?”

“Gou said that he doesn’t look too injured and that we have a medical area set up down the street in a safer part of the city,” Victoria quickly explained.

“Already? OK then,’ Kuroiro responded as he and Tetsutetsu led the civilians away.

“Greta, can you search for anyone else we can’t see?” Victoria requested

“You got it,” Greta answered while plugging a microphone into the soundboard on her neck. She hummed into the mic, letting out light soundwaves from her mouth towards the ground. “My sonar isn’t picking anyone up in this immediate area, so we should move on. There’s a big cluster down the street.”

“Alright, then let’s all—”

“Where’s this ‘all’ coming from?” Kendo suddenly asked. “Don’t act like you weren’t after my head last round. You guys go on ahead. Me and Victoria need to talk.”

“Alright,” Ibara hesitantly responded, leading the others in the direction Greta had pointed out to them. Victoria looked to Kendo as if she was going to answer, but then turned to Greta and took her microphone.

“Attention, all Gaikoku students,” she said into it, letting Greta’s Quirk send her announcement over a wide area. “Make sure you’re working together with the other schools. Sekigai, the girl with the holographic pad on her arm, is coordinating people, so differ to her if you need a specific person’s Quirk or reinforcements in general. If any first-years are unsure on procedures, then advise them. Make sure to direct them to Daisuke’s triage area with their injured civilians. This area is top priority
for evacuation, so work with whomever is nearby. Get to it!”

“Yes, ma’am!” Kendo heard from all around them.

“Greta, please assist Sekigai and help her make announcements.”

“OK.” Greta prepared to go to her, but saw the white-haired girl already approaching them.

“What’s going on?” she asked.

“It seems like Victoria here thinks I can’t remember all the shitty things she’s said and done today,” Kendo venomously stated.

“This test has become one of cooperation,” Victoria explained.

“I know that, but you seemed hell-bent on making sure we wouldn’t get this far,” Kendo pointed out.

“We don’t have time to spare right now,” Victoria said with her voice raising. “What do you want to make this evacuation go smoother? An apology?”

“You know what? Yeah. I want an apology.” Kendo crossed her arms and glared, thinking Victoria was being sarcastic in her asking.

“Then I’m sorry!” she snapped, surprising Kendo. “I’m sorry for taking my anger towards the Hero Killer out on you and your classmates. It was childish and I regret my actions.” Kendo’s stance softened once she realized the sincerity behind her rival’s words. “Can we just continue to save civilians now? If possible, I’d like to make sure my classmate can pass.”

“…Let me see that microphone,” she demanded. Victoria handed her Greta’s microphone and waited for a reply. “Attention, U.A,” Kendo announced. “From now on, consider the Gaikoku students our allies. Cooperate with them in rescue efforts like with Isamu.”

“May I?” Sekigai asked, prompting Kendo to hand off the microphone. “You two catch up with the others and help clear this area. I’ll call keep you informed using… pardon me, but what’s your name?”

“Greta.”

“Greta and I will keep everyone on task.”

“Then we’re in agreement?” Victoria asked with hope hidden behind her icy demeanor.

“Looks that way,” Kendo answered while holding her hand out. Sekigai put her hand over hers and Victoria put her hand on top of theirs. “Allies… at least, for now.”

“That’s fine with me.”

Well, what do you know, Mera thought to himself. Looking over the arena, he saw students from many different schools working with each other and steadily whittling away the number of injured and trapped H.U.C. members. The boys upstairs are getting exactly what they wanted. With All Might’s retirement, they knew as single person couldn’t replace him fully, so what our society needs is a future of heroes who will all work in unison. Of course, we’ll have to see what how they react once the situation ramps up. Mera looked over the number of bystanders remaining and clicked his headset on. “We’re nearing the benchmark to send you in. Make sure your sidekicks are all set up.”
“We’re ready whenever you are.”

“And make sure your intern doesn’t hold back on her juniors, OK? We only let you bring her if she promised to show no favoritism.”

“Don’t worry about a thing. Just let us know when to make our entrance.”

“Right,” Mera replied before looking over the data again. *God, I wanna sleep.*

As the rescue effort continued on, the partnership between the three class representatives grew in ease as they worked together. “Four in that outcropping,” Sekigai reported from the city’s entrance. She watched as Kendo and Victoria hopped over the rocks and rubble, which ised to be one of the mountains’ tip, in the arena’s center.

“I see them,” Victoria said. Kendo enlarged her hands and lifted a piece of rubble the four children were ducked under.

“WAAAAAAHH!”

“There there,” Victoria said sweetly while picking one up. “It’ll be OK. I’ve got you n—” Her sweet-talking stopped when the child she picked up started rubbing his face in her chest. “U-Um…”

“Listen, this is just my role. I ain’t happy ‘bout it neither,” the child explained in a surprisingly deep and gravelly voice. “You’re gonna come across bystanders who’ll make you uncomfortable. I don’t make the rules.”

“A-Alright then.”

“What’s the matter, Victoria?” Kendo smarmily asked while carrying the other children in her giant hands. “Slowing down?”

“You wish, Itsuka,” the Gaikoku rep retorted with a smirk. They made their way back towards the city, meeting up with Sekigai, Greta, and Ibara.

“We’re making good time,” Sekigai noted. “By my estimate, we’ve got more than 50% of the civilians rescued and in a safe area together.”

“Nice!” Kendo cheered. “Ibara, can you take these kids to the triage center.”

“With pleasure.” Just then, in the mountain area, a huge explosion quaked the stadium.

“What was that?!” Kendo yelled.

“Oh no,” Mera unenthusiastically began, “the villains who attacked before are back and they’re after the civilians. You must fight back the villains and protect the civilians while also saving the ones you haven’t found yet.”

“Seriously! What that hell?!” Kendo heard Kamakiri’s voice coming their way and saw him, Yanagi, and Fukidashi being led to her by Monoma. “They just keep throwing bullshit at us!”

“No use complaining about it. We’ll just have to divide and conquer,” Kendo suggested. “Our strongest fighter will fight the villains, our best searchers find the rest of the H.U.C. members, and our best defenders stay with the civilians.”

“We have more reinforcement coming,” Sekigai said. “Over here!” Joining them was a group of
Fujimi, Tadan, Mitch, and Gou. “Can anyone get me high enough to see our opponents?”

“Leave it to me,” Reiko offered. She grabbed Sekigai and floated her up high, where she saw an army of black-and-gray-suited men with strange guns coming through a hole in the arena wall in the destroyed mountain zone.

“It just seems to be minions. Where’s the leader?” Sekigai would immediately regret asking this as the leader showed herself, standing above her minions with a sidekick at her side. “Th-That’s… the number 9 hero, Ryukyu!”

“It’s not just here we have to worry about,” Reiko added nervously. “She brought a powerful ally. One of U.A.’s Big Three – Nejire Hado.”

“Ooooh! It’s like a big, broken amusement park!” Nejire practically squealed.

“Don’t get too distracted, Nejire,” Ryukyu advised. “Remember why we’re here.”

“Right! I’ll get to it!”

“Don’t forget your promise to treat all test takers equally. You cannot show any favoritism to the U.A. students.”

“Don’t worry about me!” Nejire assured her as she began floating and her expression twisted into something more psychotic. “I never show mercy.”

“That’s my girl,” Ryukyu said, bidding Nejire farewell. “Now, we’ll see how these fledgling heroes deal with this situation. Fight or rescue? Who will choose what? Do we have any diamonds in the rough here? I’m eager to find out.”
“Ryukyu?!?” Victoria screamed in disbelief. “We have to fight the goddamn Dragon Hero?!”

“Looks that way,” Kendo said while tightening her mask. “There’s no use in complaining now. This is the situation and we’ll deal with it like pros. Ibara’s spreading the word to the others and helping the evacuation, so we’ll buy time for everyone else to save the rest of the bystanders.”

“Yes, but—”

“Hey, up there!” Fukidashi interrupted, pointing to the sky. “Nejire’s flying towards the city!”
Looking up, the others saw the blue-clad intern floating way above them and singing a cheery tune to herself.

*I’m up to the eyes and I love everyone*

*Today I could cry, I could reach for the sun*
*I’m walking on air and I’m here and I’m there*
*I travel the sky, but for what? I don’t care*

*Flyyyyyy me straight and fly me high*
*Flyyyyyy me straight and fly me high*

“Pretty ironic for her task of attacking bystanders,” Monoma commented. “Us here should focus on Ryukyu. She’s the real threat here, despite how powerful Nejire is.”

“Right. We can entrust her to our classmates,” Kendo agreed.

“A friend of yours?” Greta asked.

“An upperclassman,” Reiko clarified.

“Hey, I’m gonna head back to the civilians,” Fujimi told Sekigai. “They’re definitely gonna start panicking and that’ll make protecting them even harder.”

“Wait, what’s your plan?” Sekigai asked as Fujimi ran off.

“Crowd control!” he yelled back.

“…Don’t be reckless,” she quietly requested.

“If everyone else is ready, let’s get to work suppressing the attackers,” Kendo ordered. As her group headed through the rubble in the center of the arena, Victoria came closer to her.
“Do you think we have a chance at winning?” she asked as they ran.

“We won’t know until we try.” As they reached a small cliff of rubble, the grouping of students became visible to the small army of costumed minions.

“Ready your cement guns!” Ryukyu commanded. “Fire!”

“Get down!” Kendo ordered as a layer of liquid cement rained down towards them.

“We’ve got his,” Kamakiri asserted while stepping forward, alongside Fukidashi and Mitch.

“FWOOOOOSH!” Fukidashi blew a great whirlwind towards the cement globs, slowing their descent.

“Multi-blade!”

“Spike Storm!” Kamakiri’s mandibles stabbed repeatedly into the sky, taking out cement attacks alongside Mitch’s spikes. “Gou, get her!” On Mitch’s instruction, Gou leapt out from cover, soaring over the minions towards Ryukyu with his fist cocked. The Dragon Hero sidestepped the attack, but seemed impressed with his power as it crushed the stone below.

“Oh dear. I’m glad I dodged that,” she sincerely complimented.

“Gou, get out of there!” Victoria shouted as she watched Ryukyu transform, growing in size and sprouting a tail and wings. Gou whirled around to attack again, but was tail-slapped into the announcing box by the fully-transformed hero.

“God, I wish that was me,” they heard Mera announce with Gou snoring in the background.

“Let’s move out, men!” one of the minions ordered. “Split up and head for the city!”

“Tadan, your missiles!” Sekigai ordered. “Shoot now!”

“I-I’d rather avoid violence,” he meekly said before Kamakiri ran to him and got threateningly close to his face.

“You shoot that goddamn dragon with your missiles or so help me god, I’ll shove my foot so far up your ass, you’ll have to dig it out with an ice cream scooper!”

“That’s a colorful threat,” Reiko commented.

“I-I g-guess. I-If it’s for civilians,” Tadan began as his missiles prepared for launch, “I have no CHOOOOIIICE!”

“Where’d that energy come from?!” Monoma wondered. Tadan’s missiles launched towards Ryukyu and her minions, but the dragon hero lurched forward and roared mightily. The shockwave of her shout was enough to destroy the missiles long before they reached her.

“They had no effect?” Kendo said. “Maybe we are outmatched…”

In the center of the city area, all of the rescued civilians were trying to be contained and calmed, but the panic they acted out kept them from moving as a group. Ibara and Tetsutetsu were in charge of getting people’s attention, along with Namida and Daisuke, but none of them were having any luck. “Everyone, please calm down!” Ibara pleaded. “We have to evacuate!”
“You’re stupid!”

“You’re stupid!”

“I’m belligerent and old! Grah!”

“They just won’t listen,” Tetsutetsu groaned. “Namida, can you just push them with your water thingies?”

"Doing that could injure them further,” the Gaikoku student pointed out. “We just have to take this slow and hope the villains can be held back by our allies.”

“You said they’re fighting Ryukyu, right, vine girl?” Daisuke asked.

“That’s right.”

“Then I’d better go back them up.”

“Since when have you been the one to rush towards action?” Namida asked as he left.

“I’m in the fucking Hero Course, ain’t I?” he rhetorically asked. As Daisuke ran down the block, he passed by Pony and Tsuburaba running the opposite way.

“Guys! Guuuuys!” they heard Pony shout from down the street while her passenger kept making air barriers. “Trouble! Nejire’s here too!”

“Nejire Hado?” Ibara asked. “If she’s one of our opponents, this is a problem. She can fly straight here.”

“She is!” Tsuburaba revealed, pointing to the rooftops where Nejire lazily floated over his barricades. “We gotta get everyone out of here. I doubt any of us will pass if we let her hit the civilians with any attacks.”

“Who can fight long range?! We also need defense!” Tetsutetsu shouted.

“Leave it to us!” Out of the crowd came Kaibara, Kinoko, Bruce, and Nasuka.

“Mushroom girl, get on my back,” Nasuka ordered, “and hold on tight. I’m not used to passengers.”

“Sure thing.” As Kinoko rode on Nasuka and spread her spores, Bruce and Kaibara began shooting at Nejire with their black balloons and Tornado Gauntlet respectively. Nejire dodged the attacks easily, however, and began descending towards the civilians.

“Wow, you guys are strong,” Nejire complimented. “Betcha that I’m stronger though.”

“This is bad,” Tsuburaba growled.

“Get back on,” Pony said. “With my speed, you can keep up with her aiming.”

“Yeah, that’s—” Before he could hop back on his classmates, Tsuburaba saw Fujimi sprinting down the street. “It’s him. The guy with that weird Quirk.” In an instant, Tsuburaba understood what the Isamu student was coming to do. “Pony, bring that guy here now!”

“Okie dokie,” she answered while running off. Tsuburaba ran back towards the civilians and began making a barrier between them and Nejire.
“So, what’re we dealing with?” Bruce asked. “Y’all know her, yeah?”

“She can turn her own vitality into shockwaves,” Kaibara explained. “She’s able to float that way too. Have you ever seen Dragon Ball Z?”

“O’ course.”

“That.” Kaibara shot more wind from his gauntlet, but Nejire flew around his attack playfully. Bruce shot a balloon at her, but she backhanded it away and stayed put against the wind pressure once it popped.

“That’s not doing much,” she pointed out. Nejire then held her arms down towards the H.U.C. members and forced a blue light into her gauntlet-covered hands. “This’ll be big and loud, but it won’t hurt the people much. You should treat it seriously though. If I were a real villain, I could kill them all easily.”

“She is way too chipper about this!” Nasuka noted.

“Output: 15%. Wring Wave!” Nejire launched her blast towards the H.U.C. members, but a giant mushroom sprouted in its path, blocking most of it. The energy that did make it past was held off by Tsuburaba’s barrier. “Wowie! So cool! Maybe I should stop holding back!”

“Please don’t!” Kinoko begged.

“Nope! I’m gonna get serious,” she announced while cracking her knuckles, her face becoming more unnerving by the second. “You’ve all piqued my interest.”

“We’ve gotta move the bystanders now!” Tetsutetsu said.

“I’ll try holding her back,” Ibara announced. She clasped her hands together and sent her vines forward, trying to encircle Nejire in them. For a moment, they seemed to work and Nejire was cocooned, but Ibara felt her vines being pushed away in all directions. In a sudden burst, her vines were shredded by a swirling dome of energy.

“Here’s my Spinning Shield,” Nejire revealed. She put her hands above her head and moved the energy surrounding her into her palms. “From there, I’ll move into this!” She threw her hands forward and shot a drilling blast down at Ibara. “Spiral Death Beam!”

“Look out!” Tetsutetsu wasted no time in diving into the attack, blocking the energy with his steel body.

“Tetsu!” Ibara said in worry as he fell to one knee.

“Oh man,” he groaned. “I hope that was her strongest attack.”

“It wasn’t!”

“Crap.”

“Just hold her back as much as you can,” Tsuburaba requested, having finished most of a dome around the civilians. “I need an airtight seal around them, so make sure she doesn’t break my barrier.”

“Why?” Tetsutetsu asked. “Shouldn’t they be running?”

“No time to explain! Just protect me, Pony, and her rider!” he instructed before going back to his
shield creation. Ibara and Tetsutetsu looked back down the street and saw Pony carrying Fujimi towards them. However, Nejire had also noticed them and was preparing an attack.

“Look out!” the iron boy shouted. “Someone protect them!”

“I’ve got them!” Kinoko announced as she sped towards them on Nasuka’s back, leaving a trail of spores on the concrete.

“Output: 20%. Wring Wave!” Nejire launched another swirling blast, but Kinoko’s mushrooms sprouted just in time to hold off the energy blast. Pony galloped ahead and reached the civilians, ducking around the dome to the small opening Tsuburaba had left.

“In here!” Tsuburaba guided. Fujimi tucked and rolled off Pony’s back into the crowd of civilians as the tubes around his costume filled with pink gas. Once Tsuburaba sealed his barricade, there was a burst of mist inside that obscured the civilians completely.

“Oooh! What’s that?” Nejire asked before attacks from Kaibara, Bruce, and Namida forced her to dodge around in the air.

“Now what?” Tetsutetsu asked.

“Ibara, once the gas is clear, break the dome and lead everyone away,” Tsuburaba instructed. “Use your vines as leashes and just pull them in the right direction. Quick! The mist is clearing!” Ibara didn’t have time to question her classmate, so she sent a huge bundle of vines around the dome and squeezed. As the solid air dome cracked apart, the pink gas went back towards the center and flowed into Fujimi’s body.

“Panicking civilians may be hard to guide and control,” they heard Fujimi say, “but mindless zombies will follow your lead!”

“Goodness!” Ibara gasped upon seeing the zombified civilians.

“Making every one of them walk away is too much of a strain,” Fujimi explained with a struggled voice. “I can keep them from rampaging, but you have to help them escape.”

“Alright, I understand,” Ibara said.

“I’ll cover you from behind,” Namida offered. “Everyone else, keep Nejire off our tails!”

“Right!”

“I’m getting so excited,” Nejire said to herself. “All these cool powers with neat users. Heeheehee. I’m gonna go all out!”

“Everyone attack at once!” Sekigai commanded. “Overwhelming her with numbers is our best shot!” Kendo was the first to leap into action, running towards Ryukyu with Monoma following close behind. “Ranged fighters, attack!” On Sekigai’s command, a rain of spikes from Mitch, a sound blast from Greta, and Victoria’s Gem Shot assaulted Ryukyu. She raised her claws up to swipe at the incoming pair of attackers, but Kamakiri’s mandibles suddenly clamped down on her wrist, slowing her attack enough for Monoma and Kendo to get in close. Fukidashi made sure her tail wouldn’t swipe at them by hitting it with a big explosion.

“Monoma, my super move!” Kendo yelled.
“Right!” The pair threw their fists up side-by-side towards Ryukyu’s scaly stomach. Just as they reached, their fisted grew to maximum size instantaneously, pushing the dragon hero up. “Instant Uppercut!” Ryukyu was hurled into the air by the attacks, giving everyone an opening to deal some real damage.

“Attack now!” Sekigai screamed. Fukidashi, Tadan, and Greta all hit the dragon hero with their strongest attacks, creating a huge burst of force that upturned rubble and forming a cloud of dust. Monoma and Kendo were blown backwards in a tumble, but were confident the bombardment caused heavy damage.

“Did we get her?” the copycat asked. Everyone watched hopefully, waiting for the dust to clear and reveal a defeated opponent, but they were suddenly assaulted by a massive gust of wind. Kendo looked up and saw the wings of the dragon hero pounding them down the force of its beats.

“I guess not,” she said. “Guys, let’s hit her aga—” She was cut off by Ryukyu suddenly dropping from the sky, crushing her and Monoma beneath her claws. With swing of her tail, Ryukyu took out Kamakiri, Fukidashi, Mitch, and Tadan, burying them with rubble in the process.

“Everyone, get away!” Victoria ordered the remaining fighters. She covered her body in diamond armor and leapt into the fray, but Ryukyu saw her coming and clamped her jaws down over the girls’ torso. The Gaikoku class rep had no time to struggle as she was thrown down into the cracked stone below. With the few moments he had to react, Reiko grabbed Sekigai and flew off, covered by Greta sending out a sound attack. Ryukyu responded with a roar of her own that made Greta fly backwards and sent Reiko spinning into a crash.

“Not my best landing,” the ghost girl admitted.

“She’s far too powerful,” Sekigai realized as Ryukyu stomped towards the city street. “We would need an army to take her on, but if she can keep defeating these small groups, we have no chance.”

“Sekigai!” The two girls looked around when they heard the familiar voice of Habuko. “There you are.”

“Habuko,” the white-haired girl began. “This battle… we need more people or we’ll fail. Please, go find anyone you can.”

“Already done,” Habuko revealed while helping Sekigai and Reiko to their feet. “I came with reinforcements. We can win this, Sekigai.”

“Habuko…” Sekigai thought over her friend’s words and formed a smile. “When did you become so confident?”

“I’m not sure,” she replied, watching another lizard girl run past. “These U.A. students… their attitudes are pretty infectious, right?”

“Agreed.”
As Ryukyu climbed over the piles of stone and finally reached the city entrance, she was greeted by the sight of Yui running towards her while growing in size. As the U.A. student reached her maximum size of 33 feet, now more than a head taller than the dragon hero’s transformed state, she tackled Ryukyu and held her in a bear hug. They went tumbling to the arena’s center, where Yui held Ryukyu to keep her arms and wings immobile. The dragon hero struggled against the grip, but couldn’t get enough leverage to break free. *She’s very powerful,* Ryukyu thought. *I’ll need slip out in my smaller form.* With a speedy transformation, Ryukyu shrunk into a humanoid form, but her hands were still sharply clawed, her back still featured a set of wings, and a tail was still poking out from under her dress. Before Yui could adjust her hold, Ryukyu kicked off from her stomach and took off for the city.

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“Spinning Cannonball Deluxe!” As she flew into the city, Shishida had leapt up from the street and threw his body into hers. As his spinning tackle slowed to a stop, he locked his legs around her wings and grabbed her arms, making them both dive-bomb towards the cement. Shishida tried spinning them around so Ryukyu would land first, but her tail dug between them and flipped him away. While the beastly student spun out his momentum and landed surprisingly gracefully, Ryukyu fanned her wings out and flew low over the city street.

“Ryukyu, hey!” From out of nowhere, Setsuna jumped on Ryukyu’s back and forced them into a crash. “It’s me, Setsuna! How’ve you been?!” Setsuna’s polite and chipper questioning was followed up with brutal slashing attacks from her metal claws.

“Just fine, thank you,” Ryukyu responded while blocking the attacks with her scaly arms and claws. “It seems you’ve also been well.” The draconic pro curled her legs up and tried kicking Setsuna into the air, but to her surprise, Setsuna’s whole body ripped in half.

“Oh, check this out! My Quirk’s gotten way stronger!” Setsuna’s bottom half disintegrated into dust, making her top half regrow the missing pieces immediately. “It’s not just my limbs anymore, but anything below my head! It’s basically a healing factor now! Cool, eh?!”

“Very,” Ryukyu agreed before throwing Setsuna off her. She stood up just in time to block an attack from Shishida and batted him away with her tail. As she turned to continue her trek into the city, she saw Rin lunging at her with a diving stomp.

“Dragon Dive!” Rin’s attack was blocked easily, but he recovered quickly and jabbed at Ryukyu with his scaly hands.

“You’ve improved, Shenlong,” she noted. “You and Indominus both. Tell me, how has your Quirk been strengthened?”

“I can cover my whole body in scales for longer,” Rin answered while trying for a spin kick. “They’ve also gotten more durable.”

“I see. Is that all?” On her left, Ryukyu saw Setsuna jumping at her with a claw slash, but the dragon hero dipped around the attack. “Shenlong, try focusing your transformation on your upper back.” After advising the student, Ryukyu grabbed Setsuna in her arms and launched into the sky with a single wingbeat. “The results should interest you greatly!”

“Aaaaah! I’m excited and terrified!” Setsuna announced.
“Setsuna!” Rin called out. He looked around for a way to reach his opponent when he saw the giant Yui making her way down the street. “Hey, over here!” he called out.

“What’s she doing?” Yui asked.

“I’m not sure, but Setsuna’s in trouble,” Run explained. “You can’t get any bigger, can you?”

“This is my limit.”

“…Then throw me!”

“OK.” As soon as the giantess’s hands wrapped around his body, Rin regretted his request. “Good luck.”

“Wait, maybe this is— AAAAAH!” Rin was pitched into the air straight at Ryukyu, instinctively scaling his entire body over. “H-Hey! Let go of my girlfriend!”

“She’s all yours,” the draconic lady replied. She casually tossed Setsuna at Rin and the two students collided. “Tell me, Shenlong, what’s your landing strategy?” Without waiting for a reply, Ryukyu threw herself towards the street before redirecting up towards Yui, knocking her back with a tail slap to the chin. With his giant ally occupied, Rin and Setsuna fell towards the city with no safe landing planned.

“Fuuuuuuck!” Setsuna screamed.

“My back! My back!” Rin remembered. “My back! My back!” He scaled over his upper back to its limit as they fell, feeling a sharp pain near his shoulder blades. “Is that it?!” he wondered aloud. Once he saw how close the street was, he forgot to question his instructions further and focused on the pain. As the lizard-like couple came close to a messy collision, their direction suddenly changed and they glided over the street, gradually losing momentum.

“Rin, look! YOU’RE FLYING!”

“What?!” He looked over his shoulder and saw a set of draconic wings had torn out of his shirt. With a quick flap, Rin confirmed to himself that he wasn’t imagining it. “Y-You’re right! I’m flying! We’re flying! This is amazing! I can’t believe—”

“TRUCK!” The reptilian duo’s flight was stopped when they crashed face-first into an overturned semi-truck. “…Proud of you.”

“Thanks.”

“Get ready for a big one!” Nejire warned.

“Well, been nice knowin’ y’all,” Bruce said to his U.A. allies.

“You dumbasses better protect me!” Fujimi demanded. “I’m the only thing keeping the civilians from rioting!”

“It’d be easier if you stop bitching!” Kaibara angrily replied. “Kinoko, you have to get more spores out. With Tsuburaba covering the civilians’ tracks, you’re the defender.”

“I’m trying, but I’m running low,” Kinoko said.

“Don’t worry, guys! I can take it!” Tetsutetsu claimed.
“No, you can’t!” Pony pointed out.

“Uh, guys?” Nasuka waved to get everyone’s attention and nonchalantly pointed up at Nejire, who’s attack was almost fully charged.

“Output: 35%…”

“Dammit,” Tetsutetsu growled.

“Hey! Tetsutetsu!” the iron boy looked to his right and saw Shoda sprinting towards him. “I need a boost!”

“A boost?” he asked before a lightbulb went off in his head. “You got it, little buddy!”

“Wring Wave!” Nejire unleashed her powerful blast on the test takers, but Tetsutetsu flung Shoda into the energy and the short student began absorbing the blue wave. “Oh?”

“Shoda!” Kinoko yelped. Everyone watched as the last of the energy entered his body and he fell to the street,, cushioned by a mushroom.

“How’d you do that?” Nejire questioned. “I’ve never seen something like that before.”

“You’re attacks… they’re pure kinetic energy,” Shoda explained as his hair stood up. “I can absorb kinetic energy and send it right back.”

“That’s so interesting!” Nejire squealed. “I’m learning about so many cool things today! Best day ever!”

“Man, she just keeps switching between adorable and psychotic,” Nasuka noted.

“That’s Nejire in a nutshell,” Kinoko added.

“Dang, you were right about this bein’ like Dragon Ball,” Bruce said to Kaibara. “That guy’s turnin’ Super Saiyan.”

“I know, right?!” Pony interjected. “Cool, huh?”


“I can reach her and hit her with my strongest attack,” Shoda began, “but I need a guaranteed hit to ensure our victory.”

“That’ll be a problem,” Kaibara replied. “She was able to use a shield of energy earlier.”

“In that case, we’ll make her use it again,” Tetsutetsu suggested. “Once we break it, you come in for the finisher.”

“Sounds good to me,” Shoda said. “Let’s finish this.”

From the city’s entrance, Sekigai and Reiko watched as Yui grappled with the fully-transformed Ryukyu in the street, all too aware they couldn’t help. “Haven’t you found someone who can fight yet?” Reiko asked.

“I’m trying, I assure you,” Sekigai anxiously stated. “I just need a plan. I need manpower, I need information, I need—”
“What you need is a fucking chill pill.” Snapping Sekigai out from her nervous muttering was Daisuke, who had been waved over by Habuko.

“About time you showed your face,” Reiko said. “We could use your Quirk now more than ever.”

“Right…” he said slowly. After scanning the rubble, he located Victoria sprawled out among the stone. “How many?”


“More like 13,” he said, motioning to the four fighters battling Ryukyu. Daisuke hopped down to his class rep and knocked her forehead, spreading a wave of healing through her body. “Now it’s 12.”

“Nnn… Daisuke?” Victoria blinked and then suddenly shot up. “Where’s Ryukyu? How is everyone?”

“She’s in the city, and everyone’s down for the count,” he replied. “At least, for now. They’ll be fine in a minute.”

“Wait, you’re going to heal them all at the same time? That’s too big of a strain! Daisuke, you could —”

“Don’t get dramatic, Vicky.” As Daisuke found a vantage point to see both the unconscious students and the four still fighting, he removed the pair of B.B. guns from their holsters. “These BBs are made with my cells, so they’ll carry my healing effects.”

“I’m telling you, 12 people at once is too much!” Victoria scolded.

“Well, if I can’t fight, I’m gonna help the ones who can,” he declared while cocking his pistols, “because I am a motherfucking hero.” Before Victoria could convince him otherwise, Daisuke unloaded shots into his allies, sniping the twelve fighters in a matter of seconds. After a moment, he started shaking and fell backwards into his classmate’s arms.

“Daisuke!”

“He’s losing stamina fast,” Sekigai warned.

“You fool,” Victoria reprimanded. “You didn’t have too—”

“So dramatic,” he teased as his energy faded. “I did have to. They’re are allies. We can’t win on our own, Vicky… Look around… Even if you can’t see them… we’re all fighting together.” His voice became lower and finally fell silent as he closed his eyes.

“He’s just unconscious, but I doubt he’ll be awake until we’re done,” Sekigai explained. “It looks like his plan worked, though. Everyone’s status is improving.” The two class reps looked over the rubble and saw the others coming to consciousness.

“Daisuke… you’re right,” Victoria said under her breath. “We can’t do this alone. Even right now, we’re all fighting together.”

“Hey, where’d this forest come from?!” one of the costumed minions yelled.

“Did we make a wrong turn?”
“No, it just came out of nowh— aaaaaah!” The minion was hooked around his body by a fishing lure and yanked from the forest, pulled up to a cliff where Awase, Kaikaina, and Kobayashi were waiting.

“Go ahead,” Kaikaina prompted.

“Got it!” Awase replied as Kaikaina dropped the minion at his feet. He stomped him down and fused his back to the ground before yanking away his cement gun. “Alright! That’s one more down!”

“Here’s two more for you,” Kobayashi said as a pair of trees grew taller, hoisting two sidekicks into view.

“Got ‘em!” Awase declared while shooting them with his Capture Guns. “Let’s keep this goin’!”

“Another big group is heading our way,” Miru warned, peering out of the corner of a building. “Get set… now!”

“Splattergun!” Bondo jumped out of cover and shot the minions, gluing them to the ground and plugging up their guns. “Any more coming?”

“I’ll check around,” Miru answered while activating her Quirk. “Stay frosty, big guy.”

“Right.”

“Up there! Two of them!” The minions all aimed their cement guns up at Kuroiro and Honenuki, but before they could fire, Honenuki jumped out over them. He descended into the center of the group and stomped his legs into the stone, softening it as he landed.

“Planet Waves!” The ground trembled from the mighty stomp and was sent out in a wave all around Honenuki. The minions’ legs were swallowed up by the softened ground, keeping them stuck once it hardened.

“What the— t-take aim, men!” Before they could fire, they felt their guns being pulled away from their hands.

“Pull of Darkness!” Kuroiro sucked the guns from their hands and brought them into his body, leaving them with no means of attacking “Bam! Teamwork, motherfuckers!”

“Hey, what’s the situation?” Kendo asked. “What happened with Ryukyu?”

“Take a look-see,” Reiko said, pointing down the street. “Yui’s got her for now, but she’ll need back-up.”

“She does, but charging in blindly is foolish,’ Sekigai stated, now biting her nails nervously. “I need more information.”

“We don’t have time to get more,” Monoma said. “We’ll need a game plan soon.”

“I know that!” Sekigai snapped. “…I-I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine,” Kendo assured her. “While everyone else comes up, Monoma and I can think up one.”
“No,” Sekigai replied. “You two will be out their fighting. I must contribute how I can. I just…” Sekigai’s anxious declaration was stopped when she noticed something on her holographic sensor. She was looking at Ryukyu through it, which showed the pro’s physical status and location on a mini-map, but something new had popped up. Yellow spots had popped up on Ryukyu’s image over certain body parts, such as the neck, her upper back between her wings, her stomach, and a few others. “What… what are these?”

“They look like they could be her weak points,” Habuko suggested.

“But I’ve never been able to see those,” Sekigai said. “Only aunt Tomoko could.”

“Well, it looks like you can now,” Kendo stated. “You said it yourself that your Quirks were very similar. You’ve pushed you limits and unlocked new strength, Sekigai. At U.A., we call this Plus Ultra.”

“Plus… Ultra…”

“So, you’re already getting ready for your Provisional License Exam? That’s great!” Sekigai was wrapped in a tight hug by her aunt Tomoko, but couldn’t find it in herself to match the older woman’s energy. “I know you’ll do amazing!”

“Thank you, aunt Tomoko,” Sekigai listlessly answered.

“What’s wrong? Not feeling confident?” Tomoko tried forcing eye contact, but Sekigai, wasn’t looking her way.

“It’s not that. I just wish… you could’ve taught me more. This never would’ve happened if U.A. could take care of itself.”

“Hey now, don’t get so spiteful,” Tomoko said, now calmer. “What happened to me was no one’s fault but my own. It was scary, and I’m still pretty sad, but I’d feel worse if those kids didn’t come out of it alive.”

“But—”

“No buts. The past is in the past.” Tomoko poked her finger into Sekigai’s forehead, getting a small peep out of the younger girl. “You and your friends are the future now. Go give it your all, Sensor Girl.”

Alright,” Sekigai began. “I have the information I need. Let’s end this fight and get our licenses.”
“Let’s fucking gooooo!” Tetsutetsu screamed. Pony and Nasuka raced ahead on Nejire’s left and right as Kaibara’s wind attacks and Bruce’s balloons forced her to guard.

“Spiral Shield!” She conjured the swirling dome around her, blocking the spinning wind and cannonball-like balloons, but her move put the group’s plan into motion.

“Get ready!” Kinoko warned. Two huge mushrooms suddenly grew under Pony and Nasuka, allowing them to jump and flank her from both sides.

“Racer Spike!”

“Bronco Axe!” While the two attacks struck Nejire’s shield with surprising force, Tetsutetsu jumped off a black balloon and was launched forward by Kaibara’s Tornado Gauntlet. He screamed as he spun towards her like a torpedo with his fists out.

“IRON APOCALYPSE!” He let loose a flurry of metallic punches that wore away at the energy barrier. The final attack was a haymaker that made a tear in the shield.

“Woah! Good one!” Nejire complimented as the energy moved up into her hands. “Here’s my counter! Spiral Death Beam!”

“Not so fast!” Nejire tried to turn in time to protect herself, but Shoda had leapt towards her from behind with a kinetically-boosted kickoff. “Flash Storm Impact!” Shoda unloaded a barrage of palm strikes on the senior girl, ending with an uppercut to her chin. As he fell, so did his opponent.

“You did it!” Fujimi cheered. “I didn’t think you’d pull it off, but—” His uncharacteristic excitement was interrupted when he saw Nejire falling towards him with her energy attack still in her hands. “Uh, guys?” She plummeted to the cement and unconsciously released her energy in a massive explosion, sending Fujimi flying backwards. “OHHO MAH GAAWD!”

“Oops, uh, sorry,” Shoda apologized sheepishly.

“Huh? Where are we?” While all of the H.U.C. members returned to their normal state, now outside of the city, Ibara and Tsuburaba hopped onto a boulder and waved for attention.

“Your attention, please!” Ibara called out. “In order to safety evacuate you, we were forced to use a Quirk that induced mass hypnosis. It wasn’t our first choice, but our options were low at the time.”

“We apologize for this, but we assure you the situation should be under control now,” Tsuburaba continued.

“That’s… actually pretty smart,” one of the H.U.C. members admitted.

“Yeah, keeping a crowd in line is important, so they acted appropriately.”

“Still, you shouldn’t say that you had little options! That paints you as incompetent!”

“MINUS POINTS!” they all shouted, making Ibara flinch.
“I’m sorry,” she whimpered.

“They really are trigger-happy with these deduction,” Tsuburaba noted under his breath. “Hey, Namida, how are the other schools doing with the evacuation?”

“We should be finished soon,” the Gaikoku student reported. “As they finish up, all we can do it protect those we’ve rescued and hope our allies can win their battles.”

“Just keep her steady, Yui!” Setsuna instructed as she tried for another attack alongside Shishida and Rin. Ryukyu was thrashing around in Yui’s loosening hold and the three attackers were thrown back by a tail slap. “Goddamn, that smarts,” Setsuna moaned.

“We’ve gotta keep trying,” Rin declared as he flapped his new wings. He still hadn’t gotten full control of flight with no running start, but they made him feel cool, so he kept them out.

“We mustn’t let her further into the city,” Shishida agreed. “We’ll try for—“

“Hey, look!” Setsuna said. From down the street, Kendo and Victoria led a charge of revived fighters towards Ryukyu just as she broke free of Yui’s grasp. She swiped around with her claws, but Rin, Shishida, and Setsuna ducked away in time while Yui shrunk to avoid the attacks.

“Told you long enough,” Setsuna joked as she and the others joined with the larger group. “With this many people, we’ve got this in the bag!”

“That’s right,” Kendo agreed. “Sekigai came up with a plan to beat her down.”

“What you need, we’re ready,” Yui added.

“In that case, get set to attack once she gives the signal,” Kendo explained, pointing to the snake-headed Isamu student. “Ready to fly, Habuko?”

“Y-Yes!” she responded as Reiko picked her up.

“If you’re taking flight, I’ll cover you,” Rin offered. “I can do that now! Well, with a running start, I can!”

“Good for you, man,” Monoma complimented as he activated Reiko’s Quirk. “Let’s move out!” Monoma and Rin flew ahead towards the dragon hero, making sure to protect Habuko and Reiko. Ryukyu swiped at them and swung her tail around, but the flying squad dodged the attacks and went above her head. “Get ready…” As Ryukyu raised her head and prepared for a roaring attack, Monoma and Rin and ducked away. “Now!” Habuko locked eyes with Ryukyu and activated her Quirk, paralyzing the hero.

“I got her!” she shouted.

“Attack!” Kendo ordered. The long-distance team of Mitch, Greta, and Tadan let out their strongest attacks on Ryukyu’s exposed stomach, pounding her weak spot.

“BOOOOOOM!” Fukidashi summoned a huge explosion under Ryukyu’s feet, putting the frozen dragon off balance. As she lurched forward, Shishida and Gou dashed between her and delivered powerful punches, sending her into the air. Reiko flew Habuko around to face Ryukyu again, letting her reset the dragon hero’s paralysis as she fell to the ground. Rin and Monoma followed her descent and attacked the side of her head while Yui went behind her and grabbed her tail. She would’ve fell forward, but Kamakiri held her neck in his mandibles, keeping her upright.
“Ready?” Kendo asked as she and Victoria ran forward.

“Of course. A Gaikoku student is prepared for anything,” she assured Kendo as large diamonds grew over her body. “Just be careful with me, alright? I can’t move like this.”

“I’ll try my best,” Kendo replied with a smirk. Victoria jumped into the air and formed larger crystal’s around her body, completely encasing herself in diamond. Kendo enlarged her hand and grabbed Victoria, now wielding the crystal-covered girl like a club. “One last push!” Kendo kicked off the ground and somersaulted in the air, aiming for Ryukyu’s back. “Meteor Diamond Sledgehammer!” With a mighty shout, she brought down the attack on her foe and the two girls’ combined powers finally brought Ryukyu down. Just as they landed, an announcement came over the arena.

“That’s it! All the civilians have been saved! It’s over! We’re done here, folks!”

“Wait, was… was that us?” Setsuna asked.

“No, the test seems to have ended because the last H.U.C. members were saved,” Sekigai explained.

“So… none of what we just did with Ryukyu actually mattered?” The reptile girl’s question poked into Sekigai’s mind like an exhausting splinter, but as she watched the fighters celebrate their victory, she sighed and smiled to herself.

“I wouldn’t say that… but we shouldn’t bring that up to the others.”

“Yeah.”

With the 100 students all back into their school uniforms, the scores were finally tallied and ready to be presented. Everyone had gather in the arena’s center and watched the giant screen for the names of whoever passed to be announced.

“OK, first of all, thanks for all your hard work in the exam everyone,” Mera yawned, back to his low-energy self. “Before I announce the results, I’ll tell you how you were evaluated. There was a two-fold demerit system handled by the H.U.C. members and a member of the Heroes Public Safety Commission that was assigned to watch every one of you exclusively. Basically, your score is based on how little you messed up. The names of those who passed are listed on the screen in alphabetical order, so let’s take a look.” Once the screen flicked on and showed the 83 passing competitors.

“Woah, that’s a lot of passing grades,” Kendo said while looking for her own. “Hey, there I am! I passed!”

“Phew, same here,” Monoma said.

“I passed 8D!”

“Aw yeah! Ya’ll can suck my lizard titties! I’m in!”

“Of course, a hero of darkness could fell this simple task.”

“Right, like you weren’t flipping your lid, Shihai.”

“Looks like we’re heroes, Sen!”

“I never doubted us for a second, Kosei.”
“A splendid showing by us all.”

“Oh yeah! New wings and a new job!”

“What a relief. I thought I was gonna fail for a second there.”

“No way, Shoda! We both did awesome and we both passed!”

“Thank you, Lord, for this blessing.”

“I'M A HERO! YEAH!”

“Dude, Mei’s gonna flip when she hears this! I gotta call my parents too!”

“Pony’s a hero now!”

“Kick ass! Mandiblade is licensed and ready to fight!”

“Shinso’ll be so jealous.”

“Nice.”

“Mhm.”

“We all passed!” Kendo cheered. “The twenty of us are officially licensed!” The U.A. students raised there fists up and let out a resounding “Woo-hoo!”

“Congratulations to you all,” Sekigai interjected as the Isamu students joined them. “I’m overjoyed to report that we four have passed as well.”

“Nice!” Kendo complimented. “Hey, Victoria! How’d you guys do?”

“Do you even need to ask?” she questioned sarcastically. “Of course, all of Gaikoku’s students have passed!”

“Then our alliance was a success,” Kendo said. “From now on, we’re all semi-pros. The next generation of heroes is officially on the job!”

As the sun began to set on the National Bespin Sky Arena, Vlad King stood outside the bus to U.A., waiting for his students to arrive with their new licenses. “Oh Vladdy!” He cringed when he heard Aisa approaching him. “Seems like are classes are pretty close now, huh?”

“Looks that way,” he replied.

“We should setup some joint training in the future. Everyone’s talking about how this next generation needs to be working together. How does that sound?”

“Hm. That does sound like a good idea—” Kan stopped himself when he noticed Aisa’s playful grin. “No! I’m not saying yes to see you! This is about the kids!”

“Sure it is,” she replied while walking away. “Well, you know how to reach me, so we’ll set something up in the future. Good luck out there, Vlad.”

“Same to you,” he responded courteously before exhaling. “Geez, that woman sure likes pushing my buttons… though I did provide so much ammo when I was younger. No matter. Being a teacher
is my focus now. I don’t have time for romantic advances.” As he made this declaration to himself, he heard someone come up behind him.

“Mr. Vlad King! Hey, hey!”

“Oh, Miss Hado,” he said, turning to greet Nejire. “Did you need a ride back to U.A.?”

“No, I’m going back to Ryukyu’s office. She just wanted me to give you this.” Nejire handed him a folded piece of paper and patted his arms before leaving. “I guess she has a thing for big muscles,” she noted to herself. Kan was completely lost, so he unfolded the paper, hoping for more answers. Instead, he found a phone number. He looked blankly to where Nejire was walking and saw Ryukyu waiting for her. Their eyes met and Ryukyu gave a small wave and smile, making Kan’s face erupt in red.

While Kan was internally self-destructing, the students of 1-B and their alliance finally exited the elevator while admiring their new licenses. “It’s really amazing to have this,” Kendo said. “Feels like a dream.”

“Well, we earned it,” Monoma added, “and I’m positive we outdid 1-A—”

“There it is,” Kendo commented while smacking his head. “I’m surprised you kept it in so long.”

“Well, I did have to deal with Angry Kendo for a while,” he reasoned. “You keep me in line all the time, so I decided to be the reasonable one for the time.”

“I did lose my cool for a bit,” Kendo chuckled, “but thanks. I needed someone watching my back.”

“Sure thing.” Monoma thought that was the end of the topic, but then felt Kendo plant a kiss on his cheek.

“There. You get a reward,” she said.

“Not to interrupt,” she heard Sekigai say, making Kendo flush with embarrassment, “but we’ll be heading off now.”

“Already? Then, we’ll be seeing you.”

“I’ll be sure to say hi to Tsu for you,” Setsuna said to Habuko.

“Th-Thank you.”


“What a heartwarming farewell,” Monoma commented. “Y’know, you remind me of a certain blond asshole I know.

“Don’t be so hard on the mirror!” he cackled before being dragged off by Tadan.

“Fuckin’ sniped you!” Awase laughed.


“In any case, be well, all.” With a small bow, Sekigai left for her bus and rejoined her classmates.

“If all’s well that ends well, Gaikoku will be taking its leave,” Victoria interjected.
“Hey, take care, you guys!” Tetsutetsu said before giving Gou a playful punch on the arm. “You and me should spar sometime, big guy! You’re tough!”

“Don’t bother,” Miru said. “He’s been awake too long. I’m pretty sure he’s sleepwalking.” Gou finally fell backwards, cracking the cement and immediately snoring.

“Woah! He made an imprint in the ground!” Pony yelped in a shock.

“Bruce, Kaikaina, help me carry the idiot!” Miru instructed. “Anyway, be seeing you.”

“Bye-bye!” Kaikaina added.

“Stay gold, Pony girl,” Bruce said with a tip of his trucker hat.

“Stay silver, balloon guy,” she replied.

“Y’know, you douchebags are OK!” Mitch said. “Take care, butch!”

“You too, asshole,” Kendo said playfully.

“I’ll be sure to drop by your flower shop,” Kobayashi said to Ibara. “Safe trip home.”

“Same to you,” Ibara answered.

“You’ll get me that autograph from Present Mic, right?” Greta begged.

“Uh, sure, yeah,” Reiko responded.

“Come on, Greta,” Namida said while dragging her classmate away. “Safe travels, U.A.”

“Well, we’re outta here. Be seein’ you,” Nasuka said with a wave. Daisuke grunted in 1-B’s direction, but seemed to be hiding a smile.

“Even if we’ve just met today, it feels like way longer,” Kendo commented. “Anyway, good luck with your studies.”

“Same to you,” Victoria replied with a sincere smile.

“Let’s go, Vicky,” Daisuke called out. With a final wave, Victoria took her leave.

“Goodbye for now, Itsuka!”

“See ya!”

“I’m gonna miss those assholes,” Tsuburaba said. “Think we’ll ever see them again?”

“Maybe,” Kendo said. “Anyway, let’s get going, everyone. We’re heading home.”

Chapter End Notes

Well, it took a while, but we’re done with the License Exam! Thanks again to our OC contest winners - BlackDragonFish, Casually_Of_A_Fandom_War, MintyMilka, DragnKitty, and Sample_Text - for their OCs. It was really fun to write for them.
As for the future, I won't be covering the Internship Arc. I can't really put them in the Hideout Raid without radically changing things and any workplace studies would feel like a retread of the Internship arc. Since I also can't cover anything related to Gentle, the Cultural Festival Arc will only be a couple of chapters and just cover the play (though I have something fun planned for that). After that, It's an original arc about my version of the 1-A vs. 1-B fight, and then a final, completely original arc to end things off. So stay tuned!
“Damn, I’m beat,” Monoma commented as he sunk deeper into the common room’s couch. It had been a few weeks since Class 1-B received their provisional licenses and many had begun a workplace study with a hero office. “Miss Kopi is really putting me through the wringer. I’m glad I could find someone with a similar power, but I feel like this new internship is gonna wear me down to the bone.”

“It’s certainly been a heavy workload combined with our normal schoolwork,” Ibara agreed while sipping a cup of tea. “Working with Mr. Kamui has been tough, but it’s been worth it to learn so much.”

“Yeah, we can handle it!” Tetsutetsu added. “I’m getting so much stronger!”

“Yeah, you’ve really bulked up,” Monoma commented. “Next time you spar with Kirishima, I bet you’ll clobber him.”

“How is Kirishima and the others?” Ibara asked. In the previous week, several of their schoolmates had been involved with a high-profile raid on a villain’s hideout that sent a few to the hospital.

“He should be out of the hospital today,” Tetsutetsu explained. “The others should be fine by now too.”

“It’s a real shame about Togata, though,” Monoma commented, bringing the room’s mood down.

“I’ve been praying for his health and wellness,” Ibara said. “Hopefully, there is some way to reverse what’s been done.”

“At least he’s in high spirits.” Monoma cricked his neck and checked his phone, but saw no new messages had come. “Hey, have either of you talked to Kendo today?”

“We chatted at breakfast, but I haven’t seen her since,” the vine-haired girl claimed between her sips of tea.

“She said she was gonna do some weight training, but she should’ve be back a while ago,” the iron boy explained. “Maybe she pulled a Midoriya and got hurt training.”

“I hope not,” Monoma said while writing out a text to his girlfriend. Before he could send it, though, the building’s front door opened and Kendo walked inside. “Well, that answers that. How was training?” Despite his questioning, Kendo gave no answer to Monoma, nor a sign that she heard him. She walked past her friends with her eyes hidden by her bangs. “Kendo?”

“Kendo, are you well?” Ibara asked worriedly.

“I’m fine,” she mumbled off handedly. Monoma pulled himself up to see Kendo heading for the...
stairs to their dorm rooms.

“Are you sure—”

“I’m fine!” she snapped. Now that they could clearly see her face, her friends could see that Kendo was crying. Without waiting for a reaction, she raced up the stairs.

“Hey, wait!” Tetsutetsu called out as the trio of classmates chased after her. Kendo outraced them to her room and locked herself inside just as they caught up.

“Kendo, if something’s wrong, you can tell us,” Ibara said. No response came.

“Seriously, what’s wrong?” Monoma prodded. Still nothing.

“Now what?” Tetsutetsu added. Monoma stared at the door and listened closely. It was muffled, but he could make out faint sobbing from the other side. The sound formed a knot in his stomach and he backed away from it.

“Kendo, it’s fine if you don’t want to talk right now, but we’ll be here when you’re ready.” He waited a good 10 seconds for a reply, but there was still nothing.

“What d’you think it is?” Tetsutetsu asked.

“Well, first of all, let’s get out of earshot from her room,” Monoma instructed. “We shouldn’t talk about her like this when she can clearly hear us.”

“Good idea,” Ibara responded as they moved down the hall. “Do you have any ideas on what could’ve caused this?”

“Not really. I doubt it has to do with our classmates, or she’d tell us.” As Monoma brainstormed an explanation, his phone buzzed in his pocket. “…It’s from Kendo,” he said while opening the message. There weren’t any words, but just a link. Once he followed it, he was taken to an article following up on the raid of the Shi Hassaikai base. “The raid?”

“What about it?” Tetsutetsu wondered. Monoma skimmed through the article, which had very few new details. Once he reached the end, however, everything clicked in his mind.

“Now I get it,” he said while clenching his other fist. “That bastard…”

“What is it?” Ibara asked. Instead of saying anything, Monoma turned his phone around to show them the article. On screen was a list of the Shi Hassaikai members arrested after the raid.

“Let’s see,” Tetsutetsu said while reading the names. “Kai Chisaki, Hari Kurono, Joi Irinaka, Shin Nemoto…” He paused once he reached the fifth name in the list. “Rappa Kendo.”

“That dumbass really has no standards,” Monoma growled. “This is Kendo’s uncle.”


“She’s related to a villain?” the iron boy mumbled. “Geez, that’s gotta suck.” Before the conversation could continue, the three classmates heard a door click open. Once they saw Kendo poke her tear-stained face outside, they rushed to her side and enveloped her in their arms.

“Kendo, I’m so sorry,” Monoma began in a warm, calm voice. “It’s fine now. We’re right here for you.”
“Thank you.”

“Detroooooo0 SMASH!” From out of the bank’s front doors, All Might busted through with all six robbers in his crushing grip. Once he was in front of the police, he squeezed the criminals tightly, forcing them to drop their guns.

Woo-hoo!”

“That’s All Might for you!”

“He’s so cool!” Among the cheering crowd, one little girl with ginger hair in a ponytail was sticking out above everyone else’s heads.

“Yay All Might!” she cheered as the hero leapt away from the scene. “That was so cool! All Might’s so strong!”

“He sure is.” Kendo felt a pair of strong hands gently grip her sides and lower her to the sidewalk. They belonged to a hulking man with long and wild blonde hair and simple clothes that showed off his enormous muscles. She looked up at this brutish man whose shoulders she had sat on and smiled.

“Uncle Rappa, are you that strong?” she asked while taking his hand.

“Dunno. I hope so. I wanna fight him someday.”

“You wanna fight everyone,” Kendo laughed as the pair walked down the street.

“Well, yeah. I just love fightin’.”

“Me too!”

“That’s my girl,” Rappa said while patting her head. “Listen up. If you like fightin’, you gotta be like those heroes. Villains who rely on guns are nothin’ but cowards, ya hear me?”

“Cowards!” Kendo parroted.

“I’m serious. Using a weapon like that is like saying “I have no chance in a straight-up fight.’ To me, fights should just be two people beating the shi… snot out of each other.”

“I wanna be a hero!” Kendo declared. “I’m gonna get super strong! Stronger than All Might!”

“If anyone can, I’d say it’s you,” Rappa complimented. “Just remember what I taught ya. Life’s about fightin’ fair and fightin’ hard. Don’t go relying on weapons or cheap tricks and always give everything your best. Now, who’s gonna be the strongest hero?”

“Meeee!”

“Who wants ice cream?”

“Meeee!”

“Same here.”

“I just don’t understand it,” Kendo mumbled to herself, leaning on Monoma’s shoulder and holding
his hand. Ibara held her other hand while Tetsutetsu had a hand on her shoulder. “He was always so nice to me when I was little. I looked up to him, but…”

“You two were very close, it seems,” Ibara commented.

“Yeah… my dad says he was always a bit of a drifter, but once I was born, he alwasyt tried to stick around. Uncle Rappa told me about heroes, about fighting – I always remembered what he taught me. He’s why I wanted to learn martial arts and be a hero. I don’t understand how he could…” Kendo gulped loudly, holding in another wave of sobs.

“I guess they were doing some pretty bad stuff,” Tetsutetsu said. “I haven’t seen anything about It on the news, but it was just making drugs like Trigger, right?”

“No, it wasn’t,” Kendo responded. Monoma could hear anger replacing her sadness with the new topic. “After I found out he was involved, I needed answers. I had to know what he was doing, so I went to someone who was there – Midoriya. He told me what they were doing.” She squeezed Monoma’s hand hard as her eyes scrunched in disgust. “The boss, Overhaul, was creating something that could erase people’s Quirks, but the way he was doing it… he was using a little girl’s DNA to make it. He would scrape blood and skin from her, and then when she’d be too damaged to go on, he’d use his Quirk to kill and revive her in good condition.” Kendo’s story put her friends into a trance of shock and horror simply from picturing what she described.

“That’s… inhuman,” Ibara murmured as she began to tear up. “Ungodly. Simply hellish.”

“Yeah…” For once, Tetsutetsu had little to say.

“My uncle was involved in this,” Kendo stated, mostly to herself. “I… I can’t forgive him. Not now, not ever.” Monoma didn’t have anything he could add, so he settled for rubbing Kendo’s back and continuing to hold her. “I’m going to visit him in prison. I got permission to go later this week. Monoma… could you go with me?”

“Of course. Anything you need, Kendo.”

“Thanks…”

Later that week, Kendo and Monoma took a train out of the city, heading for the prison Rappa had been sent to. From what they could see, it was a heavily-guarded facility that kept many powerful villains. After checking in, the pair was led to a small room divided by a wall-to-wall desk and thick glass. They sat in the chairs on one side and waited for the one on the other side to be filled.

“You never did tell me what you want to say,” Monoma realized while Kendo leaned forward on the desk, staring intently at the door.

“I’m not entirely sure myself,” Kendo divulged. “I’m here to see what changed… or maybe what’s stayed the same.”

“Would you rather talk to him alone?”

“No,” she replied while taking his hand under the table. After another minute of tense waiting, the door finally clicked open. They could see a police officer in the hallway explaining the visitation rules to Rappa, who was hidden behind the wall. His fists, however, were coming out from the doorframe. The sight of the familiar hands triggered a memory in Kendo’s mind of her playful sparring with her uncle. She pushed it away and squeezed Monoma’s hand tightly. He’s gone too far, she reminded herself.
“I got it already,” she heard Rappa say. His voice hadn’t changed much from her memory, though there was a few more years of age behind it. The police officer finally led him inside and sat him down, attaching his cuffs to the desk. As soon as Rappa saw Kendo, he grinned a little and his eyes seemed to soften. Opposite from him, Kendo sat with a scowl and furrowed brows. “Been a while, Itsu,” Rappa greeted. “I’d hug you, but, y’know, cuffs.”

“Right,” Kendo answered with rage in her voice. Monoma thought she’d start yelling, but she took a deep breath and gave his hand a quick squeeze.

“Nice to see you too, nerd,” Rappa said to the copycat.

“Hey,” Monoma greeted neutrally.

“Anyway, how’s U.A.?”

“Stop trying to deflect,” Kendo demanded, intent on taking control of the conversation. “I know why you’re here and what you’ve been up to.”

“…Right,” Rappa sighed, already knowing what was coming. “I guess you heard about what the gang was doin’?”

“I did,” Kendo said. “I kept up with the news, but I got some extra information from a fellow student. A few of them were present at the raid.”

“Hey, does that mean you know Red Riot?” Rappa asked with some excitement.

“Wait, you were the one who beat the shit out of Kirishima?” Monoma asked.

“Yeah. That kid was a real man. Is he out of the hospital yet?”

“Should be.”

“Both of you, shut it!” Kendo ordered before taking a deep breath. “I heard about your boss’s special project.”

“Oh yeah.” Rappa fiddled with his calloused hands on the table and broke eye contact with Kendo. “I was never really involved with that part, y’know? I was just there to fight people—”

“But you were involved,” Kendo interrupted. “You were part of the gang. You defended those monsters. You knew what was happening, but did nothing.”

“I mean—”

“Uncle Rappa, you’ve been gone for a while. There’s a lot I’ve learned since I was a kid. One of these things is that there’s two types of evil people. People who commit atrocities like this, and people who have the power to stop it, but choose not to.”

“You callin’ me evil?” Rappa asked. Kendo looked down at the floor, fighting tooth-and-nail to stay composed.

“I don’t know what you are,” she relented. “Even when you were gone, I wanted to believe you were staying out of trouble. I knew you’d be doing underground fights and stuff like that, but this… you’ve gone too far.”

“…I know,” Rappa said. “What happened to that kid was fucked. I’ll admit that, but fighting heroes, trying to defeat Overhaul, taking on Fatgum and Red Riot… I know you don’t want to hear
this, but I’ve been having fun.”

“I’m sure you were.” Kendo’s rage was gone, now filled by disappointment.

“I’m no role model, Itsu.”

“But you were mine,” she quietly said. “I took everything you said to heart.” It looked like Kendo’s tears would fall again, but instead, she chuckled. “Y’know, I actually quoted something you said to me during the incident at the Training Camp.”

“I remember hearing about that,” Rappa said with delight. “You beat the hell outta some villain, yeah? Pretty badass.”

“I guess. When the villains were attacking, me and my classmate fought someone with a knockout gas Quirk and he pulled a gun. He nearly killed us, but we were able to beat him once I blew the gas away. I told him that ‘carrying around a gun is just another way of saying you’ve got no confidence in a fight.’”

“That does sound familiar,” Rappa laughed. Kendo didn’t have any follow-up, which led to a lull in the conversation. “So, how’s school been?”

“Tough, but we’re getting by,” Kendo answered. Monoma could see a nostalgic smile on her face, but her eyes weren’t leaving the floor. It seemed like Kendo was wishing, or even imagining, that they were all someplace else.

“How’s my old punching bag?”

“Dad’s fine.”

“What about my rival?”

“Mom’s good too.”

“Glad to hear it. You get a boyfriend yet?” Kendo smiled and held up the hand interlocked with Monoma’s. Rappa seemed confused, then shocked, and then a little disappointed. “The nerd? Really?”

“Yup,” Monoma sheepishly said.

“You said you know Red Riot, yeah? Why not date him? He’s a real man.”

“He’s dating Bakugo,” Kendo explained with a chuckle. “Besides, I’m happy with what I’ve got.”

“Allright. Happy for you,” he grumbled, which made Kendo laugh. She and him looked each other in the eye again, but this made Kendo’s smile fade. All of the baggage she had come in with returned to her mind.

“I think we’re gonna go,” Kendo said as her smile finished disappearing. “U.A.’s really keeping us busy.”

“Right. Safe trip back, Itsu.” Kendo stood up and led Monoma to the door. As she gripped the knob, she turned back slightly, but not enough to look at the criminal she had been talking to.

“Bye, uncle Rappa.” She turned the knob quickly and pulled Monoma into the hallway.

“Itsu,” Rappa called out. Against her own judgement, Kendo looked back inside and saw Rappa
smiling and waving. “Say high to your folks for me.” With a quick movement, Kendo shut the door and started walking. Monoma wanted to say something, but his mind was blank. As they approached the lobby where other visitors waited, Kendo stopped to dry her eyes. Over the radio, a song played softly as Monoma dragged his thumb over the back of her hand.

*Been away, haven’t seen you in a while*

*How’ve you been? Have you changed your style?*

*And do you think that we’ve grown up differently?*

*Don’t seem the same, seems you’ve lost your feel for me*

“Ready to leave?” Monoma asked.

“Yeah,” Kendo nodded. “Let’s go.” As they walked off, Kendo walked a little closer to the copycat. “Thanks for coming with me.”

“No problem.”

*So let’s leave it alone, ’cause we can’t see eye-to-eye*

*There ain’t no good guy, there ain’t no bad guy*

*There’s only you and me and we just disagree.*
Setsuna's Big Show

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Another day of school began like normal for Setsuna Tokage. After arriving in class, she took her seat and looked around for something to entertain her. “Oh, Reeeiiikoooo,” she cooed to the girl one seat over. “Reiko, tell me somethin’!”

“Yeah?” Reiko asked, expecting a terrible pun.

“What d’you call a lesbian dinosaur?”

“…What?”

“A Lickalotopuss,” Setsuna snickered while Reiko rolled her eyes. “Man, I’m funny!”

“You’re definitely something.”

“Hey, hey, I wrote out another song. You wanna see?”

“After class.”

“Do it noooooow,” Setsuna moaned childishly. She reached over to Reiko and poked her face for attention, but had to stop when their teacher walked in.

“Morning, everyone. Class has begun,” Kan announced. “Before we get started, I have an announcement. Coming up soon is the annual U.A. Cultural Festival.”

“A Cultural Festival?!” Pony squealed. “That sounds like fun!”

“Yeah, it does!” Tsuburaba added.

“What a drag,” Kuroiro said to himself, ignoring his own excitement to sound cool.

“I’m sure you’re all excited, but calm down for now. It’s still some time away,” Kan continued. “The school has changed up the festival for this year due to security concerns, but your task will be unaffected. I know you’ve all been busy with your internships, homework, and training, and I’d rather not pile on, but you’ll be putting on an event during the festival. Think of it as a fun side project to do all together.”

“What kind of event?” Setsuna asked.

“Anything, really. A shop, a booth, a café or food stand, a performance – think outside the box.”

“Why don’t Shishida and I field some ideas from the class, sir,” Kendo suggested.

“Good idea,” Kan said. “You two try and find a good idea. I’ll be back in 10.”

“You got it,” Kendo replied. As Kan stepped out, she and Shishida came to the front of the room. “OK, if you’ve got an idea, just shout it out!”

I guess she’s back to her usual self, Setsuna noted with a smile. Now, what’s something we could do?
“Boxing matches?”

“Mushroom garden!”

“Haunted house.”

“Art exhibition!” Many more suggestions would come, quickly filling up the board.

“OK, we’ve certainly got a lot,” Kendo noted. “I’m gonna get rid of some that are unrealistic or inappropriate.”

"There goes my maid café,” Tsuburaba moaned.

"There goes my butler café,” Pony moaned.

“I think our choice is obvious,” Monoma claimed. “A fantasy play would be the best use of our combined talents.”

“I actually agree with him,” Shishida said. “Even if someone doesn’t want to act, they can participate in other ways.”

“I could build sets,” Bondo offered.

="Oh! I could draw backgrounds and help design costumes!” Fukidashi explained.

“If we need costumes, I know how to make clothing,” Ibara stated.

“If everyone’s in agreement, then a play’s fine by me,” Kendo said. “Show of hands, who wants a play?” A good number of hands rose for the suggestion. “Anyone opposed?” No one seemed to have any reservations, so Kendo began erasing the board.

“I guess we’re putting on a play,” Kendo announced. “What play, though? Did you have any in mind, Monoma?”

“I thought we’d write our own. It can’t be that hard—”

“Bullshit! Writing’s hard!” Fukidashi empathically claimed.

“Then we’ll collaborate,” Monoma suggested. “Now, to find out what to make it about? Maybe it could be a musical too?” Just then, everyone’s attention turned to Setsuna when she squealed in joy. She began waving her arms around, too excited to talk, and started pulling on Reiko’s sleeve.

“No,” Reiko said to the lizard girl, who kept pulling and grinning like a lunatic. “No,” she repeated.

“It’s fate!” Setsuna finally exclaimed. “This is so fate right now!”

“Something you want to say?” Shishida asked.

“It can be a musical! No – a full blown rock opera! A fantasy comedy rock opera starring me and Reiko!”

“Wait, when did we say it was a comedy?” Monoma asked. “Also, I’m the star!”

“No way! I already have music written! I’m the star!”

“I came up with the idea!”
“I’m the best singer in the class! I proved that last week when we all sang Rocky Horror songs together!”

“Don’t remind me that happened,” Kamakiri interjected.

“Come on, you gotta admit was fun,” Setsuna claimed.

“Who knew Kuroiro could do such a good Tim Curry impression,” Pony complimented.

“Did he have to wear the costume?” Awase complained, earning him some side-eye from Kuroiro.

“We’re getting off topic,” Setsuna said. “I’m already prepared to do a rock opera and you can’t stop me!”

“Am I interrupting something?” they heard from the doorway.

“Oh! Mr. Kan!” Kendo yelped in surprise. “Just a, uh, discussion over details. We’ll be doing a play for the Cultural Festival.”

“Sounds good. If that’s settled, take your seats for class.” As their teacher begun his lecture, Setsuna and Monoma had an intense staredown that radiated passion.

This ain’t over.

Once school had ended, Class 1-B returned to their dorm and waited in the common room. Setsuna had ordered them to stay put and keep the blinds closed while she prepared something with Reiko.

“She’s really taking her time,” Kuroiro noted with annoyance.

“Maybe she’s relented to my superior ideas,” Monoma suggested. “We need a serious play. Something that combines the best aspects of famous fantasy stories like Lord of the Rings or Harry Potter or Romeo and Juliet.”

“That last one isn’t fantasy,” Kendo pointed out.

“Two young teenagers marry within a week of knowing each other? C’mon, that’s fantasy,” Monoma said with laugh.

“Well, not everyone needs a whole decade to nut up,” Kamakiri mocked.

“Why you gotta cut me down like that,” Monoma whined. Before the conversation could continue, the lights flicked off. With the blinds drawn, the room was almost completely dark, but everyone could still see Setsuna and Reiko’s silhouettes step out.

“Lights!” Setsuna ordered.

“…Oh, that’s my cue,” Fukidashi realized. He took out a flashlight and shone it on the pair of girls wearing strange costumes. Setsuna wore a blue unitard with dark blue and red underwear worn on the outside, along with blue and white sneakers. Over her shoulders was a blue cape with white fur and on her chest was red star symbol with a white background. Reiko had a simple black costume with a mask and a pair of yellow dragons drawn on her chest.

“Oh, what fresh hell is this?” Kuroiro questioned with a smirk.

“For millennia uncounted,” Setsuna dramatically began, “mankind has despaired, for they knew…”
they would not be able to witness such awesomeness in person—"

“We started a music duo,” Reiko summarized.

“Duuuuuude,” Setsuna whined. “Yes, me and Reiko has formed the greatest comedy musical duo of all time. We spent countless days hard at work to form the perfect names. There were many stand outs – The Pussy Posse, Hot Jam Explosion, Big Clit Energy –”

“These’re all winners,” Kamakiri quipped.

“But in the end, only one would stand. We are… Ninja Sex Party.”

 “…So, you want to use the songs you’ve written for a musical?” Kendo asked. “Do we even have people who can play instruments? Also, someone turn the lights back on.”

“Let’s see if we do!” Setsuna said while pulling out a list. “Who can play electric guitar?” No one raised their hand at first, but Kamakiri eventually put his up with a sigh. “Boom! We got one!”

“I didn’t know you could play an instrument,” Awase said.

“I’m a man of many… well, a couple talents.”

“Movin’ on! We need a flutist! There’s a couple of songs that need one!”

“I played a little in middle school for band,” Tsuburaba said. “It was good conditioning for my lung capacity. I could probably dust it off.”

“Yes! Now, bass guitar!” Setsuna asked.

“If you need a bassist, Kuroiro’s your man,” Honenuki stated. Everyone turned to white-haired boy, who shied away slightly at the attention.

“I’m not that good yet.”

“You’re our only hope!” Setsuna begged. “I’ll bet your great.”

 “…Maybe.”

“I’ll mark that down as a yes,” the lizard girl said. “OK, next is keyboards. Normally, Reiko would do it, but since she’s in the performance, we need someone in the band.

“I took some piano lessons as a kid,” Shoda divulged. “Yanagi, if you can give me a couple refreshers, I’ll do it.”

“Sure.”

“Yes! Good boy, boy!” Setsuna cheered. “Lastly, drums. Who’s it gonna be?”

“If it means I don’t have to act, then I’ll do it,” Awase offered. “I’ve got some experience from band class.”

“Woo-hoo! We got everything!” Setsuna declared. “Fukidashi, Monoma, you two are gonna help me write this bitch! Let’s get to work!”

“Wait, hold on,” Kendo said. “Mr. Kan still needs to approve this.”
“Oh, he’ll approve it…”

“Pleeeeeeaaaaaase!” Setsuna begged, near tears. “Pleasepleasepleasepleaseplease—“

“Fine!” Kan finally relented. “Just… stop!”

“Yaaay! Thank you, Dad King!”

“Please stop calling me that.”

“Would you rather I go back to President Dracula?”

“Just leave.”

“You got it!” Setsuna left the teacher’s lounge cheerily, already thinking about how amazing her play would be. “Aw yeah. This rock opera is gonna be the tits!”

Chapter End Notes

Right here, my peoples, is the first art for the story, featuring Setsuna and Reiko in their costumes. The artist is mad-serotonin on Tumblr and they are awesome!

https://mad-serotonin.tumblr.com/
Setsuna peeked her head around the curtain and watched as people trickled into the auditorium, quickly filling up seats. “This is gonna be freakin’ awesome,” she squeaked. Near the back of the auditorium, she spotted Vlad King with a camera in his hands, ready to record their show. “OK, he’s in place,” she noted while ducking to the backstage. “How’re we doing, stagehands?”

“First set is almost ready,” Bondo stated while pushing part of a castle set to stage left.

“I’ve got everyone ready for the first number,” Fukidashi added as he double checked the battlefield background ready to be unfurled.


“Ibara’s almost done filling my costume with her vines. I’m all set.”

“Great! And once this first song is done…”

“I’ll help as a stagehand until the finale. I read you instructions,” he assured her.

“Are my extras ready to extra?” the lizard girl asked.

“Ready and waiting,” Rin answered, dressed in knight’s clothing with Kaibara and Tetsutetsu.

“PERFECT! I think we’re ready to staaaart~”

“Let’s do this shit!” Kamakiri said with a strum of his guitar that barely made a noise. “…Oh yeah, I gotta plug it in.”

“The band’s ready, the sets are ready, the actors are ready. Reiko, you ready?”

“As I’ll ever be,” the ghost girl replied as Setsuna dragged her out to center stage.

“Then let’s get this shit started, my dudes.” Setsuna struck a pose and Reiko stood normally as the curtain finally rose. The audience gave a polite round of applause while the spotlights shone down on the stars.

“Why, hello there,” Setsuna purred into the microphone. “I didn’t see you come in. Welcome to our show. I’m your only star, Sexuna Tokage. This is Ninja Reiko, but you can just shut up about her because I’m the important one here.” Setsuna flipped her cape and struck another pose as Reiko flipped the audience off and glared at them. “I might as well tell you the story of my awesome life,
so here we go. This is the tale of my totally rad-as-tits quest to gain the Sacred Chalice, which grants untold awesomeness to holder. But first, a little about me.”

On cue, a set of lights illuminated, revealing the band near stage left. Coming out from behind the stage left was the castle set where Rin, Kaibara and Tetsutetsu lurked for their cue. “You see,’ Setsuna continued, “I was once a mighty and revered queen of Slamalot. My citizens loved me – oh, did they love me – but just as the mighty Roman Empire had, all greatness must fall one day.” Just then, the rest of the stage was lit up and the battlefield backdrop fell into place, showing off pictures of monsters and demons. Out of the castle set, the three boys ran across the stage, prompted by Kamakiri’s guitar licks.

“Queen Sexuna, the realm is under attack!” Rin declared.

“My god,” Setsuna growled. “The day has finally come. It is time to release the kraken!” The boys ran off stage with prop swords flying as Setsuna began dancing and singing and Reiko backed away, still glaring.

*Look in the distance*
*Beyond the castle gates*
*The armies of the damned have come*
*On the horizon*
*They gather beneath the blood red sun*
*The blood red sun*
*A thousand warriors*
*Demons and orcs*
*Charging like a tornado*
*But they will never know*
*That their death awaits in waves below*
*In the waves blow*

“We must now unleash the monster,” Setsuna spoke as a spotlight hit the giant cage in the back of the set. It was covered by a giant sheet, but the audience could see a silhouette with many large tentacles. “May god forgive us!” The sheet was pulled off by Reiko, revealing Honenuki standing inside wearing his casual clothes and looking around aimlessly. On his back was eight prop tentacles filled with Ibara’s vines that waved them around.

*Release the kraken!*

“Hey guys,” Honenuki greeted nonchalantly.

*The tolling of the iron bell*

*Release the kraken!*

“I’m the kraken.”

*Calls upon the depths of heeeeeeell!*

Honenuuki let out an evil laugh that was interrupted by a coughing fit. “Does anyone have a lozenge?”

*Out on the battlefield*
*The armies collide*
*Hundreds die where they stand*
In screaming agony
The shadow of war across the land
All across the land
Now let's end the fight
It's time to decide
Whose blood will finally be spilled
Our secret weapon
A specter of hate who's born to kill
He was born to kill

“The time is now. Go forth, kraken,” Setsuna commanded. “Leave nothing but corpses!”

Release the kraken!

“I’m in a song!” Honenuki said with a dim smile.

A creature of Satanic rage
Release the kraken!

“Who wants sandwiches?”

Bursting from its sunken caaaaaaage!

Kamakiri began shredding out a guitar solo as Setsuna and the band harmonized. While they sang, the three extras, now dressed as monsters, came out from stage right and began taking apart the castle set. Honenuki and Reiko watched with mild interest, but did nothing.

“Release the krakeeeeeeeeeeeeeen!” Setsuna yelled as Honenuki’s cage was opened, eliciting a scream from backstage provided by Pony. Honenuki ignored the castle’s destruction and instead looked in the broken parts, finding a bell.

“Hey, look! I found a bell!” he said with joy

Release the kraken!

“Dingdingdingdingdingdingdingding!

Impervious to sword and bow
Release the kraken!

“I’ve got a splinter.”

Death incarnate from below
Release the kraken!

“Oops, I falled over.”

All shall drown in his domain
Release the kraken!

“Splishy Splashy!”

The harbinger of fear and paaaaaiiiiiin!”

The boys finished tearing the castle apart and left the stage, making Setsuna glare at them, and then Honenuki. “Well, you did nothing. The war is lost. Thanks, kraken,” she said sarcastically.
“You’re welcome,” Honenuki replied earnestly.

“Well, my friends,” she began again, now addressing the audience, “My days of being a mighty and sexy queen were over.” Reiko came to her side and flipped the crowd off again as the scenery changed under cover of darkness. The castle debris was moved, replaced by prop trees, and the backdrop became that of an enchanted forest. Bondo pulled out a kiddie pool with blue confetti and a big plastic boulder inside, then went back and carried Yui onto the stage. Her legs had been wrapped up to resemble a mermaid’s tail and she was placed on the rock.

“Do not fret for me, though,” she continued. “I am nothing if not a survivor, so me and my bestest friend in the whole world, Ninja Reiko, set off on our adventure as wandering bards. I wooed many a fair maiden, and Ninja Reiko killed some people. She does that from time to time,” Setsuna noted as Reiko pulled out a knife. “To show you of my prowess, allow me to tell of the time I seduced the fairest creature of them all.”

Setsuna began prancing through the trees towards Yui as the band played a softer, more fantasy-style tune. Off in the backstage, Fukidashi was ready at stage left to push out a cart with the necessary props for the song.

*Once upon a morning dawn*
*Ninja Reiko and I happened upon a gold pond*
*In a forest enchanted where we both gazed upon*
*A bold sight so fair, see there*
*Beneath the blue waterfall, a mermaid was swimming*
*And my heart, enthralled, became lost*
*In the beautiful lines of her face*
*Her every lithe movement was exquisite grace*

As Setsuna sang, she inched closer to Yui, who was ignoring her completely. Setsuna kept her distance and stayed by Reiko’s side, watching the “mermaid” from afar. Fukidashi then pushed the wagon out slowly to Reiko, which carried a stack of cardboard boxes.

*I trembled in silence at the love of my life*
*Such a delicate moment, I must play this just right…*

“…HEY, DO YOU LIKE PIZZA?!”

*I screamed loud as shit*
*Then I grabbed a whole pizza, threw the fuck out of it*
*It soared through the air like some pizza-ass doves*
*Now marvel and witness the glory of loooooooovvoe*

“Here comes the pizza!” Setsuna yelled while lobbing cardboard boxes at Yui, who still ignored her.

*The mermaid looked off with her hair in the breeze*
*For she’d noticed not my love letter of cheese*
*I don’t see how I may get her soul to listen*
*Like sunlight she shines, like crystals she glitsens*
*I need to dream an ingeninos new scheme*
*So this angel shall open her heart to me*

“MORE PIZZA, REIKO!”

*with onions and ham too*
Now coat me in pizza and throw me, goddamn you!
As choirs of angels sing out to the sky
In cheese crust of passion my true love shall flyyyyyyyyyy

Now wearing a cape of pizza, Setsuna was lobbed forward by Reiko. She crashed halfway to Yui and popped her legs off. “Ah, my legs!” she cried out. “Ah, they’re definitely broken.” Just then, Kaibara appeared from behind the rock Yui sat on, carrying a plate of steak. Yui’s attention was caught immediately by him. “Oh no! A handsome merman has just appeared! He’s brought the mermaid filet mignon, Reiko. That’s a clearly superior dish!” Kaibara and Yui ducked behind the rock and flapped they’re tails around for the audience to see. “Now they’re boning! Wow, that was fast. Hold on, I’m gonna try to hop over and tell her I love her— AH!”

The music trailed off as Setsuna crawled towards the front of the stage and the back sunk into darkness again. Setsuna regrew her legs and hopped back up, now looking belligerent. “OK, so maybe I exaggerated that story a little, but my point stands,” she claimed. “I’m super rad, and now that you know this fact, I can tell you of my greatest quest. It began one day in the fair Thorn Kingdom, where I met the TRUE love of my life – Princess Thorn.”

The stage was changed once again, this time into a medieval kingdom. The left side was illuminated as the girls went to it, looking like a cobbled street. Reiko grabbed a flyer from the floor and showed it to Setsuna, who snatched it with excitement. “Reiko, look what I found all on my own,” she said. “The princess— eh, blah, blah, blah, details, details— a champion! That’s code for lover! I’mma go bang the princess!” The right side of the stage was a lit as the pair walked along the set. Tetsutetsu and Kaibara, now back in their knight costumes, were kneeling before Ibara, dressed in a light green princess costume and holding 6 roses. By her side was Fukidashi, dressed like a squire. Kneeling with the two boys was Monoma, who wore a green adventurer costume.

“Hear me, brave warriors!” Fukidashi announced. “Princess Thorn has been cursed by the evil Ganon, King of Demons. The six greatest champions, as chosen by the princess, will venture forth to claim the Sacred Chalice from him so we may cure the Princess.”

“Did you hear, Reiko?” Setsuna asked. “They need brave warriors. I must prove my mettle by telling the princess of my many, many heroic feats. Bring me my book of heroic feats!” Reiko rolled her eyes and took a large book with “Bullshit lies” written on the front. “Yes, this will do,” the lizard girl stated, pointing to a random page. “Get me a dragon and a horse, Reiko.” Setsuna rolled across the stage clumsily towards Ibara and popped up by her side, pushing Fukidashi off stage and wrapping her arm over Ibara’s shoulders. “Why, hello there,” she greeted as the band began the next song. “You’re a very attractive young lady. I’d like to ask you out on the hottest of dates. I see that you have a lot of other gentlemen suitors. Allow me to make my case.” She strolled over to the boys and began dancing around while the others looked on in confusion.

This guy plays football
But I once won the whole Superbowl by myself
This guy is a weightlifter
But I can bench an entire continental shelf
That dude is a scientist
But I already cured all diseases last week
And if that’s not enough, lemme ask
When was last time one of these dicks killed a motherfuckin’ mythical beast?

She jumped onto a prop staircase and whipped her hair around like a rockstar as Reiko returned to the side of the stage in a horse onesie, pulling along Rin in a dragon onesie.
Oh yeah, I will rock your world
Cause I'm a dragon slayer, girl!
I shall now expose my chest

Setsuna tried dropping the front of her costume, but at the last second, she pulled out a crayon
drawing of abs and held it over her body.

Don't act like you're not impressed
How hard did I just seal the deal
With my dragon slayer steel?
Do you feel all my sexy appeal
And my story that's so very totally real?!

She jumped down and hopped on Reiko’s back, now swinging around a sword, while Rin stumbled
away like he was drunk.

I rode up to the mountaintop
It was ninety million hundred fifty thousand hundred feet in the air
'Till I found the Dragon's cave
And I fought through his army of awesome karate bears
The dragon's breath was a blast from hell
And we fought so hard I missed a longstanding appointment for brunch
Then I swung my horse like a club
And it caused a sonic boom that ruptured space and then exploded the sun!

Oh yeah, you are now in love
With both my dragon-slaying jugs
I killed a demon with these hands
Did I say I'm also in a band?

Setsuna ran across the stage and pulled Rin towards the others while Reiko threatened the boys with
her knife.

In case you might need more proof
I brought the dragon right to you
Ooh! it's the one that I slew
He'll attest that my story is totally true.

“Dragon Dance!” Setsuna called out while dancing to Shoda’s keyboard solo. She then handed off
the microphone to Rin to sing his part.

IIIIIIIIIIII am a dragon.
Not some guy she met at the bus station in a dragon suit.

He then tossed the microphone back to Setsuna while avoiding Reiko’s stabbing.

Woooo! Girl, let's go back to my place
Nothing fancy, just a huge mansion in space
Can you guess what's coming next?
Here's a hint: I'm talking about sex
This is the best day of your life
You'll be my dragon slayer wife
All right! Now it's time to decide
Which lucky one of us is gonna be your lover tonight?
Ibara looked at Setsuna like she was crazy and handed a rose to everyone on stage except her, including Shishida’s hairy arm poking out from the curtain. “Oh, I see you’ve chosen the football player,” Setsuna sighed. “And the scientist… and apparently the weightlifter as well… and the dragon… And Ninja Reiko… and the Manticore?! He wasn’t even in this song!” Setsuna stomped her foot and tried to wrestle the flower from Reiko’s hand, only stopping when a knife was at her throat. “OK, you can have it,” Setsuna relented. She then dashed after Rin and took his flower. “Don’t you worry, princess. I’ll gain the chalice and cure you, or my name isn’t Sexuna Tokage, master of the slutty arts!” She waved goodbye to Ibara as she and Reiko walked to the front of the stage, leaving her classmate in a befuddled silence.

“This is how it all started, folks. The greatest, most epic adventure of all time!”
“This would be my most dangerous quest yet,” Setsuna recounted. “I had heard legend of the Sacred Chalice since I was young. Don’t you remember, Reiko?” She looked to her friend for an answer, but got a middle finger instead. “Sure you do. You, my lovely, sexy audience, shall know of it too in due time… AND THAT TIME IS NOW!” the drum beat from Awase began the next song as the background finished changing again, becoming a magical forest again.

The legends say the chalice lies in the mountain of a thousand nights
And he who wields it will become crazy awesome (crazy awesome)
And all my life, I’ve wondered what awesomeness was really like
So I assembled the greatest warriors of our time

She looked around, but realized there was no one but her and Reiko. “We didn’t get warriors? Fuck, fuck, uuuuh, skip to the chorus,” she told the band.

We will follow the guiding light of the North Star
Onto the adventure of our lives
Never stopping, except maybe for some bagels
‘Cause it was gonna be a long trip

Setsuna pranced into the forest with Reiko trudging along quietly as the band petered out. From out of the trees came Monoma, which made the two girls stop immediately. “Hey, I know you,” Setsuna aggressively revealed. “You’re questing for the princess too!”

“That’s right,” Monoma confirmed. “The name’s Link.”

“What d’you want, fucknuts?”

“Well, you see, I have way to teleport instantly to Ganon.” From his pocket, Monoma produced a blue Ocarina. “By playing a simple song, we can be there in a flash.”

“What’s in it for us?” Setsuna inquired.

“I could always use a meat shield!” Monoma mocked.

“Fuck you and your fatass flute, bitchtits! Reiko, let’s run faster than he can teleport!” Reiko sprinted past Monoma while Setsuna followed clumsily. Once they reached the edge of the stage, Setsuna started to put on another costume over the first one – a gray hooded robe and a bushy gray bear with a pool noodle by her crotch – in plain sight of the audience.
“Well, now that she’s gone,” Monoma said, now facing the audience, “the real story can begin.” Kuroiro strummed his bass a few times to start the song while Monoma bobbed his head and threw out a “yeah” and “alright.”

_**My name is Link, y'all, I'm straight outta Hyrule**_
_**Been on the force o' good since 1986, old school**_
_**I'm bringin' you a laid-back summertime jam**_

“Hold on a minute Link!” Setsuna yelled in her old man voice, coming out from behind the curtains.

**Hey, what’s up, old man?**

Setsuna took out her own microphone and walked up to Monoma to stat her part.

_I see that you're embarking on another epic quest_
_You're gonna use your ocarina to rescue the princess_
_But you'll need a magic weapon that'll never ever miss_
_It's dangerous to go alone, take this!_

Setsuna turned away from the audience and opened her robe to Monoma, who began to sing again.

**Hey, thanks Old Man, that is really very nice**
_I can always count on you for help and friendly advice_
_Though I've never seen a sword of quite that shape or size_
_Oh God, that's not a sword! It's your dick in disguise_

The beat picked up and the lights all turned off except a spotlight on Setsuna, who closed her robe and started to dance and sing.

_Yes, I can't lie, I have painted my schween_  
_Now grab your destiny if you know what I mean_  
_Wait a minute Link, don't leave the cave. Where do you think you're going?_  
_This is a great chance to fondle a scrotum that you're blowing_  

Monoma went to the other side of the stage and put his microphone to his lips again as the background was getting set to change again, this time to a modern city.

_That. Was. Weird, but whatever there is no time to lose_  
_I gotta warp on out to Ganon in this chilled-out groove_  
_Wait, this isn't Ganon's lair, I'm in Liberty City_  
_This place looks just like Philadelphia but even more shitty_  
_I'm at the corner of Dead Cop and Prostitute Junction_  
_Something in my Ocarina must have gone and malfunctioned_  
_I gotta fix it quickly there is justice to do_  

“Hold on a minute Link!” Setsuna called out from behind a prop building.

**Old man, is that you?**

She jumped out of cover and whipped open her robe to Monoma again while singing her part.

_This is a place you can't survive with just your sword and your wits_  
_It's dangerous to go alone, take this_  

Monoma reached towards her while singing his part, but then recoiled
Well that's really kind o- D'aaah! That's your wrinkled dick again
Look, I know I wear a tunic but I'm not into men!

Once again, just a spotlight was on Setsuna as she sung and dance alone.

Don't be that way bitch! let me introduce you
To my three best friends – Mr. Johnson and the Juice Crew
If you see the Sacred Chalice, well you know you're gonna grab it
So why don't you try to come grab my inflatable poo jab—

“Oh my god!” Monoma interrupted while picking up his microphone again.

I gotta warp outta here, the Sacred Chalice awaits
I must defeat King Ganon before it gets too late
Okay, now I really don't know where I am

“Hold on a minute Link!”

“God damn it, old man!”

You're in Raccoon City, it's a zombie abyss
It's dangerous to go alone, take-

“NO!” Monoma screamed while throwing props at Setsuna. “Fuck you! I'm not giving you a— Not touching your we— Stop the chilled-out groove!” he yelled at the band. “Jeez! You come in here telling me you got a weewee weapon. It's not cool, I'm not gonna touch it, I'm not gonna splllllNO!” He stormed off-stage, leaving Setsuna alone.

“So, is that a no on the handjob or…? Okay.” Once Monoma was gone, Setsuna tore off her old man disguise and smirked. Reiko came to her side and they fist-bumped as the set changed again, now as a village. “Once I cleverly defeated that douchebag, Reiko and I worked our way across the land, defeating many a terrible foe. We can’t show you this, but trust me… It happened. As we journeyed closer to the castle, even more demons had attacked us and it seemed like no reprieve would come. But just then, we found it – the peaceful, demon-free village of Wayback!”

The two girls walked into the village set and looked around with great intrigue. “Look there, Reiko! In the distance!” She pointed up to the painted background, which showed a castle at the top of a hill. “The mountain of a thousand nights! Ganon’s castle is not far away… but this village is so quiet. No demons to be seen.” Out from backstage, Kaibara, now dressed as a villager, walked by Setsuna and Reiko. “Excuse me, young squire!”

“What’d you call me?” Kaibara asked venomously

“Why are there no demons? This village is too close to Ganon’s castle to be this quiet.”

“…Oh. Yeah, that’s uh… that’s ‘cause of the wizard.”

“You have a wizard?”

“Yep. Center of town. Can’t miss her hut.”

“Come Reiko! To the hut!” Setsuna ordered. As they walked around the set, a half-built hut was pushed onto stage left. Inside, Pony sat in wizard garbs and with a single horn on her head. Setsuna reached the door and knocked politely. “Wizard?”
“Go away!” Pony yelled back in her “old bitch voice.” Setsuna looked shocked, but then smirked at her companion.

“Don’t worry, Ninja Reiko. I’m an excellent persuader.” She cleared her throat and put her finger up as if she was preparing a lengthy speech, but suddenly fell apart and cried at the door. “Please let us in!” she begged. “Pleasepleasepleaseplease—”

“Alright! Just shut up!” As Setsuna picked herself up and went back to smiling cockily, Pony begrudgingly opened the door. “What?”

“Greetings!” Setsuna yelled. “I am Sexuna Tokage – the hero destined to defeat King Ganon… oh, and this is Ninja Reiko.”

“…What the hell do you want?” Pony asked.

“I’ve traveled her from the Thorn Kingdom to claim the Sacred Chalice for the princess. Tell me how you’ve kept this village safe from demons. I must know if I’m to defeat the demon king himself.”

“Thorn Kingdom?” Pony asked. “That’s a damn long journey. You must be strong to make it all the way here while facing down hordes of demons.”

“You’re damn right, I am,” Setsuna embellished as Reiko shook her head to the audience. “But to defeat Ganon, I must have more power. I beg you, wizard. Please divulge your secrets.”

“…Come inside.” Pony lead them into her house and opened a trunk, pulling out her other horn. “It is true that my powers as the Unicorn Wizard are mighty, but for you to use them, I must pass them on to an apprentice. If you can prove yourself as my pupil, you will have the power to defeat Ganon once and for all.”

“How long will that take?” Setsuna asked.

“It’s cool. We’ll just skip it with the intermission.”

“Baller.” Setsuna took the horn form Pony and held it to her forehead warily. “Is putting this on gonna hurt?”

“Nope.”

“OK.” She placed the horn to her head and immediately fell to the ground convulsing and howling in agony.

“Wait, I misspoke,” Pony corrected. “Yup.” Just then, then set went dark. Under the darkness, the set was altered slightly, removing Pony’s hut. As the stage shifted in the darkness, Shoda played a quick melody on his piano that Setsuna sang too.

_Sometimes I wish I was even more awesome than I already am_  

_What would my life be like if I turned that shit up to 11 (out of a possible 5)?_

Once the changes were made, a spotlight shone down on Kinoko, dressed as a village girl, walking through the village. Behind her was Kaibara, now dressed as a demon, who was stalking her. As they reached the middle of the stage, Kinoko finally turned around and screamed, running from Kaibara. He chased her until she fell and cried out for help, and on this cue, the lights came back on and the band began its next song.
Riding straight out of your imagination
Using my magic to fight against crime
Destroying evil with powers most awesome
Protecting the weak almost all of the time
But not on Sundays... Game of Thrones is on!
Now is the time for a girl of conviction
The world needs a hero, and I am that one

From out of the shadows, Reiko came out and started “stabbing” Kaibara. Setsuna strolled up afterwards and put her arm around Kinoko’s shoulders. “Look! Who is that masked woman?” Kinoko asked.

“That’s Ninja Reiko,” Setsuna explained, “but shut up about her. Let’s focus on me, because…”

I am the Unicorn Wizard
Riding for justice on a comet of stars
With the help of my sidekick, Princess Handjob
I’m more awesome and smarter than I already are
I am the Unicorn Wizard
My spells are amazing, and my reflexes quick
My horn is my strength and my strength is my power
And my power is my horn and my horn’s in my tits!

More extras dressed as demons came out, but were fought off by Reiko as Setsuna danced around. “Here’s your opportunity to stop listening if this song got too amazing for you,” she said. “No? OK.”

My life is a party, the guests are supermodels
Operation: I Rule is a total success
Each day, I invent a new form of karate
That changes the way that Japan views the West
Now’s that’s progress! Doitashi Mashitay!
Then we retire to the Chamber of Passion
And bathe in pool of strawberries and cream
The strawberries rub and exfoliate gently
The cream travels places you can’t even dream

“Ugh. I think I just dreamed it,” Kinoko groaned.

“How was it? Amazing?” Setsuna questioned.

“Uuh…”

“You mean uuh-stounding? Yeah, you do.”

I am the Unicorn Wizard
Like Sexuna Tokage, I’m sexy and strong
With the help of my hellhounds, Tinkles and Gary
We punish the wicked then break into song
I am the Unicorn Wizard
A superhero for the entire human race
My wand casts a spell that will unlock the door
And the wand is my junk and the door is your face!
As Shoda played a quick bit on the keyboard, the curtain closed, signaling the intermission had begun.
“Oh my god, this is the best day ever!” Setsuna squealed as she rushed backstage. “Everyone loves us!”

“We are getting plenty of laughs,” Shishida noted. “I’m surprised it’s going over so well.”

“Well, we are performing for teenagers,” Reiko pointed out.

“…Fair point.”

“Hey, how’s Kendo doing?” Setsuna wondered. “Has anyone been talking to her?”

“I went to check on her after my part was done,” Yui stated. “She’s doing fine. Nejire has been giving her advice and helping her out.”

“Let’s run over and see how she’s doing,” Monoma added. As he and Yui left, Setsuna took out her phone and texted the number listed as “President Dracula.”

ME~: How’re we doing, teach?

President Dracula: It’s everything I expected from you and incredibly surprising at the same time.

ME~: but it’s good yeah? Funny?

President Dracula: It is entertaining.

“What he say?” Pony asked.

“Standard dad reaction,” Setsuna reported, “but I think he likes it.”

“Yay!”

“No, it’ll be fine. We’ll ask someone for a recap,” Kaminari assured his friends as they entered the theater.

“We shouldn’t bother some random student like that,” Yaoyorozu chided.

“After performing and doing all that clean-up, I just wanna sit down and watch something fun,” Jiro sighed. “I don’t care if I’m completely lost.”

“Hey, there’s someone we could ask,” Sero said, pointing to Vlad King loitering in the back of the theater.
“Yeah, he’s probably been here the whole time,” Kirishima added. “Hey, Mr. Kan!”

“Hm? Oh, it’s 1-A,” he greeted. “How did your performance go?”

“Jury’s still out,” Jiro replied.

“It went great,” Yaoyorozu stated with a hand on Jiro’s shoulder.

“We wanted to relax and watch your class’s play. Do you mind filling us in on what we missed,” Kirishima said.

“Oh… well…” Kan paused and scratch his cheek awkwardly, not sure how to answer. It’s ridiculous in practice, but trying to describe it would be even more ridiculous. He looked around the theater for some way to deflect the question and thankfully spotted a set of pointy ears nearby. “I have… something urgent to look into. Amajiki is over there, so maybe ask him?”

“Sure thing.” Kirishima said before turning back to his friends. “Amajiki’s not a fan of crowds, so I’ll just ask him by myself and report back to you guys.”

That was too close, Kan thought as he walked away.

“Dude, this is gonna be so sick,” Tetsutetsu claimed as he put on his red villain costume and black cloak. “I’m gonna be the coolest villain ever.”

“You even get to kill Monoma,” Reiko added.

“Someone say my name?” Monoma greeted as he and Yui returned.

“Nah,” Setsuna interjected. “Ibara, you ready for the next song?”

“I am, and I’m still very thankfully I don’t have to say anything,” she answered. “Such vulgar lyrics.”

“Vulgar is funny!” Setsuna claimed. “Ready, people? Then let’s kick this shit up!”

Chapter End Notes

Just a quick intermission chapter so the last part of the play will be Chapter 69
At last, the lights in the theater fell away again and the curtains opened. In the spotlight on the right side of the stage was Ibara, sitting in her princess dress in a small, closed-off bedroom set with a letter in her hands. As a fantasy-style song began, Setsuna’s voice came over the speakers. “Dear Princess. This is a message from the battlefront, from your trusted knight, Lady Sexuna Tokage.” Another spotlight appeared, this time over Setsuna wandering glumly through a forest with Reiko.

\[\begin{align*}
I \text{ have ridden thousands of miles} \\
I \text{ have survived the deadliest trials} \\
I've \text{ fought through battles you can't even dream} \\
For \text{ a taste of your peppermint creams} \\
\text{Sword and steed are all that I've had} \\
\text{To conquer the evil over the land} \\
\text{But the beacon of light at the end of their schemes} \\
\text{Was the thought of your peppermint creams}
\end{align*}\]

The band kicked off into a more bombastic tune as Setsuna struck a pose. Ibara looked at her letter in shock as Setsuna sang with crazed energy.

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Oooooooh! Talkin' about your boobies} \\
\text{The peppermint creams are your boobies} \\
\text{Your boobalicious boobies} \\
\text{Oh God!} \\
\text{Gah, just lemme get at those boobies one time!}
\end{align*}\]

Her manic screaming was stopped when the fantasy styling returned and slowed the song.

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Lost in the dark of eternal night} \\
\text{Failing my quest meant the end of my life} \\
\text{And when things were the worst, I wanted to scream} \\
\text{Then I thought of your peppermint creams} \\
\text{Now I kneel and pray to the gods} \\
\text{Amidst fallen cities and crumbling facades} \\
\text{That I shall return and make you my queen} \\
\text{And bask in your peppermint creams}
\end{align*}\]

The band kicked up the tempo again and Setsuna ran to Ibara’s bedroom set, clinging to the fake stone wall and banging on it.

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Also your butt!} \\
\text{The term "peppermint creams" also refers to your sweet butt!}
\end{align*}\]
Oh! Your ass cheeks from heaven!
Aaaaaaaaahh!
Which do I like more?! Your boobs or your butt?!
God above don’t make me choose!
I’d rather die than choose, I’d rather fucking die!

The tempo instantly slowed again and Setsuna walked off solemnly while Ibara held the letter lovingly close.

And with these last words
I must now bid you adieu
You are my princess
And I will always love you…your boobs. It's the boobs. I like the boobs more, I just realized.

With the song finished, the rest of the stage lit up and the two girls met up with Pony in the center of the forest.

“This thing is bullshit!” Setsuna exclaimed while throwing away Pony’s horn. “You said this thing would give me powers to defeat Ganon, but I don’t feel any stronger.”

“Oh, Sexuna. Don’t you see?” Pony asked. “The power was inside of you all along. You can defeat the demon king all on your own.”

“…So, you’ve been bullshitting me?”

“Yup. Now get out there and kill Ganon!” Setsuna glared at Pony, but sighed and relented.

“Yeah, OK, whatever,” she said. “Ninja Reiko, we must make haste to the castle!” Reiko flipped her off as a response and the two girls ran off. As they did, the set was switched out again. When Setsuna and Reiko returned from offstage, the set had become the outside of a terrifying castle.

“We’ve arrived at Ganon’s castle, Reiko. Be on your guard. Some imposing monster must be guarding the entrance.” The girls the large prop doors in the set, but recoiled when they creaked open and a hairy arm clawed at them. “My god,” Setsuna growled. “It’s worse then I thought. Reiko, he’s got one of the most powerful monsters in existence on his side.” Just then, Awase began an abrupt drumbeat and the next song began.

Way back in olden ancient Greece
Lived a most ferocious beast
With eyes of flame and teeth of steel
On human flesh, it’d feast
Standing over 10 feet tall
No man escaped its roar
Behold, my friends and foes alike
The dreadful Manticore!

The doors were flung open and Shishida stepped out, wearing tight blue spandex pants with no shirt and American flag-patterned briefs over them, along with a black masquerade mask and a headband with horns.

Manticore! Manticore! Manticore! Manticore!

Manticore! Manticore! Manticore! Manticore!

As Setsuna sang, she and Shishida started play-fighting very clumsily while Reiko watched and
flipped off the audience.

The Manticore feels happiness  
Whenever you feel sad  
Because you got kicked in the junk  
The Manticore is glad  
The Manticore invented death  
And all things that are bad  
He'll kill your sister just for fun  
And make out with your dad

Manticore! Manticore! Manticore! Manticore!  
Manticore! Manticore! Manticore! Manticore!

Just then, the tempo slowed and Shoda played a keyboard solo as Setsuna sang more somberly.

He'll enroll you in the school of pain  
And then teach the class  
He'll kick your ass in with his feet  
And then he'll kick your feet with his gigantic ass  
Don't give him sass  
He ate a whole guy with his face and didn't even chew  
Turns out that guy was you

She pointed out to the audience for the last line, landing on Kirishima and exciting him. He gave her a thumbs-up in response.

And yet you're there  
There can only be one explanation  
And that's that you're a zombie  
Now I'm scared  
It's not like there wasn't enough on my mind  
With the Manticore  
Manticore, where are you now?  
Are you gone forever?  
Oh no, wait -- there you are.

The beat picked up again and Setsuna began fighting Shishida again.

He'll steal your girlfriend in the night  
And then he'll steal your soul  
He'll have a threesome with them both  
That's just how he rolls  
You may want to cry out loud  
"Manticore, you are wrong!"  
Too bad he already killed your ass  
In the first verse of this song!  
Manticore! Manticore! Manticore! Manticore!  
Manticore! Manticore! Manticore! Manticore!

“Move your nuts out of the way, Manticore!” Setsuna demanded. Shishida roared in response. “…I'm pretty sure he can be reasoned with,” the lizard girl said to Reiko, who shrugged. Setsuna approached Shishida, who picked her up by the throat. “He’s not reasoning, Rieko!” she grunted.
“Our only hope is beauty! You must write the most beautiful haiku ever before he chokes me to death! Go!” Reiko immediately took out a haiku form her pocket and tossed it to Setsuna to read aloud. “Puppies and kitties. Making love in the warm sunshine. So sweet, yet so hot.”

After a moment of waiting, Shishida threw Setsuna across the stage to Rieko’s feet. “AAAAUUGH! …ow.” She got up and got close to Reiko’s face, glaring at her companion. “Nice haiku, dumbass. That middle line had eight syllables. Dick.” For her insults, Setsuna got a knife by her throat. “Alright, you’re forgiven.” Reiko backed off and the two girls high fived. “But how shall we defeat him now?” This monster is just too powerful.” As Setsuna talked, Reiko approached Shishida and “stabbed” him in the stomach many times. “Hey, you did it!” Setsuna cheered. “Up top!” The girls high fived again and entered the doors, prompting the lights to go off. The scene was changed to the village again as Kuroiro and Shoda began a funkier song. Out from the background, Monoma appeared, along with Kinoko, who was dressed as a fairy. “Aaaaww yeah,” Monoma purred into the microphone.

It’s me, Link again, baby
That’s right I’m back
Last time I quested for the chalice, I got a little off track
But now my confidence is at an all-time high
Because Navi just anointed me the ‘Hero of Rhyme’"

“I said the ‘Hero of Time!’” Kinoko corrected.

That’s right, the Hero of Rhyme
I don’t need no sword or shield
I’m gonna be just fine

“Hey, listen, I think—”

Shh
I’ve got my beats and jams
I’m taking Ganon down now
No thanks to that Old Man

From out of stage left came Kaibara in his villager outfit, holding his own microphone in hand.

Link, thank God you’re here, the countryside is terrified and shocked!
We’re overrun with darknuts, peahats, leevers, gels, and octoroks!
You’re our hero of the ages with a sword and helping hand!
We really need your skills!

“Oh, you need my skills?” Monoma asked coyly. “Aw damn!”

Moblins: no problem and octoroks don’t know poppycock!
Gotta get that Triforce tomorrow, but first I gotta do my pop and lock!
When I see an iron knuckle I’mma buckle up my pants
’Cause those bitches don’t fuck around when I kick on my Z-target dance!
But see, with me, I’ve gotta find a different way to defeat
Don’t use my sword and shield but I know this flow is good enough to kill!
The Hylian people rejoice! ‘Cause your hero is the illest motherfuckin’ rapper with the illest fuckin’ voice!

“How was that?” Monoma asked as the lights went out besides the spotlight on him and Navi. “Those raps do anything for you?”
“OH GOD, EVERYONE IS DEAD!” Kaibara yelled from offscreen. The stage lights came back on as the set finished its transformation into an evil lair with Tetsutetsu standing in the background, wearing a cloak and holding a huge sword.

Moving right along to Ganon's underground lair

“EVERYTHING’S ON FIRE!”

Don't worry, I'm not scared
I'll save all of Hyrule with the tastiest rhymes I can spit
Now watch and learn, Navi

"You’re a stupid piece of shit!"

Wanna go Ganon? Get your big ass over here and try me
Just ignore the burning hellscape that's collapsing in behind me
You have never seen a rapper close to my skills whatsoever
Oh I see you brought a giant glowing sword
That's cool, whatever
'Cause, hey!
I'm gonna be the last thing you see when you lose against me here in the ruins of the city
Yeah, ah! No better bigger battle than here 'cause by the time you swing your sword I'm gonna—

Monoma was interrupted by Tetsutetsu nearly chopping his head off.
Oh!
Whoa
Chill out!
Gotta fill out this order form for a partner who can, maybe, I don't know, come out and help me out in a real bout!

“Hey listen, link,” Kinoko said to Monoma, who had his back turned to Tetsutetsu has he brought up his sword. “You’re rapping doesn’t stink, but Ganon’s standing right there with a giant sword and —” Monoma was suddenly and unceremoniously cut down by Tetsutetsu, which ended the song.
The Sacred Chalice: Act 2, Part 2

Chapter Notes

Set list:
Rap Battle: Ryu vs. Ken - Starbomb
The Sacred Chalice part 4 - NSP
Heart Boner - NSP

Once Kinoko and Monoma were offstage, Tetsutetsu took center stage and swished his cape around, revealing his face to the crowd. “My real challenge is on its way,” he monologued. “I must be ready. No mere mortal could’ve bested my foul beasts to reach this place.” He looked to stage left as Setsuna was thrown onto the stage, crashing with a yelp.

“Ow! Reiko, that wasn’t the cool sentence I wanted.” Reiko sauntered on stage and flipped off the lizard girl, ignoring Tetsutetsu.

“You two are the intruders who’ve come to challenge me?” the Iron boy questioned.

“That’s us!” Setsuna revealed. “I, Sexuna Tokage, am here for the Sacred Chalice! Princess Thorn needs it to heal the curse you placed on her! Dick move, Ganon.”

“You stand no chance against me,” Tetsutetsu claimed. “I can defeat you at any challenge, so pick your method of battle. I will humor any request.”

“Hmmmmm,” Setsuna hummed before grinning slyly. “Rap battle to the death.”

“If you insist,” Tetsutetsu answered, pulling out his own microphone as Shoda played notes on the keyboard. “Then I shall begin.”

Fuck you, Sets, you're such a little fucking bitch!
I'm gonna break your fucking spine in half and throw you in a ditch
Start up the fucking beat and drop the motherfucking bass
So I can shoot a load of Hadouken all over your face
I'll break your glass jaw like it was made of fucking straw, man
Shredding you up worse than Vega fapping with his claw hand
Cammy and Chun Li don't think you're sexy at all
They're both coming home with me, one for each of my balls
Like the bonus round car your, ass is getting destroyed
My cock is more swollen than Zangief's thyroid
Your dick's three inches hard, I'm working with a soft ten
So what you got to motherfucking say to me, then?

Setsuna was too stunned by Tetsutetsu to properly respond and started to look worried. Reiko didn’t seem interested in helping either, so the reptile girl was on her own. “I really don't appreciate those things that you just said,” she began, completely off rhythm. “I was raised to respect others, and sometimes words can be hurtful and I just—I-I just think that maybe— Yo, an apology is in order.” Her clumsy response didn’t faze Tetsutetsu at all as he started rapping again.
It's my honest suspicion
You're gonna want a physician
Only morticians are the one to help your future condition
Cause me whooping on your ass is a time honored tradition
So now I'll do it even faster in the Turbo edition
Watch your back, bitch, I'm gonna make you scream
My dick shoots farther than the arm of Dhalsim
Just like Sagat's chest, you're gonna need a skin graft
Now, please enjoy the tart, tangy taste of my shaft
My rhymes are fat like the sumo E. Honda
I'm the king of dick jungle with my giant anaconda
Harness my Chi to beat your ass with a Dao
So what you got to motherfucking say to me now?

Setsuna finally looked ready to fight, but still rapped awkwardly.

Alright, two can play at this game, dick-penis man
Can you lose to me in a rap battle? Sure you can. Heh… hehe—

“Hi-yah!” Tetsutetsu yelled as he swung his sword down on Setsuna.

“AAAAH!” she yelled before finishing her song.

You have proven that you are the best
You have stabbed a giant hole in my chest

“Oh hey, you rhymed on beat,” Tetsutetsu casually pointed out.

“Hey, yeah,” she responded.

"I knew you could do it—“ Reiko interrupted Tetsutetsu when she snapped his neck, making him fall to the ground dead.

“Alright! We did it!” Setsuna cheered, standing up unharmed. “Distracting him with a rap battle so you could snap his neck was a brilliant maneuver. Up top, Reiko!” With the villain defeated, spotlight shone down on a table in the background, showing a plastic goblet. “There it is. Finally, The Scared Chalice. It’s been a long and perilous journey, but we’re here, Reiko. Up to—” Setsuna was cut off when Reiko pulled her into an embrace. “Awww. Thanks, buddy.” Once they seperated, Awase began a drum beat for the next song and the two girls approached the chalice.

We made our way through the castle
That the demon built in the mountain side
We found the Alter of Sweetness and atop it lay our prize
(Oh shit the chalice.)
We fought through trials, and risked our lives
For this one moment to arrive
It was emotional and tears sprang to our eyes.

Setsuna took the chalice and held it up with joy, showing it off to the audience. The lights went out besides the single spotlight on the girls and the set began to change.

Because we followed the guiding light of the north star!
The bond we share is indestructible and tight just like my pants
And now my heart is filled with wondrous sigh of angel blessings
Our quest was over and we had all survived because friendship
And love will always triiiiumph!

“So, my dear, sexy audience,” Setsuna monologue, “the quest had finally ended. We returned to the Thorn Kingdom with the chalice and cured Princess Thorn of her curse. My reward? The fair princess’s hand in marriage. For truly, the love we shared was a pure and magical love. At long last, I had found my soulmate.” The lights returned and showed off the final set – a wedding in a magical forest. Everyone was there – Yui and Kaibara as the Mermaid and Merman, Shishida as the Manticore, Monoma and Kinoko as Link and Navi, Rin as the dragon, Honenuki as the Kraken, Pony as the Unicorn Wizard – almost every character shown. As Ibara and Setsuna both prepared for their wedding, a soft guitar melody came in and Setsuna began singing the final song of the play.

When I first looked in your eyes
You were more than just a beauty to me
All my senses shot straight up
I was rock hard emotionally
The fact that you and I could plow
Is something I haven’t
Even thought about
Starting noooow

I've got a heart boner for you
I stand before you stiff and true
I wanna blast a load of feelings onto you
This heart boner's for you

The two girls went to the altar and held hands while staring into each other’s eyes lovingly. Bondo was there as the officiator and the two girls were married.

You've helped me grow into a woman
My shallowness is a thing of the past
I want to slam you with my empathy
And then I'll rail you with my class
You've helped me find maturity
I'll be your wiener queen, tee hee... Hee hee hee~

I've got a heart boner tonight
Feel my love pants growing tight
I wanna plug you with respect all through the night
I'll bust a nut of joy and light

As the wedding finished, the center of the stage was cleared for the two girls to dance. They spun around gracefully in each other’s arms as the song built up some speed.

You are the love that I pursue
Do you feel the feels I feel for you?
There's so much we have yet to do
Now jump me like a kangaroo!

(Wooooo0000000000 aaaaahhh)
This heart boner's for you
I stand before you thick and true
I'll shoot a wad of gleaming romance just for you
This heart boner's for you
The curtains’ closed slowly over the stage as the song faded slowly out. Setsuna came in close to Ibara and crooned the last lines by her ear.

*It’s aaaaaall for yooooooouuuu*

*Every throbbing inch of my heart is just for you*

*Screw you if you’re judging me*

With the curtain finally closed, 1-B heard laughter and applause from the audience, telling them they were a hit. “Well, that was fun,” Reiko said.

“They loved it!” Setsuna cheered. “That was so awesome! Thank you so much, everyone! This was legit the greatest thing I’ve ever done!”

“We should be thanking you for writing such a funny play,” Fukidashi told her. “Now, let’s clean this place up quick. The faster it’s back to normal, the faster we can go enjoy the festival!”

“Yeah! I wanna go eat something sweet!” Pony declared. As cleanup began for the class and a few others left to check up on Kendo, Reiko was approached by Setsuna.

“So oo,” she began coyly, “that hug wasn’t in the script.”

“Call it improv,” Reiko replied with a small smile. “That’s your reward for making this fun.”

“Awwww, Reikooooo!” Setsuna cooed while hugging her friend. “Hey, hey, if this was fun, you should see what I’m working on for next year! I’ve got a sequel in the works!” She held up her phone to Reiko and showed off a document called “6969.”

“You’re already working on a sequel?”

“Yup! Sci-fi this time! It’s gonna be the tits!”

“…I think once was enough,” Reiko replied.

“I’ll convince you.”

“Nah.”

“Yeah.”
As time swept forward, the wind at U.A. began to bring a chill to its students. Fall had come in quickly, and with it, Halloween had eventually come as well. Thanks to a pair of students with a flair for the gothic, 1-B had prepared a celebration and the day had finally come. In the Common Room, a few bystanders looked on as Reiko checked over her decorations one last time before the festivities began.

“I’ve never seen her so excited,” Pony noted.

“Is this excitement?” Monoma wondered. “Seems more like… just, less apathy.”

“Whatever it is, it’s cute,” Setsuna cooed. “She’s got that sparkle in her eye.”

“Where’s Kuroiro?” Pony asked. “It’s his party also.”

“Final touches on his costume,” Monoma explained. “Honenuki said it’s very detailed and complicated.”

“Speaking of costumes,” Reiko said from across the room, “you guys should go put yours on.”

“Oh yeah! I’ll go do that!” Pony exclaimed.

“You go get yours on. We’ll watch the door for Shinso and Hatsume,” Setsuna offered. Reiko gave her a thumbs-up and phased up through the ceiling towards her room. “See? She’s too eager for stairs! Excitement.”

“Maybe,” Monoma relented. “So, what’re you going as?”

“It’s a secret—”

“Probably Godzilla.”

“…I’m not telling,” she claimed as Monoma smirked knowingly. “How about you?”

“I’ll tell you when Pony shows hers off. We’re matching.”

“Not doing a couple’s costume with Kendo? Hey, what’s she going as? Something cute?”

“Take a look for yourself,” the two students heard behind them. In the stairwell, they saw Kendo striking a pose in her Chun Li costume.

“I knew it’d be cute!” Setsuna cheered. “Your hair looks adorable in Odango buns!”

“You look great,” Monoma complimented.

“Thanks, you guys,” Kendo chuckled. “I was never a big Halloween kid, but Reiko’s enthusiasm got to me. This party looks like it’ll be great.”

“I’m glad you think so.” Out from behind Kendo, Reiko stepped out wearing a simple but well-made Danny Phantom costume.

“Oh dang, that’s fitting,” Setsuna giggled. “You changed quick. Must be all that excitement.”
“Is Shinso here yet?” she asked

“Not yet,” Monoma reported. “Is Pony on her way down?”

“Pony’s not here!” they heard the blonde girl shout from the top of the stairs. Monoma popped out of his seat and excitedly flipped the lights off for Pony’s entrance. Everyone saw her silhouette go into the common room and strike a pose before Monoma’s phone shone a spotlight on her, revealing a Sailor Moon costume. “In the name of the moon, I’ll punish you!”

“Oh wow,” Kendo said while applauding. “You look great, Pony!”

“Thanks,” she said while rubbing her head sheepishly. “I go as her every year.”

“I’ll go change right now, Pony,” Monoma told her before darting up the stairs.

“Of course, he’d be Tuxedo Mask,” Reiko noted before feeling her phone buzz in her pocket. “Oh. He’s here. Pony, can you do me a solid?”

“What’s up?” the centaur girl asked. Reiko leaned over and whispered in her ear before going to the main entrance. “I can do that!” Pony offered. Reiko used her Quirk to hover over the entrance, waiting for Pony to say he line. “Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice!” Reiko turned invisible and flung opened the entrance to reveal Shinso in a disheveled black-and-white striped suit. In the shadow of the doorway, he gave a grunting laugh before stepping inside.

“’Sup,” he greeted, now back to his normal voice.

“…I’m gonna chalk that up as both completely expected and way out of left field,” Kendo commented.

“Well, you know, Halloween just does something to me,” he responded while Reiko floated into his arms. “Cool party, babe.”

“It’s gonna get cooler,” she said.

“Allrighty, it’s my turn to change,” Setsuna exclaimed. “Don’t you two start graveyard smashing while I’m gone.”

“I have a feeling these Halloween puns aren’t stopping anytime soon,” Shinso commented. Just then, everyone heard the sound of a Spanish Guitar from the stairwell. They looked and saw Monoma in his Tuxedo Mask costume playing theme music from his phone.

“It’s Tuxedo Mask!” Pony gasped.

“Isn’t that just his hero costume?” Shinso joked.

“Laugh all you want. I look good,” Monoma claimed. “My entrance is done,” he called up the stairs. “You two can come down.”

“Woah!” Pony said as Kaibara and Tsuburaba followed Monoma downstairs, dressed as Gyro Zeppeli and Johnny Joestar, respectively. “You two look so cool!”

“Don’t we?” Tsuburaba said while striking a pose. “…Sen, say the line.”

“Oh, uh… Nyo ho.”

“He said the line!” Pony cheered.
"We’re not the only JoJo’s costume," Tsuburaba revealed.  "Fukidashi, come on down!"

"Coming!" Down the stairs came Fukidashi wearing a blue school uniform with a plush Stand on his shoulder.

"Koichi and Echoes!" Pony yelled.  "So cool!"

"Now that everyone’s coming down, we can start the party." Reiko said. She turned on the music and mood lighting while Shinso put a scary movie on the TV.  "Start partying."

"Man, nothing gets me excited like being told to party," Monoma commented.

"Hey, Monoma?" Shinso said.

"Yeah?"

"Punch yourself in the face." With no hesitation, Monoma reeled back and punched his own jaw.  "OW! I hate it when you do that."

"I love it when you do that," Reiko said. Monoma pouted at the hypnotist, but before he could argue back, everyone heard a roar from the stairwell.

"RAAAAAAH!" Setsuna was lumbering downstairs in a Godzilla suit, wiggling her tiny arms around at people.  "Totally unexpected and creative! That’s me!"

"Looks sick!" Tsuburaba complimented.  "What about Rin?  Is he a Kaiju too?"

"Not exactly," they heard Rin say as he entered the common room in his Goku costume.

"Godzilla and Goku?" Kaibara questioned.

"He wanted to be Goku.  I can’t say no to that face," Setsuna shrugged.  "I do have another Kaiju to fight though… Oh, there he is!"  Coming downstairs was Kamakiri in a Gigan costume, where he immediately started play-fighting Setsuna.

"Looks like everyone’s in the Halloween spirit," Kendo chuckled.

"Yo, guys!  Mei here yet?" they heard Awase say as he came to the common room in his Chrono costume.

"Woah.  Looks just like the game," Shinso commented.

"Thanks, dude."

"Looks like she’s just arriving," Reiko said from the window by the entrance.  She opened up and Hatsume sauntered inside, dressed as Lucca from Chrono Trigger.

"Hey, hey, people!" she greeted.  "Gimme some sugar, baby!"  Awase hooked his arm around her waist and gave her a deep, long kiss.  "I was talking about candy, but that was awesome too."

"Candy bowl’s right here," Pony pointed out.

"Bitchin’," Hatsume said while grabbing for chocolate.

"Yo!  Who’s ready to party?!" Everyone heard Tetsutetsu yell as he and Ibara arrived.
“Everyone looks so festive,” Ibara commented. She wore a Poison Ivy costume while Tetsutetsu was dressed as Colossus.

“That’s some irony, my dudes,” Setsuna said. “Tetsutetsu’s Marvel and Ibara’s DC.”

“Forbidden romance,” Pony decided.

“Who forbade it?” Kendo asked.

“Continuity.”

“Y’know, with Shishida’s costume, the Marvel characters have you outnumbered, Shiozaki,” Kamakiri pointed out.

“What’s Shishida dressed as?” Monoma asked.

“Take a look for yourself!” they heard. Coming downstairs was Shishida, who had dyed his fur blue and wore only black shorts and a gold belt. “Well?”

“Looks great,” Kendo complimented. “How’s all that dye gonna come out?”

“With time,” he answered sheepishly. “A small sacrifice for dressing as my favorite of the X-Men.”

“I’m looking forward to you being randomly being blue for a few weeks,” Monoma laughed.

“It’ll look funny in your uniform,” Pony giggled. “Oh hey! Shoda and Kinoko!” Form behind Shishida came the two short 1-B students, dressed as Mario and Princess Peach. “Kinoko, you look so cute!”

“Thanks! I’m a real mushroom princess!” she cheered while hopping into Shoda’s arms. “Check me out!”

“Uh, party looks great, Yanagi,” Shoda complimented while holding up his girlfriend. “Looks like almost everyone’s here.”

“Did you see the others on your way down?” Kendo asked.

“Kuroiro’s helping them put together some last-minute costumes,” Kinoko explained. “Those three forgot or didn’t care enough and he got pissy.”

“Sounds about right,” Monoma commented. After a few moments, Yui, Honenuki, and Bondo came downstairs in their more traditional costumes. Yui was a mummy, Honenuki was a zombie, and Bondo was Frankenstein’s Monster.

“Sorry we’re late,” Honenuki said sheepishly. “Shihai will be down in a minute.”

“Can’t believe you guys didn’t get costumes beforehand,” Reiko grumbled.

“Well, they’re dressed now, so it cool,” Pony said. “Hey, where’s Mr. Kan?”

“I see him comin’,” Rin said from the window. Soon after, Vlad King entered the dorm in a classic Dracula costume.

“Sorry I’m late,” he said, “but your chaperone is here.”

“That’s everyone,” Kendo said. “Well, once Kuroiro shows himself, it will be.”
“I’m already here.” The class turned and saw Kuroiro standing at the bottom of the stairwell in an incredibly detailed and well-made Spawn costume.

“Freaky,” Shinso said with a grin.

“That’s movie quality right there,” Monoma complimented.

“I look badass,” Kuroiro bragged while swishing his cape. “Let’s party, bitches.”

So, the Halloween party begun. People danced, watched the horror movies on the TV, ate candy until they felt sick… and then ate more. A classic teenager’s holiday bash. Eventually, Reiko brought out materials for some party games.

“OK, whoever wants in, get over here,” she called out next to a big bucket of water. “We’re bobbing for apples.” Kamakiri was the first to come over and simply speared one with his mandible, smirking cockily. “…Anyone else?”

“Pony wants to!” The centaur girl trotted happily to the bucket and looked down at the crisp red apples. “This is my jam!”

“OK, I’ve got the timer when you’re ready.” On Reiko’s cue, Pony stuck her face into the water… and just stayed there. It was a full minute before people started to wonder if she would ever come up.

“Is she OK?” Monoma wondered. Kendo leaned down to check on her, but Pony suddenly flung her head out just then.

“Got one!” she yelled. “I ate one!”

“You what?” Shinso asked. Everyone looked in the bucket and saw an apple core floating around the whole apples. “…I think she wins.”

“Yeah,” Reiko agreed. With Bondo’s help, she quickly set up the next activity of pumpkin carving. “Everyone partner up,” she instructed. “Mr. Kan, do you want to participate?”

“I suppose,” he answered.

“Need a partner, Kan?” The class looked to the entrance when they heard a familiar voice and saw All Might coming inside, wearing a dapper skeleton costume.

“Hey, All Might!” Pony greeted.

“Glad you could make it,” Kendo added.

“Well, I spent some time at 1-A’s party, so I thought I’d come to yours too.” The former pro took up the carving tools with Kan and the many groups started carving their pumpkins. With Fukidashi’s impressive artistry and Kamakiri’s knife skills, that duo took first place. Second place went to Tetsutetsu and Setsuna, who somehow carved the words “man run in and funny scream” into theirs. Last place went to Honenuki and Bondo who tried using their Quirks and made a mess in the end.

With plenty of activities, karaoke and dancing, and scary movies to watch, the night went by all too quickly. The last of the partiers were left sprawled out on the common room couch late at night, too tired to move but too sick from candy to fall asleep.

“No, but I’m too tired,” he said. “Let’s just go to my room and cuddle.”

“Carry me?”

“Sure.” The pair of lizard-like hobbled upstairs, meaning Kendo and Monoma were the only couple still awake downstairs.

“Maybe we should follow their lead,” Kendo suggested.

“I gotta get out of this tux,” Monoma said. Kendo took this as a yes and pulled him up off the couch. As they walked to the stairs, they looked at Awase and Hatsume lying on the floor under a blanket, along with Shinso and Reiko snuggled close on a couch.

“Man, I’ve never been to a party as fun as this,” Kendo said. “I hope the rest of our parties are this fun.”

“Well, these dorks are our family now. We’ve got lots more to look forward to.”
For both of U.A.’s freshman hero courses, the second semester, while quiet, had been a period of growth. With no villain attacks or threats on their life, they were free to train at their own pace, seek internships with their new licenses, and enjoy living the life of a high school student. There had been a few close calls, such as Midoriya’s run-in with a villain the morning of the cultural festival, but campus life had mostly been peaceful. For Class 1-B, however, the harmony would not last much longer. Though they didn’t realize it, a storm was brewing on the horizon that would test their mettle against their fated rivals. The catalyst of this clash was an announcement in early in November from their teacher.

“There’s the bell,” Kan noted as the afternoon school bell went off. “OK, I’ve handed out homework, you’ve got the study guides for the test…” Kan flipped through the papers on the podium and paused when he found the last one. “Oh, right. Listen up. I’ve got an announcement you’re sure to be interested in.” Kan flicked his eyes around the classroom, making sure he had their full attention. “In two weeks’ time, you’ll finally be having your joint training class against Class 1-A.” The students were so silent that you could hear a pin drop in the room. “I can’t give you many details, but this will be a 20-on-20 combat exercise. I know you’ve been eager to fight them, so here’s your shot. I have great confidence in you, but make sure you don’t underestimate your sister class. That’s all. Class is dismissed.” With his announcement done, Kan left the classroom. After a moment, the heavy silence was broken by, ironically, Bondo.

“Guess it’s finally time,” he said.

“It’s been a long time coming,” Tsuburaba added. “I know they said we’d have a class together earlier this semester, but that feels like so long ago.”

“It’ll be pretty hectic with 40 people fighting it out,” Shoda pointed out. “This could get dangerous easily.”

“We’ll be the ones bringing the danger,” Kuroiro stated. “Ain’t that right, Juzo?”

“Yeah,” he agreed while clenching his fist. “It’s finally time for me to face off against him. Todoroki…”

“OK, before we get too excited,” Kendo began, “let’s remind ourselves of a few things. We have friends in 1-A. All of the attention they’ve gotten has been from threats on their life. They’re just like us, so let’s not get… crazy.” She turned to Monoma on her last word, wondering what his expression would be. The rest of the class did the same and waited for him to speak.

“You guys,” he began while turning to his friends. “This is our chance. We’ve got to pull out all the stops and give it everything.” Once Kendo saw his eyes, she felt a strange reassurance. Instead of the manic Monoma that was consumed by envy, she saw something more controlled. In his eyes was a glimmer of that same competitiveness, but it was Monoma who was in control, like a destructive fire being contained into a light-giving torch. “If we plan ahead and train our hardest, we will win.”

“That’s what I like to hear,” Tetsutetsu said with a grin. “We’re gonna kick some ass out there!”

“I’m with Tetsutetsu,” Rin interjected. “I believe in us.”

“As long as we have faith, the way to victory shall be shown,” Ibara added with her usual
melodramatic flair.

“Kendo, what you think?” Pony asked. No one knew what she’d say to their declarations, but Kendo smiled at her friends and held up a fist.

“I won’t hold back on them either. Let’s take the victory, guys.” The rest of the class raised their fists in solidarity, ready to fight alongside their comrades at any time.

“Before we all start training for this,” Monoma said while taking out a spiral notebook, “I think we should head back to the dorms and have a strategy meeting. Our greatest strength in this battle will be information.”

“What’s in the notebook?” Fukidashi asked. Monoma flipped open the book and showed a random page to the class. The page had a sketch of Kaminari on it was information on his Quirk with possible countermeasures based on everyone else’s Quirks.

“To know your enemy is important,” Monoma claimed.

“Hey, I seen Midoriya scribbling stuff like that in his own notebook,” Pony said.

“Well, I am the class copycat. Besides, marking out information is important.”

“Should we really be resorting to espionage?” Ibara questioned. “It feels impure.”

“I don’t think it’s espionage. 1-A showed off all their powers in the Sports Festival, so we’d know their powers anyway,” Tetsutetsu pointed out. “They’re probably gonna do the same thing. I trust Monoma if he says info is important.”

“It is,” Kendo added. “This is a valuable resource and seems to have plenty of strategies in it, so we should go through this back at the dorms and add whatever we can to it.”

“Everyone say ‘thank you, Monoma,’” the copycat requested.

“Don’t push it,” Kendo scolded with a chop to his neck.

“Haven’t seen that in a while,” Tsuburaba laughed. The class began to pack up, and once Monoma stopped feeling numb, they left the classroom together. Once they were outside, they were greeted by a group of visitors coming towards them.

“Miss Kendo!” It was Iida greeting Kendo, and behind him was the rest of 1-A. “I’m guessing you have also been informed of our upcoming combat exercise?”

“We have,” Kendo replied. “In fact, we were just discussing it.”

“In that case, I wish you all luck with your training,” Iida said earnestly. “We promise to hold nothing back on the battlefield.”

“We’ll destroy you damn extras,” Bakugo growled.

“Kacchan, that’s a little much,” Midoriya said quietly.

“It’s fine,” Monoma said to the green-haired student. “The smallest dogs always bark the loudest.”

“You calling me a dog?” the explosive boy asked.

“I would be lying if I said that hair didn’t remind me of a Pomeranian.”
“OK, that’s enough,” Kendo said, while pushing Monoma to the back of the group. “Whatever happens, let’s all try and be friendly.”

“I’d like nothing more,” Iida replied.

“Yo, Tetsutetsu!” Kirishima said while blocking Bakugo’s path to the other class. “We still on for sparring tomorrow?”

“Huh?”

“C’mon! Let’s bash it out on our own before the big fight, eh?” Kirishima held out his fist to the iron boy, but Tetsutetsu, for once, didn’t bump it.

“…Sorry, Kirishima, but I can’t.”

“Huh? Why not?”

“It’s nothing personal,” Tetsutetsu assured him, surprisingly soberly. “I just… I don’t think I can really evolve if I keep sparring with you. If we keep going like this, we’ll never grow up differently. I have to see what I can do on my own.”

“…I see,” Kirishima responded with a grin. “Then I can’t wait to see what you’ll be like in two weeks.”

“Same here, Mr. Unbreakable.” The boys bumped fists, but then lurched forward into an emotional bro hug.

“You my boi!”

“You MY boi, boi!”

“Aww, that’s sweet,” Uraraka said, poking her head out from behind Iida.

“If that’s everything, we’ll be going back to the dorms,” Kendo said, pulling Tetsutetsu back to the group of 1-B students. “Be ready, Iida. We’ll be hitting you guys with everything.”

“I’d expect so, Miss Kendo. We promise to do the same.”

With school out for the day, both hero classes returned to their dorms. While 1-B had begun their strategy session almost immediately, Class 1-A started theirs later that night. “Attention, everyone!” Iida said to his classmates in the common room. “Please be silent so we can begin our discussion.”

“Dude, you’re the only one talking,” Mina pointed out.

“…So I am,” the class rep said. “Thank you all for meeting promptly at this time. Our topic of discussion will be our fellow hero course class. In order to best prepare and strategize, we must compile any and all information we have.”

“So, we’re just here to put our heads together?” Kaminari asked.

“Yeah, you probably won’t be of much help in that case,” Jiro snarked.

“So cold!”

“Can you two idiots shut up?!” Bakugo snarled. “I wanna get this meeting over with so I can go to
“Oh yeah. I forgot about you’re ‘Old Man Schedule,’” Sero joked.

“Quiet down, all,” Iida said, trying to reign in the meeting. “The purpose of this meeting is to gather information. I don’t expect us to know everyone in Class 1-B’s Quirks or fighting styles, but any and all knowledge is welcome. Midoriya, the sketches?”

“Oh, right. Yeah, I got them.” On the wall behind Iida, Midoriya started taping sketches of all 1-B students up in alphabetical order.

“In order to better track our information, I’ve had Midoriya sketch them out so we can memorize their names and faces,” Iida explained. “We’ll go in alphabetical order and see if anyone among us knows their Quirks. It could be from the Sports Festival, a shared internship, training at the same time and place, etc.”

“What about the training camp?” Hagakure asked. “I know we were kinda interrupted, but we still spent some time there.”

“I figured that we wouldn’t have much information from then since we were all preoccupied with our own training, but if you know learned of someone’s Quirk then, please speak up. Now, let’s begin!”

“First one is Yosetsu Awase,” Midoriya stated, pointing to his sketch of the headband-wearing boy. “Does anyone know?” None of the class seemed to have an answer, but Yaoyorozu eventually but her hand up begrudgingly.

“I know of his power, but… I learned it during the training camp. He used it to save me and put the tracking device on the Nomu chasing us. It feels wrong to share such information considering how I came to know.” The class looked to their vice-representative in silent understanding, but Bakugo broke the silence.

“Don’t start holding out on us, Ponytail,” he demanded. “Spill.”

“Bakugo, Momo doesn’t have to say anything,” Jiro said defensively.

“You don’t think those extras aren’t using every resource they have for information? Keeping secrets will fuck us over, Ponytail.” Even with his coarse words, Bakugo was surprisingly composed and not raising his voice. “Now talk.”

“…You’re right,” Yaoyorozu finally said. “I need to think of the class first. Awase’s Quirk lets him fuse things at an atomic level as long as he is touching both and the items are touching each other. He can even do this to organic material such as flesh.”

“I see. That’s quite powerful,” Iida commented as Midoriya wrote the information on his sketchbook paper. “If he can fuse you to the ground or the wall, you’re out of the fight.”

“Then just send me after him,” Kaminari suggested. “He can’t touch me without getting a million volts!”

“Good idea,” Midoriya complimented. “You would be a good counter to him.”

“Moving on,” Iida continued. “Next is Sen Kaibara.” The class looked at the boy’s sketch but had no clue of his power. “Nothing then?”
“Not quite,” Midoriya said. “At the camp, him, Shishida, and I were with Mr. Tiger, so both of them have simple enhancement-style Quirks.”

“Well, that’s something,” Iida replied. “Next is Togaru Kamakiri. Any ideas?” No one responded. “Then he’s our first mystery. Moving on, we have Shihai Kuroiro. Tokoyami, you’ve mentioned him being a rival of sorts before. Would you happen to know?”

“That was… a different matter,” Tokoyami explained, “but he has mentioned it. It functions similar to 13’s Quirk, but instead of atomizing what he sucks in, he stores it inside of his body.”

“Interesting,” Midoriya mumbled while writing down the information. “Um, next is Itsuka Kendo. You interned alongside her, right, Yaoyorozu?”

“I did. Her Quirk lets her hands grow to large sizes which increases her strength.”

“Oh, I remember that,” Hagakure interrupted. “I saw that during the Sports Festival, but I didn’t know if I was just seein’ things.”

“Large hands? Alright then,” Iida said. “Yui Kodai is next. Anyone? …What about Kinoko Komori?” No one had any information on the two girls, so they were skipped over. “Ibara Shiozaki.”

“I think we all remember hers,” Jiro declared while smirking at Kaminari.

“Yes, she will certainly be a tough adversary.”

“She’s also pretty good at maneuvering through cities now,” Sero claimed. “Kamui Woods taught us how during our internship with him.”

“Good to know. Jot it down, Midoriya.”

“Got it. Next is Jurota Shishida – an enhancer-type.”

“He looks like he may have just a mutation-type Quirk,” Ojiro added. “He could have an animal’s senses too.”

“That’s certainly possible,” Iida agreed. “Next is Nirengeki Shoda. Ojiro, did you happen to learn his during the Sports Festival’s Cavalry Battle?”

“Sorry, Iida, but I don’t really remember anything about that event,” Ojiro explained while rubbing his neck embarrassedly.

“Iida, he was brainwashed. Be more sensitive,” Hagakure scolded.

“Y-You’re right. I apologize,” Iida responded with a quick bow. “If no one has any information on him, we’ll move on to our next subject – Pony Tsunotori.”

“Oh! I think I know!” Mineta said while raised his hand. “During the cavalry battle, she was running around on all fours with that Kamakiri guy on her back. She was pretty fast too.”

“With those hooves, it’s probably a mutation that gives her a horse’s strength and speed,” Midoriya reasoned. “From his height, Kamakiri looked like he could way around 200 pounds.”

“Those horns look dangerous too, ribbit,” Tsuyu added.

“Right, I’ll add them to the list. Up next is Kosei Tsuburaba.”
“Oh hey, I remember him,” Kirishima spoke up. “He was on Monoma’s team for the cavalry battle. He could make walls of air by breathing.”

“A defensive Quirk? That could spell trouble,” Iida said. “With all of the training we’ve done, he’s probably increased the size and strength as well. Good to know. Moving on, we have Tetsutetsu Tetsutetsu, who’s Quirk is also well known. Do you have any extra information, Kirishima?”

“Sorry, but what Midoriya’s already got is pretty much it.”

“Then we’ll move on. Setsuna Tokage is next.” No once raised their hand or spoke up, so Midoriya drew a question mark next to her sketch.

“Manga Fukidashi is our next subject. Any ideas?”

“What is it, it’s probably related to his weird head,” Sato suggested. “He’s also a pretty shrimpy guy, so he’s probably not a physical fighter.”

“An astute observation,” Iida complimented. “Moving on, we have Juzo Honenuki, one of the recommended students.”

“So, he’s on Todoroki and Momo’s level?” Jiro asked.

“Do you know his Quirk, Todoroki?” Ojiro asked.

“…I don’t,” he answered with his normal level of stoicism. “Sorry.”


“Yes. He was able to turn the ground into some sort of mud,” Tokoyami confirmed. “A useful Quirk for trapping people, but if he’s considered to be on par with Todoroki and Yaoyorozu, there must be more to it.”

“Then we should all be on our guard around him,” Iida instructed. “Next up is Kojiro Bondo.”

“Oh! Oh! I know!” Mina spastically declared. “He can shoot superglue out of his eyeholes!”

“Superglue? That could be a problem,” Midoriya began. “Then it’s like Awase’s Quirk—something that can stick you to one place unless we have a specific counter.”

“Then you’re in luck,” Mina continued. “Back in the cavalry battle, my acid was strong enough to melt it.”

“That’s great!” Midoriya replied. “In that case, we’ll put you in charge of keeping him from taking anyone down with his glue and freeing anyone who get stuck.”

“Leave it to me!”

“How much more of this?” Bakugo complained.

“Just three left, Bakugo,” Iida told him. “You faced our next subject, Neito Monoma, in the cavalry battle, so your opinion would be greatly appreciated.”

“The copy bastard,” he growled. “OK, everyone listen up ‘cause I’m not repeating myself! Deku you better write down every single word!”
“Y-You got it, Kacchan.”

“He can copy people’s Quirks by touching them. It most likely has a time limit, but I don’t know if it’s a set limit or if how long he touches you matters. Whatever the limit is, he’s probably lengthened it since the Sports Festival. Back then, he could only use one at a time, but that could have changed too. I don’t know if he can copy mutations or not, but be careful around him. He could use almost any of his classmate’s Quirks or our own, so ones like the headband guy or Icyhot’s that could stop you for good are definitely a possibility.”

“Surprisingly well thought out,” Yaoyorozu commented.

“Why’s that surprising?!” he yelled at her, prompting Jiro to put her ear jacks up defensively in front of Momo.

“Thank you very much for you input, Bakugo,” Iida said. “The next one is the other recommended student of Class 1-B, Reiko Yanagi. Hagakure, you’re internship with Edgeshot was alongside her, correct?”

“You bet! OK, so, her Quirk is a phasing Quirk, but different than Togata’s. She can pass through solid and float around freely, but she has a time limit on it. Also, she can’t pass through people, so she can be caught in your arms or by something organic like Sero’s tape.”

“If she can float, then she may be used as an eye in the sky,” Iida theorized. “Thank you, Hagakure.”

“You got it!”

“Lastly, we have Rin Hiryu.”

“I don’t know his Quirk,” Ojiro began, “but I know he’s a martial artist like me. I’ve seen him training.”

“So, he’s a physical fighter. That’s good to know,” Iida stepped away from the wall and looked over the papers with the rest of the class. “It’s incomplete, but we’ve got a solid grasp on many of their Quirks and already have a few countermeasures in place. For now, all we can do is train our hardest in preparation.”

“You’re really taking this seriously,” Uraraka noted.

“He better be,” Bakugo grunted. “They’ll be fighting hard out there. We can’t underestimate them.”

“He’s right,” Iida stated. “We must be ready. This fight may be our toughest yet.”
With their hearts full of fire and determination, two weeks of grueling training for Class 1-B passed by swiftly. The day of their joint training began quietly in the dorms and stayed that way through morning classes. Then, after lunch, the time had come. Monoma stood outside of their locker room with his arms crossed, staring down at his shoes.

“Thinkin’ hard, buddy?” Tetsutetsu asked, an eager smile plastered on his face.

“A little. Just nerves, I guess.”

“Just be confident!” the iron boy suggested with a rough pat on Monoma’s back. “We got this!”

“Right. Yeah. We’re ready,” Monoma told himself. As time passed, the other boys came out of the locker room and waited. Once the girls arrived from down the hall, they were ready to go.

“Before we head off, should Kendo say something?” Kinoko asked. Everyone turned and looked at Kendo, who was admittedly unprepared.

“…I got nothing,” she confessed. “It feels like everything’s already been said. Just watch each other’s backs, remember our strategies, and… have fun?”

“That works,” Reiko said. “We should get going.”

“What? Before we get a chance to see you off?” A familiar voice grabbed people’s attention, and out from behind the girls came Shinso and Hatsume.

“We wanted to wish you all luck before you head out,” Shinso admitted. “Maybe it’s a little dumb, but I figured you’d all need some positive vibes.”

“We’re behind you all the way!” Hatsume cheered.

“Hey, thanks,” Awase responded with a toothy grin.

“That’s sweet,” Reiko added, thankful that her mask hid her blush.

“We’re also giving you some sweet walk-up music like in wrestling,” Hatsume continued.

“She hacked into the outside speakers,” Shinso admitted with a laugh.

“Aw, cool! This’ll be badass,” Tetsutetsu shouted.

“Sorry you can’t be out there with us, Shinso,” Shoda said, poking his head out from the crowd.

“…Someday,” he replied wistfully. “For now, just focus on kicking ass and taking names.”

“Get going!” Hatsume yelled.

“Then we’re off,” Kendo declared. Class 1-B walked down the hall and exited the school building, heading in the direction of Training Ground Zeta. On their left was a thick patch of trees, but
through the slight cracks, they could see their rivals on the other side. As they strode forth, they heard the sound of an electric guitar begin behind them, jumpstarting their adrenaline and excitement.

*Two worlds collide*  
*Rival nations*  
*It's a primitive clash*  
*Venting years of frustrations*  
*Bravely we hope*  
*Against all hope*  
*There is so much at stake*  
*Seems our freedom's up*  
*Against the ropes*

The trees separating the hero classes began to thin as they walked forth, showing them brief glimpses of the other.

*Does the crowd understand?*  
*Is it East versus West*  
*Or man against man?*  
*Can any nation stand alone?*

Finally, the thicket ended and the two paths started to intersect. The classes came closer together and locked eyes with their foes as they approached Training Ground Zeta.

*In the burning heart*  
*Just about to burst*  
*There's a quest for answers*  
*An unquenchable thirst*  
*In the blackest night*  
*Rising like a spire*  
*In the burning heart*  
*The unmistakable fire*

Once the music died out, the two classes reached their destination to see several teachers waiting – Eraserhead, Vlad King, Nezu, 13, Midnight, and All Might. “We’ve got a big audience,” Awase whispered to Tetsutetsu, who nodded in agreement.

“Welcome, everyone!” Nezu greeted. “I trust you’re well prepared for your training, so let’s dive right into things. Eraserhead, Vlad, go ahead and explain the rules.”

“Alright,” Eraserhead began. “To put it simply, it’s a class-wide game of Capture the Flag. On the northern end is a blue flag for Class A, and on the south side is Class B’s red flag.”

“To win, you must have both flags,” Kan explained. “There’s a podium at each end where your flag will start. Once both flags are in your podium, your class wins. You cannot make either flag inaccessible or destroy them, and you cannot take them outside the training ground’s boundaries. Other than that, you’re free to do as you please.”

“Here’s a map. Memorize it,” Eraserhead instructed. He and Vlad stepped out of the way and showed the map of Training Ground Zeta to the students.

*Simple enough,* Monoma thought. The map showed a warehouse district with many alleyways and backstreets, but there were three major roads that stood out – one straight down the middle from north to south, flanked by a road on the east and one on the west. *Most of the fighting with take*
place on the main road, east road, and west road, along with the rooftops for more mobile fighters, but they could also spread to the warehouses and backstreets that connect them.

“You have five minutes to prepare,” Kan told them. “Class reps, shake hands.”

“Let’s have a good and clean match, Miss Kendo,” Iida said.

“Sounds good to me,” Kendo replied while firmly shaking his hand.

“Alright, take and earpiece and get going,” Eraserhead instructed.

“Good luck, everyone,” All Might added. The students all collected an earpiece and headed off to their sides of the field.

1-B walked south silently, trying to steel their nerves. They arrived with time to spare and saw their red flag with a white “1-B” written on its face. “Pretty,” Pony commented, breaking the silence. That was all anyone said until the final minute of their prep time.

“How’re we doing?” Kendo asked. “Are we ready?”

“I sure am,” Tetsutetsu declared. “We’ll show them all our power.”

“Hands in, guys,” Monoma requested. The class put their hands on top of each other, giving the copycat a chance to copy as many as he could. “Take it from someone who’s had your powers – You’re all amazing.”

“Agreed,” Kendo added. “On three, ‘Fight on.’ One, two, three—”

“FIGHT ON!”

“VICTORY!” Class 1-A cheered as their hands flew up, except Bakugo, who muttered a few things about murder, and Todoroki, who said nothing. As their cheer finished, a siren went off deeper in the facility, signaling the start of the game.

“It’s begun,” Yaoyorozu said while creating some binoculars and a set of glasses just like Aoyama’s. “Here. These glasses can detect heat signatures, so they’ll help you with your look-out duty.”

“Merci, mademoiselle,” Aoyama responded while replacing his glasses with the upgraded ones.

“Uraraka, take him up,” Iida requested. She nodded and activated her Quirk on herself and Aoyama, jumping towards the tall tower near the center of the facility.

“I’ll go down the main road and try to draw people’s attention,” Todoroki offered. “If enough people come, I can freeze them and thin out their numbers.”

“Good thinking, Todoroki!” Iida complimented. “Ashido, you should go with him in case Bondo or Awase attack him.”

“You got it, Iida!” the pink-skinned girl confirmed with finger guns.

“You should have someone more suited for physical combat as well,” Midoriya reasoned. “I’ll go with you.”

“No, Midoriya,” Iida interjected. “Your mobility makes you better suited for the West rooftops team
with Sero and Ojiro.”

“I’ll go with him,” Sato offered. “I can smash whatever’s in the way.”

“Then we’re off!” Mina shouted as she, Todoroki, and Sato began their trek down the main road.

“Kirishima, let’s go,” Bakugo barked. The two boys headed towards the western road, followed soon after by Shouji and Yaoyorozu.

“Aoyama, do you have anyone in your sights yet?” Iida asked through his earpiece.

“Not yet. You’ll be the first to know, monsieur~”

“You should get going, Iida,” Midoriya suggested as he, Ojiro, and Sero went west.

“You’re right. Kouda, make sure to report any attempts to get our flag and I’ll rush back!” The silent boy gave Iida a thumbs-up, letting the class rep begin his run to 1-B’s flag.

“I guess we’re starting,” Kendo noted as the siren to begin went off. Immediately, Reiko took to the sky and looked out over Training Ground Zeta.

“I’ve spotted a few people moving already,” she reported. “It looks like Aoyama’s going to be their look-out.”

“Be careful, then,” Kendo warned. “If he sees you, he’ll try sniping you with his laser.”

“Right. Hold on… Todoroki’s on the move.”

“Where?” Honenuki asked instantly.

“Main road. He’s got Sato and Ashido with him.”


“Thanks, you guys,” he replied.

“Do you see Tokoyami?” Kuroiro asked with his earpiece.

“Looks like he’s getting ready to head this way on the east side’s rooftops.”

“Then that’s where I’ll be,” he declared. “I’ll be watching, Juzo. Don’t get yourself killed out there.”

“Same to you,” the skeletal-faced boy replied before walking off with Shoda and Bondo by his side.

“You sure I should stay here?” Pony asked.

“Definitely,” Monoma told her. “You and Kendo will be great defenders, but if someone can get the flag, you’re our best bet for chasing it down.”

“OK. Be careful,” she replied.

“Anything on Bakugo?” Monoma asked Reiko.

“He and Kirishima are going east. Shouji and Yaoyorozu are close behind, but look like they’ll split off at some point.”
“Hear that, Tetsutetsu?”

“Oh yeah.”

“Good luck,” Kendo told them as the boys rushed off. Monoma led the way down the eastern road, sticking to the shadows when he could. Tetsutetsu went straight down the middle, ready to harden his skin at any point.

_Where are you?_ Monoma wondered. _I know you’re smart. You think my power is dangerous, so you want to deal with me personally._

“Behind you!” he heard Tetsutetsu shout. Monoma activated his friend’s Quirk and turned his skin to metal while spinning around to block an incoming attack. An explosion went off on his crossed arms, wrecking his sleeves and making him skid backwards.

“Been a while, copy bastard,” Bakugo snarled. “This is what you wanted, yeah? A chance to prove how much stronger you are? You ready?”

“…Oh, I’m ready,” Monoma answered as a tuft of his hair stood up. “Come and get me.”

“Tetsutetsu,” Kirishima began while hardening his arms and body, “You got me real excited for how tough you’ll be by today. Let’s see what you’ve been working on.”

“I can do that,” Tetsutetsu smirked. He and his doppelganger approached each other with no fear, and without hesitation, their battle begun. Each mighty fist was blocked or deflected away, leading to a flurry of punches that never made a solid hit. Sparks flew as hardened skin grinded against metal, but neither could land a punch on the other. The complicated blows and parries kept going, only gaining momentum until it appeared only a s a hurricane of fists.

“You’ve gotten way more skilled!” Kirishima complimented. “Let’s see who’ll make the first hit!”

“It’s gonna be me!” As the defensive warriors duked it out, Bakugo stalked closer to Monoma, eager for his battle to begin. Monoma stayed on his toes for the first attacks to come, and it came quicker than he expected. Bakugo launched himself forward with an explosion and flung a kick towards Monoma’s ribs. The copycat blocked it, but was still sent flying backwards.

“I’ll show you why I’m top dog around here!” Bakugo challenged. He dove after Monoma and tried hitting him with an explosion, but in switching out Tetsutetsu’s Quirk for Reiko’s, Monoma floated into the street and disappeared. “Running already?”

“You wish!” Bakugo turned and tried to hit the copycat behind him, but Monoma floated the opposite direction and stayed behind Bakugo.

**Twin Impact and Explosions!** Monoma thrust his palm into Bakugo’s back and released the stored kinetic energy along with an explosion, creating a huge burst of light that sent Bakugo soaring forward.

“Bakugo!” Kirishima called out. The blond 1-A student stopped himself with a few explosions and landed down the street, holding his wounded back.

“What the hell was that?” Bakugo wondered. He noticed Monoma’s hair falling back to normal and reasoned that it was a combination of Quirks at work. “You’ve gotten stronger. Good thing. I was worried this would be boring!”

**Poltergeist and Size!** Monoma suddenly shrank down to palm-size and flew towards Bakugo like a
bird. In response, Bakugo sent a wave of tiny fire balls from his gauntlet.

“AP Shot: Autocannon!” The shrunk Monoma flew around the mini-blasts coming towards him, but a shot hit its target and he flew down into the ground, phasing out of sight. “What now?” Bakugo wondered. As he checked around his feet, he thought back to the talk about 1-B’s Quirks and, remembering Aware, took to the sky. He did this just in time to avoid Monoma’s hands coming out of the ground by his feet.

“Damn, so close,” Monoma groaned, now back to normal size. Bakugo hung in the air with his explosions and Monoma gave chase. Poltergeist and explosions! He flew up and began shooting off explosions at Bakugo, who responded with the same. Their mid-air clash kept going with no clean hits, but eventually, Monoma grabbed Bakugo’s shoulders and let loose a string of direct bursts. If I damage his arms, that’ll take him out of the fight! Before he could deal too much damage, however, Bakugo hit Monoma across the stomach with a massive explosion that blew them apart. Bakugo landed on a nearby rooftop and took the offensive again while Monoma was still stunned.

“AP Shot!” The condensed, long range explosion looked like it would hit Monoma dead-on, but the copycat used Reiko’s Quirk to correct his mid-air course and avoid the attack. “Getting tired?” Bakugo mocked.

“Just warming up.”

On the street below, Kirishima and Tetsutetsu were still exchanging attacks rather amicably. “So, when are you gonna bust out Unbreakable?!”

“When I see that it’s needed!” Kirishima tired for an uppercut to the jaw, but Tetsutetsu maneuvered around the fist and went for a straight punch to the chest. His attack was blocked and pushed to the side, leading to a brief moment of pause between the endless attacks. In this moment, Tetsutetsu stepped around Kirishima and put him in a Full Nelson.

“Metal Lock!” Kirishima responded by hardening his head and throwing it back into Tetsutetsu’s face. The first time didn’t stun him much, but Kirishima kept going and eventually loosened his grip enough to escape. Tetsutetsu tried for a punch to the face, but Kirishima was able to block it.

“Red Counter!” Kirishima finally landed a punch to his opponents punch and made him skid backwards. “Now, Red Rush!”

“Iron Apocalypse!” With the first hit landed, the boys give up their attempts at fighting strategically and started wailing on each other with reckless abandon, determined to be the last man standing.

“I’LL BREAK YOU DOOOOOOOWWWWN!” they both screamed.
“We’re going up,” Kaibara announced. He raised his left arm and spun it, using the propeller to fly up with Kuroiro holding onto his legs.

“This is embarrassing,” he complained.

“You’re the one who wanted to tag along with our rooftop team,” Kaibara pointed out. Below the boys, Kinoko created a bridge of large mushrooms between the warehouses that she and Kamakiri crossed. “See anything yet?”

“Yeah. Just across the way.” Kuroiro pointed further down the string of buildings and warehouses where Tokoyami, Tsuyu, and Uraraka were coming towards them.

“Then here’s where we fight it out.” Kaibara flew down onto a spacious warehouse rooftop, right next to the center plaza of the training ground, and waited with the other three for their opponents to meet them. Once they landed on the same rooftop, they stopped and surveyed the group from 1-B.

“It seems combat has found us,” Tokoyami realized.

“We don’t know most of their Quirks,” Uraraka whispered to Tsuyu. “What’s our play?”

“We’re outnumbered, so I guess we should try and make an opening to get past them, ribbit.” The two groups of students were distracted briefly when an especially powerful explosion from Bakugo went off not far away, but they refocused on their opponents and waited for a move to be made.

“Did you see who it was?” Yaoyorozu asked, looking up at the warehouse roof her friends had stopped on.

“I did,” Shouji confirmed. “Kamakiri, Komori, Kaibara, and Kuroiro. Our comrades are outnumbered.”

“Not only that, but their opponents all have Quirks that are mysteries to us… Would you mind if—”

“Go ahead. I’ll be fine on my own,” Shouji assured her. Yaoyorozu smiled gratefully and nodded, prompting Shouji to head south alone. With his transforming hands turned into ears, he could hear Bakugo and Kirishima’s battles not far away. I may get dragged into a fight if I stick to the streets. Maybe cutting through a warehouse will get me to the flag quicker and more safely. Shouji made a quick turn and entered a dark warehouse as a shortcut, but stopped halfway through when he saw Yui just outside the other entrance, blocking his path. It’s Kodai. I don’t know what her Quirk is, but since it’s only her, I should see what it is while I can. If it’s too powerful to handle alone, I’ll try to escape.

Yui stepped inside, waiting to see Shouji’s response, so he fanned out his arms and ran towards her. Yui kept her ever-present calmness and simply waited for him to reach her. Once he was in range and tried to grab at her, she shrunk down and avoided his arms, scurrying under his legs and returning to normal size behind him. To her surprise, his top right hand became an eyeball and spotted her, letting Shouji whip around and grab her.
“So, you can shrink,” Shouji remarked as Yui struggled in his grasp. “That could make you hard to find. Sorry, but I’ll have to knock you unconscious.” Yui quit her struggling and began to expand her body, forcing Shouji’s arms apart. She kept growing until she was more than double the boy’s size and threw a punch down at him. He caught it with some effort, but Yui swiped her other hand at him and knocked him across the room.

“Sorry but I’ll have to knock you unconscious,” Yui parroted back at Shouji. With her neutral tone, the masked boy couldn’t tell if she was being facetious or not. All he could tell is that she was powerful.

“Shrinking and growing… noted.”

“What’s wrong, Tokoyami?” Kuroiro asked. “Come and attack me. Summon your beast.”

“Rushing in with no plan is a fool’s game,” the bird-headed boy lectured.

“Then go ahead and wait,” Kuroiro goaded. “Wait until we’ve beaten you to fight back.” He waited to see if his prodding worked, but then noticed the trio from 1-A turn their heads. Kuroiro looked to his right and saw Yaoyorozu rising up from the street, using a metal pole created from her arm as a growing pole-vault.

“Kamakiri, get her!” Kaibara instructed. After activating the metal blades over his arms, Kamakiri shot a mandible up at the Creation user, but she blocked his blade with a steel plate from her arm.

“This evens the odds!” Uraraka realized, now inspired by the sudden appearance of the class’s main strategist. “Let’s get ‘em!”

“I guess we’re starting!” Kaibara told his team. Yaoyorozu broke off the pole from her hands and created a set of metal tonfas to fight with as she landed in front of Kamakiri. Over her hands, she created a set of gauntlets for protection and began to spin her tonfas. Kamakiri came at her and swung his blades down, but Yaoyorozu’s tonfas blocked the attacks and she began an onslaught of blows. Kamakiri could keep up enough to block them, but just barely, as Yaoyorozu’s strikes kept coming. Eventually, she struck him across the cheek, but before she could press her advantage, Kamakiri attacked with his mandibles and put her on the defensive.

“Multi-blade!” A swarm of stabbing mandibles and slicing arm-blades made Yaoyorozu start backing away, but she kept her cool and waited for an opening to form in the bug boy’s attacks.

Tsuyu lashed her tongue out, trying to grab Kinoko, but the mushroom girl jumped out of the way just in time. “This should get you tongue-tied a little bit,” Kinoko giggled as she spread her spores. After a moment, mushrooms started spouting down the frog girl’s tongue, making her croak confusedly. “What’s wrong? Cap got your tongue? Heehee. Cap.” Tsuyu looked wary about the mushrooms and didn’t retract her tongue into her mouth, but she did jump across the roof towards her opponent. “Eep!” Kinoko jumped back to avoid the attack, but Tsuyu hopped forward again and tackled her. “Kaibara, help!”

“On it!” With his propeller put away, Kaibara activated his gauntlet and shot a torrent of wind at Tsuyu, forcing her to jump back. While he dealt with Tsuyu, Uraraka took this chance and dashed closer to Kaibara. She tried reaching out to touch him, but Kaibara changed the aim of his gauntlet and blew her backwards.

“Ochako!” Tsuyu called out in worry. She whipped her tongue out at her friend and caught her before throwing her back across the rooftop.
“Thanks, Tsu!” Uraraka yelled as she released her Quirks, now falling towards Kaibara. He attempted to change the aim of his gauntlet, but he had no time and was forced to jump backwards. Kaibara knew to avoid her touch, but had to fight back, so he clenched his teeth and threw a spinning punch towards her stomach. It seemed like the attack would hit it’s mark dead-on, but in that brief instance, Uraraka’s demeanor seemed to shift. She dodged the attack and grabbed his spinning arm, activating her Quirk to take away his gravitational pull. Kaibara was pulled up into the air and then slammed down by Uraraka, who’s face had become unnervingly serious.

“Geez, what happened to you?” he wondered.

“She gets like that when Gunhead’s teachings take over, ribbit” Tsuyu explained while scraping the last of the mushrooms off her tongue. “It’s neat to see. Right, Ochako?”

“Lemme see your war face, boy!” she screamed like a drill instructor while picking Kaibara back up and slamming him down again. Kaibara tried blasting her with is gauntlet, but with no gravity affecting him, the wind pushed him around on the ground, giving Uraraka the chance to slam him down again.

“Back-up’s coming, Kaibara!” Suddenly, a layer of mushrooms grew over Kaibara, Tsuyu, and Uraraka, who snapped out of her “fighting trance.”

“Hey, I’ve got some weight now,” Kaibara realized. He grabbed Uraraka’s wrist and pulled her down and rolling over so that he was pinning her down. Before Tsuyu could help her friend, Kinoko jumped onto her back and cupped a hand over her mouth, blocking her tongue. “Turn off your Quirk and I’ll go easy on you,” Kaibara offered. This seemed to snap Uraraka back into her “fighting trance” and she pushed him off into a floaty tumble. “Oh yeah. Guess I’m still not super heavy even with these mushrooms.” Once he landed, Kaibara was assaulted by a flurry of jabs from Uraraka that he blocked by crossing his arms.

“I WANNA SEE YOUR WAR FACE, BOY!”

“She’s totally lost it!”

As his classmates battled on, Kuroiro inched close to the roof edge closest to the central plaza, facing down Tokoyami and Dark Shadow. “I know my Quirk’s more suited for rescue than combat,” Kuroiro began, “but battling you… will be quite the spectacle.”

“It seems dark minds think alike,” Tokoyami agreed. “Steel your mind and show me what endless darkness truly means. Dark Shadow, attack!”

“Aye aye!” The black bird rushed forward and swiped down at Kuroiro, but the white-haired boy dodged away and activated his Quirk. Dark Shadow was sucked into Kuroiro’s chest, leaving a thick black thread that connected the competitors.

“If your descriptions of your Quirk are true,” Tokoyami began warily, “then you’ve made a huge error.” Kuroiro didn’t believe him and stalked forward, but suddenly doubled over and shouted in pain.

“What the fuck?!” he screamed. Kuroiro forced Dark Shadow from his chest and saw that it had doubled in size, looking much fiercer. As it basked in the sunlight and retreated to its controller, Dark Shadow shrunk back down to its normal size.

“My apologies,” Tokoyami said. “In the pitch black, Dark Shadow becomes far more savage and out of my control.”
“I noticed,” Kuroiro growled. After catching his breath for a moment, he sprinted across the roof, prompting Dark Shadow to attack again. This time, however, Kuroiro had a counter. He activated his hand portals and caught Dark Shadow’s arms in their suction before pulling them apart. With the black bird momentarily slowed, Kuroiro slid under it and ran to Tokoyami. He threw a kick into his foe’s chest and knocked him back across the roof, giving chase as soon as he could. Dark Shadow was hot on Kuroiro’s trail, but he was able to reach Tokoyami and deliver a punch to the beak before it reached him.

“I got ‘im!” Dark Shadow announced. Kuroiro felt its ethereal claws rake across his back and was thrown across the room in a tumble.

“I wouldn’t try that again. Simple tricks and schemes won’t work twice on me,” Tokoyami warned. “Now, Black Ankh!” Once Kuroiro stood back up, he watched Dark Shadow shape itself into a dark armor over Tokoyami’s body.

“Whatever,” Kuroiro sneered. “Just makes things simpler. I’ve only gotta worry about one body. Ebony Lure!” His suction began to drag Tokoyami towards him slowly, but it was countered by having Dark Shadow’s arms stretch forward to attack. “Gloom of the Black Arm!” Kuroiro dodged to the left to avoid the crushing arms, but Dark Shadow was immediately ready to attack again. “Piercing Claw of the Dusk!” A single claw swiped at Kuroiro and made contact, knocked him to the edge of the roof.

“Damn,” Kuroiro moaned.

“You’ve underestimated my abilities, it seems.”

“Nah. I knew you’d be strong,” 1-B’s goth boy revealed. “You’re one of the best fighters in your class. If I can just keep you in one place, that’s fine by me. I don’t care who wins our fight as long as my class wins in the end.”

“…A commendable goal,” Tokoyami complimented. “In that case, I shall fight at full power, my rival.”

“That’s all I could ask for. Be warned, though. I may be outgunned, but I’m difficult to keep down.” Kuroiro prepared once again for battle, and as he did so, he noticed Todoroki and his team had finally reached the center plaza. Sparing a glance away from Tokoyami, he checked over his shoulder to see Honenuki, Bondo, and Shoda were also finally arriving. “Heh heh heh.”

“Something amuses you?” Tokoyami inquired.

“We’ve got a good view of the real battle,” Kuroiro declared. “Watch them closely, Tokoyami, and you’ll see the ice finally break.”

Chapter End Notes

In case you didn't see, the third chapter of the USJ Side Story has been posted.
Break the Ice

Though he could hear battles across the training ground, Honenuki was able to calm his mind with a few deep breaths. *Don’t lose your cool. Don’t rush in with no plan. Above all, be flexible.*

Adaptive. He can’t surprise you if you’re ready for anything. When the central plaza was finally in Honenuki’s sight, he noticed Kuroiro facing Tokoyami on his right. Their eyes found each other momentarily, but both knew their battles needed every ounce of their attention and they separated.

“I see them,” Bondo stated. Honenuki refocused and stared straight ahead, and just opposite him was Todoroki, looking as composed as ever. On his right was Mina, who started moving away while pointing at Bondo. “Guess I have an opponent.” Bondo noted while meandering left. Shoda silently went right, matched by Sato across the way. Now alone to face Todoroki, Honenuki felt a squeeze in his chest – a feeling that he shouldn’t be doing this.

“Be flexible,” he told himself as his breathing went erratic. “Don’t let him get to you. He’s just another—” Without warning, flashes of memory from the Sports Festival invaded his mind. The sight of Todoroki’s ice holding his friends captive in the cavalry battle, the giant glacier he had frozen Sero in, and the catastrophic explosion that ended his fight with Midoriya. Honenuki felt something rise in his throat that he desperately gulped down. Though he and Todoroki had stopped walking towards each other, it seemed to Honenuki that his opponent was still getting closer. He wanted to move, but his legs were still as stone. For a moment, Honenuki considered the battle over before it had even begun.

“JUZO!” A shout from Kuroiro caught his ear and he looked up and over to his boyfriend. “YOU’VE GOT THIS! KICK HIS ASS!” With just seven words, the dust and fog in Honenuki’s mind began to empty. Everything became clear and sharp, and just like that, he was out of his thoughts and back in Training Ground Zeta.

“…You know what? He’s right. I’ve got this.” As soon as Honenuki began his dash towards Todoroki, the scarred boy put his right leg forward and summoned a wave of ice to rush at his opponent. It seemed as if the ice would hit its mark, but Honenuki sidestepped the attack and held his gloved hand out. The ice’s momentum slowed from his touch and it’s shaped changed with the softening effect. Honenuki sunk both hands into the soft ice and brought it over his shoulder before hurling it back at Todoroki. The snaking sleet flew back at its summoner, but Todoroki countered the attack with a blast of fire. The elements clashed between the fighters and created a huge burst of wind, followed by a flood of steam. Honenuki rushed headfirst into the steam cloud, determined to clear the distance as soon as possible.

Todoroki sent out a wave of fire to clear the steam, so Honenuki hooked to the left jumped over the fire. It singed his legs a bit, but he was able to continue his run just fine. Todoroki used ice again, keeping it low to try trapping Honenuki’s legs. The 1-B student leapt over the ice, but his opponent used this brief moment of vulnerability to summon a blast of fire.

Honenuki’s foot touched the ice before the fire hit him, but he knew he wouldn’t be able to dodge normally. *Guess I’ll bust out this technique now.* He activated his Quirk at full power, turning the ice and ground below into loose mud, and fell through just as the fire began to hit him. Inside the pool of mud, Honenuki held his breath and sank until he reached the bottom. Once he reached it, he kicked off and breathed out of his nose, softening the ground in his path. With this kickoff, Honenuki flew through the mud and came out into the fresh air just behind Todoroki. Once he landed, he turned on a dime and threw his leg up, aiming it towards Todoroki’s head. The split-haired boy noticed at the last second and just barely blocking it, but the kick still sent him skidding to
Finally made it to him, Honenuki thought, so I won’t let him escape. Now that the distance is closed… I’ll overtake him! Once Honenuki landed, he shot towards Todoroki with his fist cocked. In the brief moment Todoroki had to think, he made a shield of ice over his arm and held it up, but on contact with Honenuki’s fist, it turned into slush. The punch passed right through and rammed Todoroki’s cheek.

With no escape, Todoroki activated his left side and formed an enormous blaze. Honenuki back away and went to his opponent’s right side, but Todoroki still turned and outstretched his left arm for a fire blast. In response, Honenuki softened the ground at his feet and dug his fingers into it, pulling it up into a dome-like wall. Once it was tall enough to protect his body, he breathed in and hardened the mud, turning back to stone, and the fire blast finally hit. Honenuki watch the flame’s tips flick around the wall, but for the moment, he was safe.

Slowly but surely, the flame’s center seemed to change and move to the left side of the shield. Honenuki moved right and ducked around the wall of stone once Todoroki came around the left side, as soon as he did, a blast of ice came at Honenuki and engulfed him. He was quick to soften it, but once he did, he was greeted with a blast of fire that he couldn’t dodge. The heat burst was painful, burning his skin and hair, but once Honenuki’s feet found the ground, he pushed through the blast and dove towards Todoroki.

He elbowed him across his right cheek, finally putting an end the fire attack. The contact had let Todoroki put a layer of ice over his arm, but it was quick work to soften into water. Honenuki ripped off his charred jacket and attacked again, this time spin-kicking his foe across his left side. Todoroki tried to summon more ice, but Honenuki halted the attack with an uppercut that pushed his rival off the ground. He followed this up with a high kick that made Todoroki fly back, and kept going with a shoulder check to his falling opponent, flooring him.

“Where’s all that power from before?” Honenuki asked. “Your full power – I want to see it.” Once Todoroki regained his bearings, he stared Honenuki down with a new expression, he was finally invested in the fight, wiping away the blood on his forehead with chilling seriousness.

“If you insist.” With their powerful gaze digging each other’s eyes, Todoroki and Honenuki both activated their Quirks. Honenuki turned the ground in front of him into mud with different levels of solidity while Todoroki’s two sides activated, shooting off fire and creating ice. “Don’t complain if it’s too much too handle.”

“If I couldn’t handle it, I wouldn’t be here.” Just then, Honenuki pushed off the ground and jumped high into the air before coming back down, his legs prepared to stomp. At this time, Todoroki brought both of his arms forward, sending a wave of ice out that was surrounded by a surge of fire. The two elements raced towards Honenuki, who seemed defenseless in mid-air, but once he reached the ground, his true strength came forward to clash against the attack. “PLANET WAAAAAVES!” The softened ground was thrown forward in a colossal wave, slamming into the ice and fire in a destructive collision of force. For a moment, the three elements seemed to be in a stalemate, but the energy from the heat and cold being pushed together by the mud wave became too much to contain and an explosion came out from the center. Ice shards, globs of mud, and flicks of heat were sent flying in all directions, and the boys who created the clash were blown away.

“…Y’know, I kinda glad I opted out of the Sports Festival finals now,” Shoda told himself as he came out of cover. As soon as he saw Todoroki’s and Honenuki’s attacks begin to clash, he wisely hid and waited for that to finish before continuing towards his own fight. “OK, OK, don’t get psyched out now,” he said while throwing a few jabs at the air. “You’re not fighting Todoroki. It’s
just Sato.” Now walking alongside the warehouse that Kaibara’s team had gone onto, Shoda was staring down Sato, who chugged a cup of sugar in preparation.

“Ready to lose, little guy?” Sato asked as his muscles grew in size.

“Just shut up and fight,” Shoda spat back, finally ready to battle. Sato made the first move and brought a haymaker down on Shoda, who blocked it with his arms. The kinetic energy entered his body, so Shoda sent it to his right hand and threw a palm strike towards Sato’s ribs. To his surprise, it was blocked and Sato threw another punch, this time nailing Shoda across the jaw.

“HIRAAAAAAH! SUGAR RUSH!” While Shoda was dazed, Sato unleashed a string of powerful punches, knocking him backwards. The final hit was an uppercut that made Shoda fly back into a streetlight, denting it on impact. “Is that it?”

“…Nah.” Shoda opened his eyes and pushed himself off the streetlight, shocking his opponent. “Let’s keep this going.” With his challenge, Shoda forced part of his stored energy into his foot, kicking off while putting the rest into his palm. “Flash Impact!” He rocketed into Sato’s torso and landed a powerful strike, but Sato puffed out his chest and roared, knocking Shoda into the warehouse wall with an elbow.

“Here’s another taste! SUGAR RUSH!” Now embedded in the wall, Shoda was helpless and received Sato’s attack in full force. The strikes were powerful enough to break the wall down, and on the final hit, Shoda was knocked across the warehouse to the other side. “That should be it. Anything to say, little guy?” Sato didn’t expect an answer, assuming Shoda was unconscious, but the shorter fighter began to stand again, ignoring his injuries.

“Yeah… I do have something to say,” he declared as his hair stood on end, now glowing and giving off sparks. “Life ain’t about how hard you hit. It’s about how hard you can get hit, and keep moving forward. How much you can take, and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done!” Both fighters gave out a battle cry and rushed forward meeting in the warehouse center for another exchange of blows.

“Holy fuck,” Reiko mumbled as she reappeared on a building roof, looking out over the devastated central plaza. “Starting to feel a liiiiiiiitle inadequate, guys. Tone it down,” she said to no one. “Now, where did you land?” Reiko took to the skies to try locating Honenuki, but couldn’t find any sign of him. “No, don’t try and make it easy for me. That’s fine.”

As time went on, Reiko began to run out of time in her transformed state, but before she could return to a rooftop to recharge on, a bright light suddenly twinkled in her eye. She whipped around to see what it was and was shot in her chest by a laser, making her fall from the air. “Forgot about him,” she grumbled as her Quirk activated again, letting her lose her momentum and land safely on the ground. Looking above to the nearby tower, she saw Aoyama aiming down at her in his usual firing pose.

“Bonjooooouuuur~!” he greeted flamboyantly before firing again. Reiko transformed to float away, but was forced to change back soon after she dodged the beam.

Damn. I still have to recharge. As more lasers came down on her, Rieko was forced to dip and duck around to avoid damage. OK, this isn’t so bad. I’m almost back to full—

“Naval Laser Buffet~!”

“Oh fuck.” Reiko sighed and jumped backwards to avoid the barrage of erratic blasts, but a few
beams hit her to the ground. “Reeeaaally starting to regret getting out of bed this morning.” As one more blast came down at her, Reiko phased down into the ground and floated through the ground towards the tower her opponent stood on. *Now that I think about it, everyone should have met up with someone from 1-A by now. I may be better off heading for the flagpole now. But first...* Reiko flew up the tower and came out of the top, landing behind an oblivious Aoyama.

“Merde, where has that little fantôme gone too?” Reiko cracked a smile under her mask while she grabbed the sides of his head, prompting a small “Eep” from Aoyama.

“Phantom Pain!” She pulled him back and down onto the tower’s floor, knocking his head on the ground. When she reappeared by his side, he had fainted. “Welp, that takes care of Glass Joe. Now for that flag.”

“Come and get some, big guy!” Mina prodded while sliding around Bondo on her acid. Bondo swung his muscular arm down at her, but she slid away from the attack with ease.

“Splattergun!”

“Acid Veil!” Mina spread out a screen of her acid, cancelling out the super move from her opponent. She then slid around the clashing fluids and tried for a spin kick to Bondo’s head. He blocked it just in time, but Mina escaped his grab by kicking off his arm. “You gotta limber up if you wanna stand a chance, glue guy!”

“I’ll consider it,” he responded before shooting a massive flood of glue at Mina. She slid out of the way, but was then tackled by Bondo and put in a bear hug.

“Yeah, like that— hurp!” Mina felt her insides being squeezed from his crushing grip, so she expelled a thin, slippery layer of acid all over her body. This let her pop out of the hold swiftly and she returned to her acid skating. “Let’s kick it up!”
“Woah! Did you guys hear that?!” Kaminari shouted as the explosion in the central plaza shook the ground under their feet.

“Obviously,” Jiro remarked as her jacks scrunch up in discomfort. “That definitely wasn’t Bakugo – he went further away than this. If I had to guess, Todoroki’s the cause.”

“Like the Sports Festival?” Mineta asked. “Man, I’m glad we’re not there.”

“Don’t speak too soon,” Jiro told him while plugging her jack into the ground. “I hear footsteps from down the road. Four— no, five of them.”

“Five footsteps or five feet?” Kaminari asked.

“…Five people coming this way,” Jiro sighed

“Seriously?! We’re totally outnumbered!” Mineta cried.

“We may be outnumbered, but we can still win,” Jiro told them. “Both of you have good Quirks for disabling people. We just have to be smart. Mineta, get on the rooftops. When I give the signal, make it rain.”

“Sure thing.” Mineta popped off a few hair balls from his head and used them to spring onto the rooftops to the group’s right.

“Kaminari, you’ll be the vanguard of our group. Hit them head-on.”

“You can count on me,” he assured her with a twinkly smile. “What’re you gonna do.”

“Stay in the sidelines until—I mean, in case one of you guys mess up.”

“…OK!”

“Holy crap! That was huge!” Sero exclaimed as he, Midoriya, and Ojiro came out of cover on top of a warehouse roof. “I haven’t seen something that big since the Sports Festival.”

“Todoroki’s definitely getting… bombastic,” Ojiro commented while flicking some mud off his tail. “We should get going now.”

“Hold on,” Midoriya requested. He scanned the ruined plaza with his eyes, but didn’t see his friend. “No sign of Todoroki.”

“I’m sure he’s fine,” Sero assured him. “Let’s get going, Midoriya.”

“…Right. OK, let’s go.” Ojiro went first, hopping across rooftops by slamming his tail down. Sero followed close behind by swinging between buildings with his tape, and behind him was Midoriya, running along the buildings using his Full Cowl transformation. They made it halfway across the plaza before Ojiro came to a halt.

“What’s wrong?” Sero asked as he and Midoriya stopped behind him.

“Up there.” In front of the boys was a much taller building where they saw two figures standing on.
Before they could make out who it was, the pair jumped down and landed behind them on top of the closed-off stairway entrance.

“Pardon the sudden appearance, but we can’t let you go any further.” The trio from 1-A took fighting stances following Shishida’s declaration, but were more unnerved by Ibara’s stone-faced silence.

“Well, at least we’ve got them outnumbered,” Sero pointed out. “We’ve got the advantage, right, Midoriya?”

“That’s right,” he agreed while activating Full Cowl again. “Ojiro, you and Sero take Shiozaki. I’ll handle Shishida.”

“Can we trade?” Sero asked. “She scares me.”

“Bad news, guys,” Ojiro interrupted while looking over his shoulder. “I can see a group of five people heading for Jiro’s group. Mind if I go back them up?”

“Go ahead. We’ll cover your exit,” Midoriya told him.

“Wait, can’t we discuss— and there he goes,” Sero moaned. Ojiro slammed his tail into the roof and pushed off, but a bushel of vines chased him down. Sero moved without thinking and lassoed the vines with his tape, letting Ojiro escape and head his other classmates.

“I’ll take that move as your declaration of battle,” Shishida announced. He gripped the edge of the stairwell entrance and threw himself at Midoriya in a powerful somersault. “Spinning Cannonball Deluxe!” Midoriya braced his legs and caught Shishida, but the hairy boys pushed off Midoriya’s shoulders and flipped behind him, putting him in a headlock.

“Wow. You’re so acrobatic,” Midoriya noted as he struggled against the hold. He pulled Shishida’s grip apart by the wrists and jumped forward before kicking off backwards and throwing a spin kick. Shishida tried to block the attack, but the surprising power behind it made him fly back towards the building he had come from. “I’ll make sure to study your moves.”

“I’m flattered,” Shishida responded politely while pushing off the building’s side he had been slammed into. “Dynamic Hunter!” Midoriya prepared to block an attack, but to his surprise, Shishida stopped short and began dashing in a circle around Midoriya, stopping and feigning attacks at random intervals. Before he could figure out a pattern or counter, Shishida shoulder checked his side, sending him flying past Sero towards another rooftop.

“Midoriya!” Sero called out as Shishida ran past him. “Great. I’m all alone with her.”

“Don’t be afraid,” Ibara told him, unnerving him further with her serenity in the middle of a fight. “I will not hurt you, little lamb.”

“Yeah, but you still kinda freak me out,” Sero admitted while flipping down the visor of his helmet. “Oh well. Even if you’re one of the strongest in your class, I’ve still gotta give this a shot!” Sero shot out his tape at Ibara, which she blocked with her vines while sending more towards him. “Uh oh!” Sero shot more tape to the other side of the roof and retracted it into his elbow, pulling himself away from the vines. He jumped over the building’s side while attaching more tape to the roof, letting the momentum of his fall lessen. The vines came over the roof’s edge after him, but he swung further down the building and suddenly flew back up, flinging himself high into the air. He shot out a strand of tape at Ibara, but she sidestepped the attack, letting it hit the roof.

“Last Roots!” Ibara’s vines turned upwards and approached Sero from below, but the taping hero
was suddenly gone from their path. He pulled himself towards the roof with the tape he had shot before, flying past Ibara while unravelling more tape from his other elbow. The strand wrapped around her body and arms, then began moving down towards her legs.

“Gotcha!” he exclaimed. Ibara snapped the tape with a vine before it could fully cocoon her, but most of her body had been wrapped up. “Maybe I can take ya.”

“Pride cometh before the fall, Sero,” Ibara warned. “Don’t fall prey to the cardinal sin.” Her vines spread out dramatically as she talked, then rushed at Sero from all directions. Sero flinched, but then sent tape towards Ibara’s feet and pulled himself forward, avoiding the vines before they encircled him. He slid underneath the vines and popped up behind her before wrapping her body in more tape and stuck her into the stairway entrance.

“Hope you like it there, ’cause that’s where you’re staying!” Sero told his opponent.

“I refuse to stay bound,” Ibara asserted while struggling against the tape. “My duty has yet to be complete, so I shall— mmmf!” Her dramatic declaration was cut off when Sero shot a tape strand over her mouth.

“Heh. That’s enough outta you,” Sero stated with a grin. His confidence was short-lived, however, as a massive grouping of vines spread out to attack, accompanied by a frightful glare from Ibara that gave Sero a knot in his gut. “Uuuuh… I’m sorry?”

“Wait, hold up,” Awase instructed. “Someone’s coming.”

“Who is it?” Fukidashi asked.

“Kaminari,” Tsuburaba revealed, “and he’s alone.”

“They wouldn’t send him off by himself,” Setsuna reasoned. “His teammates have to be lurking nearby.”

“Probably,” Awase agreed. “Rin, Setsuna, you keep an eye out for them. Tsuburaba, you disable Kaminari.”

“Right.” The team of five continued forward, meeting up with a smirking Kaminari not far down.

“What’s up?” he greeted with a palm of electricity held forward. “I’m glad you’re all grouped up like this. Makes taking you down a whole lot easier!” Sparks began to erupt from Kaminari’s body, but before he could send them forward, Tsuburaba stepped forward.

“Air Prison!” He blew a rectangular room of solid air around Kaminari that contained the electricity when it finally exploded from him. Once Kaminari stopped his attack, he tried beating down the walls with his fists, but they wouldn’t budge.

“That takes care of him,” Awase noted, keeping his eyes peeled for Kaminari’s hidden teammates. Before his group could step towards Kaminari, they saw Jiro’s ear-jacks fly out toward her teammate.

“Mineta, now!” she commanded. Above the 1-B students, purple spheres began to rain down on them, but Awase was ready with a plan.

“Tsuburaba, above us! Rin, Setsuna, get Jiro!” On Awase’s command, Tsuburaba made a barrier above the group that stopped the balls as they fell. At the same time, Rin and Setsuna ran forward
and batted away Jiro’s jacks before they reached the Air Prison. Once they were out of his way, Rin dashed at Jiro with his fist cocked. She jumped back and tried to retract her jacks in time to attack Rin, but he reached her first and threw a punch. Before it could connect, however, a figure jumped down and batted Rin backwards into Setsuna’s arms.

“Good timing,” Jiro complimented as she and her tailed classmate came out into the street. Ojiro attacked Rin and Setsuna again, separating them from the trapped Kaminari. Jiro stuck her jacks into the Air Prison and pumped her heartbeat into it, breaking down the barrier after a few seconds.

“Hey, thanks!” Kaminari said to her.

“BOOM!” Fukidashi sent out an explosion at the feet of the 1-A students, forcing them to separate to dodge it. Ojiro went forward and whipped his tail at the reptile couple, sending them both flying up towards a rooftop on their left. Awase tried grabbing him, but he sent himself flying away with a tail strike to the ground. With her teammate out of her way, Jiro started attacking by sending soundwaves out from her boots.

On top of the building they were hit onto, Rin and Setsuna both stood up and found a terrified Mineta facing them down. “Watch out!” they heard Fukidashi yell to them. Rin turned and saw Ojiro leaping towards him, so he scaled over his arms to block the incoming tail slap. He was thrown backwards, skidding across the rooftop, and Ojiro kept up his pursuit and attack with another tail strike. This time, however, Rin caught the attack and threw Ojiro away. Neither martial artist exchanged banter during their fight – they both took the other too seriously to waste their energy.

Rin began his offense with a jab from his scaly fist, but Ojiro guided it away with a palm strike to the arm. He then knee’d Rin’s stomach, but the dragon boy’s scaly armor protected him and he threw a punch that nailed Ojiro’s jaw. The tailed fighter was knocked across the roof in a stumble, but he recovered quickly and leapt towards Rin in a somersault. “Tail Wheel!” His tail slammed against Rin’s crossed arms and knocked him down, making an imprint in the roof.

“Get off him!” Setsuna demanded. She ran at Ojiro and threw a kick, forcing him to jump away from Rin to dodge. With the reprieve from combat, Setsuna helped Rin to his feet to continue the battle.

“Thanks.”

“Sure thing. Let’s take this dude together—”

“HEY!” Their attention was shifted to Mineta when they heard him yelling. “Don’t forget I’m up here too!” He seemed to have gotten over his initial fright and was plucking balls from his hair. “I’ll trap you both with my Super Move! Get ready! Grape—” Setsuna cut him off by throwing a punch that popped her arm, sending it hurtling into Mineta’s face. The impact sent him flying backwards and Setsuna kept the arm gripping his neck. As she ran off, Rin looked back to Ojiro and, seeing that he was in shock over Setsuna’s Quirk, attacked again.

“Dragon Fang!” He transformed his arms further, turning them into a pair of draconic claws, and jabbed his fingers into Ojiro’s stomach, knocking the wind out of him. “Don’t lose focus. A dragon’s bite can come out of nowhere.”

On the other side of the roof, Mineta had finally pried Setsuna’s arm from his throat and tossed it away. Setsuna then regrow her arm while stalking towards Mineta with a frown. “Minoru Mineta,” she began, sending a chill up Mineta’s spine, “your reputation proceeds you.” While Mineta stuttered for an answer, Setsuna brought her metal claws down over her hands and clicked them together, sharpening them for the battle. “I’m gonna enjoy this way more than I should.”
As the lizard-like couple fought on the roof, their classmates were struggling to keep away from Kaminari’s electricity. Jiro was fighting with Awase, keeping him away with her sound blasts, but had been separated from her teammate.

“Up here!” Tsuburaba said, pulling Fukidashi onto an elevated platform of Solid Air.

“BOOOOM!” An explosion went off at Kaminari’s feet, but he dodged it and jumped towards his opponents.

“Hope you’re ready for the Human Stun Gu—” Kaminari was cut off when a trash can lid was thrown by Awase and collided with his head, knocking him away.

“Brutal,” Fukidashi commented.

“Just swap with me and take Jiro,” Awase requested. Fukidashi hopped off the platform and ran after Jiro while Kaminari got up off the sidewalk, holding his head angrily.

“That… smarted,” Kaminari growled. He stood and prepared to fire his gauntlet, but had to stop when Tsuburaba inhaled and aimed his mouth at him. Kaminari expected another Air prison and began to run, but instead, Tsuburaba whistled and shot a line of solid air towards him. He dodged, but the line of air nicked his side and left a small cut.

“I finally got an offensive Super Move now,” Tsuburaba boasted. “Here’s some more for ya! Whistle Spear!” He whistled again and shot more spears of air, but Kaminari dodged and shot a metal disc from his gauntlet. Tsuburaba ducked out of the way, but Kaminari still pointed out his left arm and prepared to fire.

“Get ready for some volts!”

“Tsuburaba, get off the platform!” Awase instructed. He saw the disc had latched onto a streetlight behind Tsuburaba and that it was Kaminari’s real target. The electricity Quirk user fired off his attack and zapped Tsuburaba, sending voltage through his body. Thinking quickly, Awase pulled out his capture gun and fired a net at Kaminari, knocking him backwards and stopping his attack.

“You OK, man?” Tsuburaba seemed fine for about a 10th of a second, but then fell backwards and let out a dry exhale. “So, that’s a no then?” Awase sighed and stomped towards Kaminari, cracking his knuckles in preparation.

“I know your Quirk, y’know,” Kaminari revealed while trying to work his way out of the net. “If you try to fuse me to something, I’ll just zap ya!”

“Fine by me,” Awase replied. “I can take it.” Not expecting a response like that, Kaminari rolled away and struggled against the net even harder. Once he rolled into a lamp pole, he was finally able to anchor himself and yank the net off with his other hand.

“C’mere!” Awase yelled while reaching out for Kaminari, who dove out of the way and made a run for an alleyway just across from him. Awase followed him and reached for his capture gun, but was surprised to see Kaminari turn to face him.

“You fell for it!” Kaminari mocked. The realization hit Awase like a truck and he looked over his shoulder to see a metal disc attacked to the lamppost across the street.

“Shit! I’m boxed in!” Before Awase could make a run for it, Kaminari unleashed a bolt of lightning into his body.

“Not bad for the dumbest in class, huh?!”
“What d’you think that explosion was?” Pony asked Kendo. “Sounds like Bakugo’s over to the right, so it wasn’t him.”

“I don’t know. It sounded bad though,” Kendo responded. She listened up for the other fights happening around the stadium, but the first thing she heard was the sound of approaching engines. “Get ready. We’ve got company.” Both girls took a protective fighting stance in front of the flag and waited. Before long, Iida arrived and in front of them.

“I have come for your flag, Miss Kendo!” he declared. “I refuse to leave empty-handed!”

“Then you’re probably not gonna leave,” Pony boasted back. Kendo grinned and nodded in agreement while enlarging her fist in preparation.

“So be it!” Iida passionately replied. He dashed towards the girls and threw his leg up for a spin kick, but Kendo blocked the attack with her giant hand. Pony took this chance and kicked Iida in the side, knocking him away from them. The attack didn’t halt him though, as he activated his engines again and made a run for the flag.

Kendo stood between him and the flag and enlarged both hands. She swatted at Iida once he approached, but he dove over her and reached for the flagpole. He wouldn’t reach it, however, as Pony shot her horns at his legs, redirecting his engines to push back towards the main road. Once he landed, Kendo took the offensive and ran towards him, somersaulting above him with both hands enlarged. “Meteor Sledgehammer!” Iida kicked off the ground and just barely avoided the attack, but Pony threw herself hooves-first into his torso.

“Hero Hoof!” The impact cracked Iida’s armor and knocked him further away from the flag.

“Good job, Pony,” Kendo complimented.

“Yeah. He ain’t gettin’ by us,” she replied. Iida stood back up and gripped his fist as his engines whirred again.

“Trying to dodge your attacks to get past you has gotten me nowhere… so I must break straight through!”

“Bring it on!” Kendo challenged.

“RECIPRO… BURST!” Iida raced forward and rammed into Kendo’s hands, pushing her backwards. Her shielding didn’t falter against his power, but she was skidding backwards and digging her feet through the concrete.

“You won’t… GET BY ME!” Kendo let out a roaring battle cry and pushed against Iida with all her strength. She forced their clash into a stalemate, not letting her body be shoved back any more, and finally started to push him back.

“Stronger than my Recipro?!” Iida gasped.

“Go, Kendo!” Pony cheered. Kendo forced her body forward again and at last, she threw Iida backwards as is Recipro Burst died out.

“I underestimated your resolve,” Iida relented as he stood back up. “Your power is truly admirable.”
“You’re not so bad yourself,” Kendo complimented, “but I won’t let you past me.”

“Kendo! The flag!” Pony cried out. “IT’S GONE!”

“What?!” Kendo whipped around and saw that their flag was indeed missing. “How?!”

“Dunno! It just disappeared!”

“Disappeared? …Hagakure! She snuck by and took it.” Kendo turned around again and saw Iida taking off in a sprint to the right. Out from a small alleyway, a set off gloves carrying the 1-B flagpole hopped out into Iida’s arms.

“Later!” Hagakure yelled out to them. It had happened so fast that Kendo’s mind was put in a spin trying to think of what to do.

“Hop on!” She was brought back to her senses when she saw Pony by her side, ready to gallop after the flag.

“Right! Let’s go, Pony!” As soon as Kendo was on her friend’s back, the girls were in a powerful sprint after Iida and Hagakure. “We’ll get that flag back no matter what!”

“Black Ankh Sabbath!” From high in the air, Dark Shadow’s arms came off Tokoyami’s body and flew down towards Kuroiro, who jumped backwards to dodge. The claws pierced through the roof and came back up underneath Kuroiro, knocking him across the roof. Instead of crashing, however, he was caught by Kaibara.

“Gotcha! You OK?”

“I’ll be fine,” Kuroiro assured him, “but I’m starting to run out of steam.”

“Tokoyami’s a tough opponent. I’m impressed you’ve lasted this long.” They watched as Tokoyami landed on the roof and joined Uraraka and Tsuyu, who had caught Kinoko in her tongue.

“Lemme go!” Kinoko demanded. “This is super gross!”

“Let’s get back out there,” Kaibara instructed. Kuroiro cricked his neck in preparation before looking off to the side at Kamakiri and Yaoyorozu’s battle.

“Cross Cutter!” Kamakiri slashed at Yaoyorozu with his arm-blades over each other, but she made a shield to block them. Out of her arm came a Matryoshka doll that she threw into Kamakiri’s face, which suddenly exploded into light. “FUCK! A FLASHBANG?!” From her hand came a steel pole that she struck Kamakiri’s side with, sending him across the roof to his teammates’ feet.

“…How’re you doin’?” Kuroiro asked.

“How d’ya think?!” Kamakiri snapped while rubbing his eyes. As he stood up, Yaoyorozu rejoined her classmates, prepared for the fight to continue.

“Well, get up,” Kaibara instructed. “We gotta save Kinoko.” He stepped forward with Kuroiro while Tokoyami did the same across form them. It seemed like they would begin the battle anew, but the roof suddenly shook under their feet.

“What was that?” Yaoyorozu questioned. Not a second later, the roof underneath her, Uraraka, Tsuyu, and Kinoko gave way and they all fell into the warehouse.
“Kinoko!” Kaibara called out. The trio of 1-B boys tried to run towards the hole, but found the black arms of Dark Shadow blocking their path.

Before the roof fell out below the hero course girls, Sato and Shoda were exchanging blows inside the warehouse. Every punch from Sato was blocked by Shoda, who absorbed the energy and put it into a palm strike. Sato, in turn, blocked the palm strikes and punched back, creating a stalemate of repeated blows. “Stay down!” Sato demanded while slamming his fists down on Shoda’s head. While the shorter boy’s mind went fuzzy from the impact, Sato pulled him up by the collar and delivered a powerful uppercut into his stomach, knocking him up into the warehouse’s ceiling right near the holes Dark Shadow had made. Shoda bounced off and plummeted towards the ground, but was intercepted by a devastating punch that sent him flying across the warehouse.

“Phew. He’s finally down,” Sato sighed. He relaxed for a brief moment, but then heard crumbling above him. He looked up to see his three female classmates falling towards him, along with Kinoko, who had used the opportunity to wriggle out of Tsuyu’s tongue. “Oh shit!” Sato moved to catch Yaoyorozu, then jumped aside to catch Tsuyu as well. Uraraka also fell into his arms, as did Kinoko.

“Nice catch,” Uraraka complimented.

“Yes, thank you, Sato.”

“I wonder what broke the roof, ribbit?”

“Whatever it was, it must’ve been strong,” Kinoko added. Sato and the girls all stared at her for a few moments before Kinoko finally realized where she was. She yelped and tried escaping, but Tsuyu and Yaoyorozu were able to grab hold of her before she could get away. “Ah! Let go!”

“Hold her steady, Tsu. I’ll make some rope.”

“I got her, ribbit.”

Across the warehouse, Shoda laid on the concrete floor, half-consciously listening to Kinoko’s struggling. The kinetic energy from Sato’s attacks were still moving through his body, but with no commands from Shoda, it wasn’t even moving towards his hair. That is, until he heard Kinoko call his name. “Shoda, help me!” Those words made his eyelids pop open instantly.

“Kinoko…” he grunted. He shakily lifted his head to see Yaoyorozu finishing tying her up.

“You better untie me! My boyfriend’s a Super Saiyan and he’ll kick all your butts!” Yaoyorozu ignored her threats and placed her in Sato’s grip, letting her struggle ineffectually.

“What do we do with her?” Uraraka wondered.

“Should we take her back to the flagpole, ribbit? It is our base in a way.”

“Hey…” Once Shoda spoke up, everyone’s attention went to him. He was in the shadows of the warehouse and his hair had finally stood up, giving off silver light. “Put. Her. Down.”

“We will not,” Yaoyorozu declared. Once he heard her answer, Shoda took a step forward. Once he took another, the energy rushing out of his foot pushed him right in front of the 1-A students. He let out a palm strike into each girl’s stomach in quick succession, sending them flying in different directions, and finally turned to Sato. He delivered strikes to the underside of his arms, forcing him to throw Kinoko into the air, and then poured the remaining energy into both palms that he pushed
“Dual Impact!” Sato went flying backwards into the warehouse wall, and Shoda left his arms outstretched to catch Kinoko. Once she was in his arms, Shoda looked over his handiwork with a confident smile, feeling pride in his strength. It didn’t last long though, as Kinoko nuzzling her head into his neck made his face twist into a blushing panic.

“My hero~” she cooed, making Shoda’s brain practically short-circuit. Once he set her down and untied her, the 1-A fighters returned to their feet, albeit groaning in pain.

“Oooowww. That hurt a lot,” Uraraka complained.

“Look. He changed,” Tsuyu noted. “His hair’s normal again. I think his power’s related to it.”

“Yeah. He absorbs your attacks and sends them back at you,” Sato revealed. “The hair shows you when he’s got energy to do it.”

“Then we’ll capture him instead of knocking him out,” Yaoyorozu instructed. “Everyone, get ready t—” Suddenly, from out of the hole in the roof, an injured Tokoyami appeared, using Dark Shadow to cushion himself from what would’ve been a rough landing. “Tokoyami!”

“I apologize,” he said to Yaoyorozu, “but it seems handling three at a time is beyond my current abilities.”

“You know, you talk a lot.” Jumping down from the roof, Kuroiro, Kaibara, and Kamakiri entered the warehouse as well, landing beside Kinoko and Shoda. “So many big, fancy words for no reason,” Kuroiro mocked. “You could just say ‘I suck’ and get it out much quicker.”

“You seem to think this is a battle of tongues,” Tokoyami ominously began while forming Black Ankh again, “but our clash is that of combat. Be silent and fight with honor.”

“…Honestly, I’d rather keep mocking you,” the white-haired boy admitted with a laugh.

“Everyone, prepare for another round,” Yaoyorozu announced while pulling a metal pole from her arm.

“Same to you guys,” Kaibara said to his classmates. “Let’s finish this.”

“Iida, they’re gaining on us!” Hagakure warned, keeping a tight grip on 1-B’s flagpole. “Use your Recipro again!”

“I’m afraid I can’t,” he admitted. “If I crash at that speed, you’ll be seriously injured, and I can’t exactly stop to drop you off.”

“We gotta pick up the pace though!” Hagakure looked back at Pony sprinting after them, slowly but surely closing the gap, and tapped Iida’s shoulder anxiously. “Faster, faster!” Iida begrudgingly picked up his speed, but as he did, they saw a warehouse down the street break apart into itself.

“What the—” Out from the rubble, he saw Shouji being thrown out into the street and instinctively slowed himself, intent to check on his classmate. “Shouji!”

“D-Don’t slow down!” Shouji yelled. “Keep running or she’ll stop you!” Out of the rubble of the warehouse, a giant Yui rose up and spotted Iida and Hagakure. “She’s too strong! Keep going!”

“Titan Tremor!” Yui kneeled down and smashed her palms into the street, breaking apart the
concrete. Iida slowed down as much as he could, but the stone crumbling under his feet made him and Hagakure crash and tumble towards Shouji.

“S-Sorry… I couldn’t… hold her back longer,” Shouji said.

“No. I’m sorry I couldn’t get here sooner,” Iida told him. “Hagakure, are you OK?”

“I’m good,” she assured him while handing him the flag. “Run.”

“But—”

“Move!” Shouji suddenly shoved Iida away from Yui’s incoming grasp, pushing him into a tight alleyway that Yui couldn’t fit her hand into

“He’s in there, Kendo,” Yui said, pointing down at Iida. Down the street, Pony and Kendo reached the broken part of the road and started jumping through the rubble towards the fallen 1-A members.

“Good looking out, Yui.” Kendo complimented. Yui gave her a thumbs-up, but out of nowhere, an explosion went off on the side of her head. “Yui!” While the giantess was stunned by the explosion, a string of smaller explosion went off past her in a line towards Pony and Kendo. Neither could see him coming at first, but once he was at their side, they realized Bakugo had arrived.

“DIIIIIEEE!” Bakugo reached out to fire an explosion at them, but at the last second, Monoma came flying into his side, propelling himself through the air with Explosion and Poltergeist.

“FIRST OF ALL, HOW DARE YOU!”

“Monoma!” they both cheered in surprise. With Bakugo off their tail, they continued forwards towards Iida, who had come out of hiding.

“Go for it!” Pony told Kendo. The orange-haired girl enlarged her hand and reached out, ready to grab at the flag. On Iida’s other side, Yui’s giant hand came down to try grabbing them as well. They seemed boxed in, but Iida was still charging his engines.

“Light Refraction!” From Hagakure’s body came a glaring light, temporarily blinding the three 1-B girls. While they couldn’t see, Shouji grew more arms from his right side at a rapid pace, creating a long platform over Yui’s arm that lead to intact concrete.

“Tentacle Road!” With this stable platform, Iida hopped onto the arm bridge and fired his engines at max speed.

“Recipro Burst!” Shouji’s giant arm kept stable as Iida ran past Yui towards the unbroken section of the street, but near it’s end, Iida felt it go limp. Looking over his shoulder, he saw Kendo slamming her giant fist into Shouji, and without stable footing, Iida fell and crashed into the rubble below him. Shakily, he climbed to his feet, but her Pony’s hooves coming towards him. Without Kendo on her back, the blonde girl was gaining on Iida, so he fired off his engines, still gripping the flag tightly, and dashed ahead.

Back at the destroyed warehouse, Bakugo and Monoma took their high-speed battle back into the air. “Just fuck off already!” Bakugo demanded. Monoma ducked under his explosion and shoved his metal fist into his chest, knocking him away. Bakugo evened out his flight with more explosion, but saw the shadow of Yui fall over him.

“Got him,” Yui declared while reaching for Bakugo. Before she could grip him, however, Shouji’s massive collection of extra arms wrapped around her arms, keeping them pinned to her side.
“Kraken Constrict!” Bakugo grinned in the brief moment his and Shouji’s eyes met and he returned to his fight with Monoma, bringing the battle back towards where Kirishima and Tetsutetsu were still brawling.

“I’ll blow your head right off, copy bastard!”

At the 1-A flag pedestal, Kouda watched as Iida turned a corner to his left and sprinted towards him with Pony hot on his heels. “You’re not getting away!” Pony shouted. She picked up her speed for one last push and finally dove for the flag, but Iida fired his engines at full strength and narrowly escaped her grasp.

“RECIPRO EXTEEEEEND!” Iida’s speed was too great for him to slow in time, so instead of stopping, he let go of the flag and let its momentum carry it into Kouda’s grasp while he skidded past. “Plant the flag!”

“Hold it!” Pony screamed, throwing herself towards Kouda. “Hero Hoof!” Her kick collided into Kouda’s torso and he was thrown back, but he held on to the flagpole and Pony went flying over him. When her tumble slowed enough for her to stop and raise her head, she saw Kouda raising the flag up to plant it in his class’s pedestal. “No!”

“Do it, Kouda!” Iida cheered. On his class president’s command, the silent boy brought the pole down and the battle seemed over, but just before it was planted, it escaped his grasp, pulled up by an invisible force. The blue 1-A flag was also pulled away, bringing them both into the air.

“Sorry, but we’re a lot tougher to beat than that.” From between the flagpoles, Reiko appeared, bringing them high into the sky with her. After a moment of confusion and realization, Iida and Pony clicked on their earpieces and exclaimed the same message – one in panic and one in joy.

“Yanagi has taken flight with both flags!”
“Yanagi’s taken flight with both flags!” Pony’s voice in his ear is what finally stirred Honenuki back to full consciousness. He sat up groggily, pushing mud off his body, and surveyed the plaza. From what he could tell, his clash with Todoroki had decimated the area.

Where is he? Honenuki wondered. Once he got to his feet, putting strain on his weakened knees, he brushed the dirty blond locks from his eyes and spotted Todoroki across the way. It seemed he had also been stirred awake by a teammate shouting in his ear, and to Honenuki, he looked weakened by their fight as well. He was walking to the center of the plaza and looked up, waiting for Reiko to appear in the sky.

Yeah, that’s not gonna happen, Honenuki asserted in his mind. As long as I’m still standing, I’m not letting you stop us. His stumble of a walk picked up speed slowly, transforming into a sprint. Even if I can’t beat you, I’m keeping you away from my classmates. The sound of his footsteps caught Todoroki’s ear too late. As soon as he turned to see Honenuki, the blond boy’s fist was colliding with his jaw. That’s the least I can do… for the greatest family in the world!

Todoroki fell to his knees, but was quick to get back to his feet while forming fire around his arm. “I’m getting sick of fighting you,” he spat along with some blood.

“Here that?” Rin asked Setsuna, making her pause her mauling of Mineta.

“Yeah. You should go help her.”

“Right,” he said before looking back at Ojiro. Both boys looked back and forth between each other and the direction of the main street, ready to make a break for the central plaza. Their standoff was interrupted when Setsuna hurled the scratched and bloodied Mineta into Ojiro, giving Rin his opportunity to escape.

“Go!” she told him. Rin nodded and bolted towards the street, jumping off towards a platform leftover from Tsuburaba. The bug-eyed boy had recovered from his shock and was battling Jiro with Fukidashi, but with their injuries, Jiro had the advantage.

“Not so fast,” she yelled at Rin, shooting her jacks out towards him. Rin landed on the air platform and prepared to jump to the next roof, but the ear-jacks were closing in too quickly. They would’ve hit their mark, but suddenly, Fukidashi jumped onto Jiro’s back.

“BZZRRRT!” Fukidashi’s Quirk summoned a flash of electricity from his body, shocking both himself and Jiro. It didn’t seem as powerful as Kaminari’s, but it stunned her long enough for Rin to leap up to the next rooftop.

I can’t show my wings just yet. At the very last second… that’s when I’ll sore!

“Manchester Smash!” With his back to the building’s edge, Shishida dove forward underneath Midoriya, just barely avoiding an ax kick that destroyed a chunk of the roof.

“Spinning Cannonball!” He launched himself back at Midoriya, but the green-haired boy was able to get his footing stable in time to block the attack. He threw Shishida backwards towards the roof’s center and held out his arm, preparing for a finger flick, but a scream from Sero made him stop.
“Sero!” Midoriya took off towards his friend and Shishida followed, both arriving to see Sero struggling against Ibara’s vines. Ibara herself was still taped to the wall, but her vines were moving freely and proving to be more than Sero could handle.

“Hey, gimme a hand here!” he begged. Once Midoriya landed, he ran into the vine thicket and pulled Sero free. The vines began to constrict him too, but Midoriya jumped over the building’s side to escape, using Sero’s tape to repel down.

“Shiozaki!” Shishida called out once he touched down on the roof. Shiozaki’s vines went limp as he approached, letting him begin untaping her with his claws.

“Oh, thank you, Shishida,” she sighed once the tape over her mouth was gone. “I didn’t want to stay like that another second.”

“It’s quite alright,” he assured her. “To be honest, it didn’t seem to impede you much, but I’m glad your safe.”

“You guys!” Shishida and Shiozaki’s conversation came to a halt when they heard Awase’s voice. At the edge of the building, they saw him climbing onto the roof, panting and with singed skin.

“Trouble. They’re bringing Kaminari up with them.”

“H-How did… this building is at least three stories high,” Shishida said, trying to make sense of Awase’s sudden appearance.

“Oh, I just, uh, fused my hands to walls while climbing,” he explained, still out of breath. “It’s tiring, but I made it up in only about 22 seconds.”

“…How?!” Shishida asked, even more confused.

“Your physical capabilities are truly admirable,” Ibara complimented. “If Kaminari is coming, then I shall deal with him.”

“Careful. He’s got this—” Before their conversation could continue, Midoriya, Sero, and Kaminari returned to the fray, launching themselves into the air with Sero’s tape and Midoriya’s super strength. High above the trio from 1-B, Midoriya aimed his gauntlet down and flicked four of his fingers, sending a wave of wind pressure down at them.

“Delaware Smash!”

“Get down!” Ibara ordered. Her vines came forward and blocked the wind attack, and the three 1-A boys took this opportunity to land on the roof safely. Once the wind died out, Shishida ran around her vines to attack, but saw Midoriya flinging a metal disc at him. He caught the disc, and then saw Kaminari preparing to fire electricity out of his arm.

“DROP THE DISC!” Awase shouted just as Kaminari let out his lightning, shocking the bestial student. Ibara acted quickly and blocked the attack with her vines, but the damage was done.

“Are you OK?” Ibara asked. “Can you move.”

“I’ll be fine,” Shishida told her, trying to stop his muscles from shaking and spasming. Seeing her friend in this pained state angered Ibara, making her shoot her vines out at her opponents.

“Via Dolorosa!” Her vines caught Kaminari and Sero, hoisting them into the air, but Midoriya was nowhere to be seen.
“St. Louis…” In an instant, he appeared at Ibara’s side with his leg raised, attempting a spin kick to break apart her vines and knock her away. Just as his leg swung out, Awase appeared to protect his teammate. “SMASH!” Awase caught the attack in his arms, skidding around the roof in the arc of the kick’s spin, but he didn’t let go.

“Get out of here!” he yelled, throwing Midoriya away. Once he let go, he took out his capture gun and fired a shot, wrapping Midoriya in a net. “You’re mine, Midoriya!” Awase dove after him in a bid to fuse him to the roof, but Midoriya was able to throw it off at the last second. He dug his fingers into the roof and spun his upside-down body, launching a spin kick at Awase.

“Seattle Smash!” Awase was sent rolling through the air and seemed to be heading over the side, but at the last second, Shishida dove out a grabbed him.

“Thanks, dude,” Awase said.

“You’re very welcome. Now, let’s show them what we can really do.”

“Sounds good to me.”

“Bakugo, you hear that?” Kirishima asked while blocking a punch from Tetsutetsu. “Flags are in play.”

“I heard him, ya damn hair-for-brains!” Bakugo spat while shooting more explosion towards Monoma, who blocked them with Tetsutetsu’s Quirk.

“Then get going! If they’re in the air, you can go after them!” Kirishima retreated to Bakugo’s side as he talked, prompting Monoma and Tetsutetsu to regroup as well.

“Fine, but first, we’re taking them down together,” Bakugo ordered. He slid open the handle on his gauntlet and grabbed the pin, waiting for Kirishima to take his place. His red-haired companion hardened his body and placed one hand on Bakugo’s elbow and another on his shoulder, bracing his arm for the coming attack.

“You should go too, buddy,” Tetsutetsu recommended. “I’ll keep them off you as long as I can.”

“Thanks, and yeah, I’ll get going.” Once Monoma had answered, the iron boy stood in front of him and walked towards the 1-A duo.

“If your gonna attack, do it now,” Tetsutetsu prodded, “before I get bored.”

“I’m gonna turn you into paste, Shiny!” With one last jeer out of his mouth, Bakugo pulled the pin from his gauntlet, releasing a giant explosion to come forward. With Kirishima bracing him, Bakugo’s explosion went off at full power, blowing the street to rubble and tearing up the walls of the alley. “Hot enough for ya?”

“Bakugo, Monoma got away!”

“Huh?!” Bakugo craned his neck back and saw Monoma flying overhead towards the central plaza, blasting forward with Poltergeist and Explosion. “Dammit! Well, at least Shiny’s down for the count.”

“Who’s down for the count now?!?” Out of the smoke and fire, Tetsutetsu leapt forward and delivered an overwhelming right hook to Bakugo’s jaw, sensing him careening into the alley wall.
“Bakugo!” Kirishima called out before Tetsutetsu attacked him with a flurry of punches. Bakugo seemed to be mostly fine, but was stewing in even more anger than normal. “If you’re OK, then go after Monoma. I’ll see what I can do at ground level.” With his plan laid out, Kirishima shot his fist into Tetsutetsu’s stomach, knocking the wind out of him. “Let’s go!”

“Right,” Bakugo answered, running past Kirishima.

“Hold on!” Tetsutetsu coughed while climbing to his feet. “I’m not done with you! HEY!”

“Sorry, but the flags are the top priority,” Kirishima told him. “We’ll finish this another time.”

“I’m not— Y-You can’t just… Grrrr… GET BACK HEEEERE!” Tetsutetsu dashed like a madman after Kirishima, closing the distance faster than he’d normally be able to. All he could think of in that moment in time was showing his red-haired rival his strength. Don’t go thinking I was bluffing two weeks ago, he thought. I really have evolved. Though his focus was single-mindedly on Kirishima, he was still able to spot a fire escape on the wall he was coming towards. I’ve watched you grow and change right by your side. We started as the same, but since the Sports Festival, you’ve done so much. You’ve become unbreakable, while I stayed in your shadow, trying to catch up. Just as he came within arm’s length of Kirishima, he jumped for the fire escape and used it to swing forward, flying right over his rival. I have nothing but respect for you, bro, but it’s time for me to create my own path. One that will lead me to surpass you. That all starts right now.

Once he was in the air, Tetsutetsu pushed his transformation beyond its limit, and then even further beyond that. His metal body was shifting, becoming blockier, angular, more rigid and sturdy. Our Quirks may seem the same, but there’s a big difference you’re about to learn. Steel is really fucking heavy! Tetsutetsu fell like a ton of bricks onto Kirishima, who had looked up and started to harder instinctively. “REAL STEEL: HEAVY METAL!”

“RED RIOT: UNBREAKABLE!” For a split second, the boy’s seemed equal, but the extreme weight of Tetsutetsu’s form was too much for Kirishima to lift. He was pushed into the ground, howling in pain as a crater formed in the cement.

“Kirishima!” Bakugo yelled. His Unbreakable form seemed to be protecting his skin, but the weight was still crushing him.

“Keep going!” Kirishima told him. “Get the flags! Go!” Bakugo wanted to argue, but knew Kirishima was right, so he begrudgingly fired off an explosion and took flight. “Red Gauntlet!” With his unbreakable fist, Kirishima slammed Tetsutetsu’s jaw hard enough to shift the weight, letting him slip out from underneath the shiny fighter.

“Told you I’d get better,” Tetsutetsu grunted.

“You sure did. Let’s keep this going.” The boy’s locked eyes again, showing off the respect for their opponent, and they clashed once again.

“I’LL BEAT THE LIVING CRAP OUTTA YOU!”
Once Monoma was far enough from Bakugo, no longer using Explosion so he wouldn’t draw attention, he flew higher to locate Reiko. He spotted her on a rooftop at the edge of the central plaza, recharging the time limit of her transformation. Out of the corner of his eye, Monoma saw Honenuki and Todoroki brawling in the plaza. Two larger battles were still happening on the plaza’s sides, which meant flying directly over the center would be safest. *Yanagi knows this*, Monoma realized. *That’s why she’s recharging – to make sure she’s ready.*

The copycat came down onto the same rooftop as her and tapped her shoulder, resetting his time limit with her Quirk. “Good timing. I’m almost ready to go,” she told him. “We’re flying over the middle.”

“Right. I’ll protect you and the flags as best as I can,” Monoma asserted. After a few more moments of waiting, Reiko took off with Monoma following close behind. Todoroki seemed to notice them immediately, but thanks to Honenuki’s attacks, he wasn’t able to attack them. He wasn’t their biggest worry, however, as a series of incoming explosions caught their ears.

“Bakugo’s coming,” Reiko told her classmate. Once the explosive student came into sight, Monoma flew out in front of Reiko, hardening his skin with Tetsutetsu’s Quirk.

“Just keep flying,” the copycat instructed. “Don’t try and help me.”

“Wasn’t gonna,” she admitted. Monoma prepared himself as Bakugo sped forward, using his explosions to fly in erratic and unpredictable patterns.

“Found you!” Bakugo reached Monoma insanely quickly and fired an explosion into him. Monoma’s iron skin protected him, however, and he used this opportunity to knock Bakugo away with a punch to the head.

*He can’t fly forever. I have to hold him off until his arms are too hurt to keep going.* Bakugo blasted himself up again, but this time, he went over Monoma, intent on attacking Reiko. “No, you don’t!” Monoma undid Steel and used Explosion to reach Bakugo in time to block the attack on Reiko, but was blown away as a result.

“You’re mine, Casper!” Bakugo shouted as he brought his gauntlet down towards Reiko. The flags seemed to be his, but at the last second, a scaly fist collided with his chest, flinging him backwards.

“Rin!” Monoma cheered, seeing the draconic student flying with them.

“Sorry I’m late,” he said with a smile. “We’ll fight him off together.”

Bakugo fell in a tumble, not able to summon an explosion strong enough to correct his drop. For a moment, he was sure that he’d crash to the plaza, but out of nowhere, he landed on something cold. Once he was back on his feet, Bakugo realized he was on an ice tower created by Todoroki. He wanted to scream at his classmate about how he didn’t need any help, but the tower began to falter under his feet. Bakugo looked down and saw Honenuki softening the ice, so he took flight while he still could. He looked over his two opponents in the sky waiting for him, but wasn’t deterred. Instead, he just blasted himself up to continue the fight. “DIIIIE!”

“Midoriya!” In the middle of fending off Ibara’s vines, Midoriya looked behind himself and found Ojiro. “Did Rin come this way?”
“He’s in the sky.” Ojiro followed the sound of explosions and found the mid-air battle immediately, noticing Rin was flying. The sight of these new wings, and the realization he had been holding back his power in their fight, made Ojiro clench his fist tightly.

“I gotta get up there,” he declared. “Midoriya, I need to chase after him.”

“But how?”

“Throw me!” Midoriya was shocked by the request, but trusted Ojiro’s judgement. “Delaware SMASH!” He sent out a wave of wind pressure at Ibara, stunning her vines long enough for he and Ojiro to escape and begin their plan. “Sero, get ready to grab the flags on my mark.”

“I’m a little busy!” the black-haired boy exclaimed while fleeing from Shishida and Awase.

“Ready, Ojiro?”

“Ready!” The two boys jumped into the sky and Midoriya swung his leg out, readying a spin kick. Ojiro took this time to wrap his tail around Midoriya’s leg and grit his teeth for the flight.

“Now! SMASH!” Midoriya’s powerful kick sent Ojiro sailing over the plaza on a crash course for the mid-air battle. He rolled into a somersault as he flew, trying his best to aim for Rin.

“Tail Wheel!” To Ojiro’s luck, his strike not only knocked Rin away, but put him into a collision course with Monoma. He stuck his leg out a struck Monoma’s side, giving Bakugo a clear shot at Reiko.

“DIE!” With his usual battle cry, Bakugo let loose a thunderous explosion that engulfed Reiko and blew the flags out of her hands.

“Shit!” Monoma yelped. As Bakugo and Ojiro landed on another ice tower from Todoroki, Monoma tried to chase the flags, but a line of tape encircled the poles before he could reach. Across the plaza, he saw Sero reeling them in while Midoriya and Kaminari kept their three opponents at bay.

“I’ve got them!” Sero announced. “Midoriya, get ready to run like hell!”

“Watch your language!” Ibara commanded while thrusting a wave of vines at Sero. The black-haired boy was able to dodge these vines surprisingly easily, but as they continued forward, he realized that he wasn’t the target.

“Oh crap!” The vines snapped the tape in half and grabbed the flags, now taped together at the pole, letting Reiko fly down and scoop them up.

“OK, got ‘em back,” Reiko told herself. “Just gotta—”

“CASPEEEEER!”

“Fuck!” Reiko ignored her brain telling her not to look back and checked over her shoulder, seeing Bakugo steadily gaining on her while avoiding Rin’s attempts to grab him.

“Drop the flags!”

“Eat a dick!” Reiko spat. With a double-handed explosion, Bakugo burst forward and up, preparing a long range Super Move to finally take her down.

“AP Sho—” From below, Monoma flew up and grabbed Bakugo by the chest, halting his attack
with an explosion that pushed him up.

“Keep going!” the copycat shouted. Bakugo wasn’t done, however, and he unclipped a grenade from his belt, hurling it towards Reiko. She didn’t notice until it was right next to her, but just before it went off, Rin flew forward and wrapped his body around it, absorbing the blast with his powerful scales. That wasn’t all, though, because just as his wings started to flap again, a blast of fire enveloped him from below.

“Rin!” Reiko gasped. She looked below and saw Honenuki being held at bay by Ojiro, letting Todoroki attack with his fire from long range. “Dammit! Him too? What other shit can they throw at us?!” She would immediately regret asking this once she saw the Tokoyami leaving the group fight on her left. Uraraka had halted his gravitational pull, so he jumped into the air and wrapped Dark Shadow around himself, using it to fly towards her.

“Black Fallen Angel!”

“Monoma!” she hollered. Over her shoulder, she spotted him and Bakugo in a furious clash of blows, and with no sign of Rin, she was on her own. “Son of a bitch.” She swerved to the right to keep away from Tokoyami as long as she could, but the shadow bird’s flight, combined with Uraraka’s effect, brought him up much too quickly.

“Ebony Lure!” Tokoyami was barely a few feet from the flags when he was pulled away. Kuroiro had snatched him in his suction and yanked him away, leaving Reiko’s flight path clear of enemies.

“Yanagi! On your right!” she heard Shishida bellow. Reiko felt like screaming from the pressure of everything that was happening, but she kept her composure and looked to right. Leaping towards her was Midoriya, who was clearly too far to reach, but he extended his right arm and flicked four fingers, sending out a blast of wind.

“SMAAAAASH!”

“Not so fast!” Just as Midoriya unleashed his attack, Kaibara flew up on Reiko’s right, firing his Tornado Gauntlet to counter the air pressure attack. Once Midoriya hit the ground, he aimed up to fire another blast, but a wave of glue came at him from behind, letting Bondo pin him for the moment.

“Below you!” Reiko heard Honenuki yell. She didn’t need to look down to know a blast of fire was heading towards her. Her only reaction was to hold the flags tighter, hoping she could withstand the attack.

“I’ve got it!” Out of nowhere, Rin appeared to take the flame blast’s full force. “You’re home free, Yanagi!” he told her. “Just don’t look back!”

“Right!” With total anarchy at all sides, Reiko pushed herself ahead, clenching the flags hard enough to turn her knuckles white. After all the close-calls and attacks she’d just barely dodged or been saved from, an adrenaline high was what finally pushed Reiko beyond herself. The physical limit of her transformation had run out, but after seeing her friends fight valiantly to protect her and the flags, she refused to let up. It took every ounce of her strength, but she pushed her body to keep going. “I’m home free.”

That’s when the attack finally hit her. Not from Bakugo, Todoroki, Midoriya, Tokoyami, or anyone else she expected – the attack was a sparkly laser blast from Aoyama. It hit her side dead on, taking the strength from her arms and letting the flags fall. On the plaza’s cement, Todoroki watched them fall, still bound by Sero’s tape, and took off to grab them. “I’ve got them.”
“No you don’t!” Honenuki was right at his side, keeping pace as they went to intercept the flags. In the few seconds it took for the flag to fall, they had both run to the center of the plaza, reaching them just before they hit the ground. Everyone in the vicinity looked to them to see what the next move was – run or attack – but silence and stillness took them over. The fighters in mid-air were forced to land, not sure what to do next.

Both Todoroki and Honenuki had their right hand gripping the poles.

“…Let go,” Todoroki requested. Honenuki could feel his ice-cold hand pressed against his own. Drawn by the commotion from the battle in the air, the 1-A and 1-B classmates who had been fighting in the side streets arrived, seeing the stalemate in the center of the plaza.

“Not happening,” Honenuki asserted. With his back to 1-B’s side of the training field, he felt the solidarity and bonds with his teammates behind him as well. “You let go.” Both boys tightened their hold, and in the same instance, they activated their Quirks. The raw strength of Todoroki summoning his ice, only to be pushed away by Honenuki’s softening, gave off a pressure that refused to let anyone else near. No one present knew if this pressure was really coming from their Quirks fighting against each other or if it was all in their heads – all they knew was getting close was far too dangerous. The two student’s muscles strained as they pulled back, trying to overpower the other with sheer force.

That’s when Bakugo, at the edge of this clash, noticed something. The two flags were beginning to harden and crack apart while the flagpoles were starting to bend, almost like they were melting. “HEY! You dumbasses are gonna wreck ‘em!” Neither boy heard him. Their test of power had taken all of their focus. The flags began to contort more and more, but neither side relented.

“LET GO!” they both roared. With a final yank from both sides, the flagpoles were both torn in half, having been softened by Honenuki. The flags themselves, now stiff and frozen thanks to Todoroki, fell and broke into pieces on the cement. Now pulling back on nothing, Honenuki and Todoroki both fell to the cement, looking over the ruined signs of victory. Most of their classmates didn’t make a move at first, but both Pony and Iida took off running for their friends.

“Todoroki!” Iida yelped. He grabbed him and ran back to the edge of the plaza where the rest of 1-A began to crowd. Pony put Honenuki over her back and galloped to 1-B’s side, where the class was already waiting for him.

“Juzo!” Kuroiro gasped as they arrived. Honenuki’s right hand was turning black and had strips of ice still clinging to it.

“Frostbite? Crap,” Kendo mumbled while looking over his hand. “We have to warm it up—”

“I’ve got this!” Tetsutetsu declared, sliding his arms out of his costume and pulling it down to expose his stomach. “I saw it on TV. If Eskimos get frostbite, they touch on each other’s bodies to conserve heat.”

“Wouldn’t it be better if Shishida does it since he has fur—”

“THEEERE’S NOOO TIIIIME!” Tetsutetsu screamed before pushing Honenuki’s hand onto his abs.

“Thanks, man,” Honenuuki said to the iron boy, who was still screaming.

Across the plaza, 1-A had crowded around Todoroki to try helping him, though his own frostbite was being taken care of by his left side. “Will you be OK?” Iida asked.
“Todoroki, your head is bleeding,” Yaoyorozu realized. “Here, I’ll make a bandage for you.”

“Thanks,” he mumbled, concentrating on not burning his hand.

“I can’t believe you really broke the flags!” Bakugo barked, prompting Kirishima to put hand on his shoulder. “Idiot!”

“Easy, Bakugo,” Kirishima told him. “It was all an accident. Not a big deal.”

“Hey, so, what happens now?” Mina asked. “Is it a draw?”

“Probably,” Midoriya reasoned. “There’s no way to win now.”

“Oh, there’s a way,” Bakugo declared. He had moved on from yelling at Todoroki and was staring across the plaza at 1-B. A few of them, such as Monoma, Kamakiri, and Awase, were staring back.

“We’re gonna fight until one side stays down.”

“That’s not what we were instructed to do, Bakugo,” Iida reprimanded. “Stand down. The fight is done.”

“Try telling them that.” Iida internally scoffed at the response, but once he saw 1-B, he began to see where Bakugo was coming from. Even more of them were staring 1-A down, as if the fight was about to continue. Iida could practically sense their fighting spirit and his own began to flare up. Without an idea of how to proceed, he flipped on his earpiece to call his teacher.

“Mr. Aizawa, how shall we proceed?”

“I guess we have to stop the exercise,” 13 figured.

“Do you think they’ll accept that?” Midnight asked. “Those kids were really fighting their hardest out there. I doubt they want to stop.”

“True, but just letting them clobber each other with no goal is really unsafe.”

“You’re both correct,” Nezu stated from his seat on All Might’s lap. “Letting them continue to fight with no end goal is irresponsible, so we should think of some way to end this now. That is, if our homeroom teachers are OK with their students continuing like this?”

“Fine by me,” Eraserhead claimed with his usual lack of energy.

“You bet,” Vlad answered, fired up from seeing his students in combat.

“That settles it,” Nezu continued. “Now, what can we use as a finishing mark? It should be something simple, something that will come quickly…” The teachers all pondered in silence for a moment, but All Might was the one to break that quiet.

“I’ve got it,” he said with a snap. “Midnight, can you run and get something for me? And Cementoss too?”

“Sure, but what?”
“Now what?” Kaibara asked aloud. “We doin’ this Civil War style?”

“We have to wait and see,” Kendo told him. Despite the two class representatives telling their classmates that nothing had been decided yet, both sides had begun to form a line facing the other.

“Attention, students.” In their ears, the forty heroes-in-training heard Principal Nezu’s voice. “After some deliberation, we’ve decided to let you continue your match. In a few minutes, we’ll present an end goal for you, but until then, continue as you’d like.”

“Sounds like we got the OK to keep fighting,” Tetsutetsu said. “Kendo?”

“Seems that way,” she agreed before looking across the plaza to Iida. He had removed his helmet and tossed it aside, showing off a determined face. Class 1-A was lined up across from 1-B, ready to battle once more. “I guess we’re doing this.”
Spirit vs. Spirit

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

It began as a slow walk, started by Bakugo and Monoma. As more people joined, it became a march. Once all 40 students were heading for the battle, it became a run, and then an all-out sprint. Whether battle-hardened or not, each student, to some degree, was excited for the battle. The frontrunners who sent out the first attack were, surprisingly, Uraraka and Jiro. Uraraka began it by pressing her fingertips to the ground while Jiro plugged her jacks into the small devises on her hands.

“Heartbeat Distortion!” She slammed her fists into the ground, letting her soundwaves break apart the ground. With Uraraka’s Quirk, the earth chunks were blown up and forward, floating over 1-B.

“Now release! Meteor Shower!” The stones dropped from the sky, threatening to crush the students, but the long-range fighters took aim to stop them.

“Fwoooossh!” With Fukidashi’s wind, they were slowed enough for Kamakiri to lance them into pieces and Bondo to knock them away with shots of glue. Once the two groups met in the center, all hell broke loose. Attacks flew indiscriminately as people grouped up and challenged foes from their rival class.

“DIIIIIEE!” Bakugo threw his gauntlet forward and blasted Shoda’s stomach with an explosion, but the shorter boy only skidded back. Once a glowing spike of hair appeared on his head, he sprang forward and let out a palm strike into Bakugo’s chest, blowing him backwards. Just as Bakugo was thrown away, Kaminari jumped into the fray and put Shoda in a bear hug.

“Get ready for a million volts!” He let out a burst of lightning from his body, electrocuting Shoda.

“I GOTCHA, LITTLE BUDDY!” Just then, Tetsutetsu appeared next to Kaminari and slammed his fist across his face, knocking him away from Shoda. He received a shock across his body, but didn’t seem deterred by the damage.

“I’ll fry you both!” Kaminari shot out a disc from his gauntlet, but Tetsutetsu grabbed it and whirled it back, hitting him across the forehead. Shoda took this chance to strike him in the stomach, blowing him away.

“Good job, little bu—” Before he could finish, Tetsutetsu was separated from Shoda by a wall of ice, being ridden on by Todoroki. “Hey!” He ran after the split-haired boy, but Todoroki jumped away to dodge a different attack. A bundle of vines where chasing him down, trying to encircle his body and keep his powers contained.

Ibara ran alongside the ice, still growing vines that followed Todoroki. He summoned fire from his arm and shot it forward, but Tetsutetsu jumped in front of them, blocking the attack. The iron boy dashed through the fire and punched Todoroki across the cheek, giving Ibara the chance to encircle him. “I’ve got you now!”

Just as Todoroki regained his bearings, he firmly planted his right foot and summoned a giant ice wall, breaking the vines and blocking Ibara’s view. He only had a second to relax though, as from behind, a giant set of hands came down, shattering the ground he stood on and the ice he had made. “Titan Tremor!” Without stable ground to work with, Todoroki found himself being thrown around like ragdoll from the shaking attack. He didn’t know how to regain control, but Yui’s assault was
halted not long after it had begun. A bright laser shot her head, putting her in a daze.

“Adieu~!” Aoyama was quick to flee from sight, but Todoroki finally had his chance to counterattack. He brought a wave of ice forward, shaping it precisely to lock Yui in place.

“Not so fast!” Without warning, Todoroki felt an enormous pressure on his back and was thrown into the ice that held Yui. Looking back, he saw Kendo standing where his ice wall had been. “Don’t worry, Yui! I’ll break you out!”

“Behind you!” Yui warned. Kendo turned around just into time a kick from Midoriya that threw her back, but didn’t knock her down. She ran at him and threw a giant punch, clashing against Midoriya’s own super-powered punch, and their equal strength canceled each other out.

“Midoriya! I’ve come to assist you!” Hearing Iida behind him, Midoriya jumped away from Kendo and landed beside his classmate. “Shall we?”

“Yeah, let’s do it!” The two boys ran towards Kendo and jumped, crossing Iida’s left leg behind Midoriya’s right. He flared his engines and pushed Midoriya’s leg forward at unimaginable speed, creating a kick of their combined strength.

“RECIPRO SMASH!” Kendo crossed her hands over each other, desperate to block the attack, but another figure appeared in front of her. Tetsutetsu jumped out and took the blow for his friend, though he was hurled away from the battle for his trouble.

“Tetsutetsu!” Only able to spare a glance as her classmate went flying, Kendo swatted at Midoriya, knocking him away as well. She wanted to chase him down, but felt ice locking her legs in place. Iida landed and tried to attack Kendo again, but felt himself being pulled away from her towards the center of the battle.

“Ebony Lure!” He saw that he was caught in Kuroiro’s suction and ground his feet into the concrete to slow the pull. This gave Uraraka just enough time to disable Kuroiro’s gravity and throw him away.

“Iida, let’s fight together!” she suggested.

“Sounds good to—” Out from the dust and debris behind Uraraka, Iida saw a forest’s worth of vines rising. “Get down!”

“Woah!” Iida sped by Uraraka and grabbed her, but the vines caught his trail and sped forward to grab them both.

“St. Louis SMASH!” Before they could grab the two, Midoriya sprang out and swung his leg out, using the wind to keep Ibara’s attack at bay.

“ Deku!” Uraraka and Iida quickly joined Midoriya, ready to fight as a team. Once the wind died out and Ibara’s vines moved again, Kaibara and Tsuburaba sprang out from the thicket.

“Whistle Spear!” Tsuburaba shot a line of solid air at Midoriya, who tried to dodge, but as still slashed along his side. Kaibara then dove between the 1-A trio, pressing his fingers into the ground and spinning his arm.

“Spinner Swing!” His kick just barely missed Uraraka, but Midoriya was knocked away by the powerful kick. Iida fired his engines and swung his leg into Kaibara’s chest, but his follow-through was interrupted when Tsuburaba’s Whistle Spear lodged part way into his leg.
“Iida!” Uraraka watched both him and Kaibara groan and clutched their injuries, but her focus had to switch to Ibara. Her vines were racing towards her and her best friends, so, in a moment of intense focus, she forcibly flipped her mental switch and entered her “Gunhead Martial Arts Mode.” With a wild expression, she ran into the vines and grabbed one, spreading her anti-gravity effect all the way to Ibara and the rest of the vines. “Hoo-ah!” Once she reached Ibara, she threw a series of jabs that forced Ibara to evade, now clumsier from the lack of gravity. Uraraka then grabbed Ibara’s wrist and pulled her into the air before slamming her into the ground. Kaibara went to attack Uraraka after this, but Iida sped around him and blocked the attack.

“You guys OK?” Tsuburaba asked. Kaibara gave him a nod, but his eyes went wide and he pointed past Tsuburaba.

“Look out!” Without bothering to look first, Tsuburaba cupped his hands over his mouth a blew out his Solid Air as he spun around.

“Air Prison!” It was Shouji who he trapped in mid-air, but after a few seconds, a laser blast from Aoyama came, breaking the barrier. “Shit. Sen?” He looked back to see Kaibara still dealing with Iida, meaning he was on his own.

“Now, Octoblow!” Shouji’s arms began to manifest in great number, and he swung these tentacles out at Tsuburaba, who jumped back try and avoid them. He assumed the attack would hit him, but a green figure jumped out and dove headfirst into the attack.

“Setsuna! You OK?” Now safe, the bug-eyed boy saw his lizard-like classmate being constricted by the tentacles, looking satisfied with her predicament.

“Dude, I saw tentacles and heard ‘Octoblow.’ I regret nothing.” Tsuburaba rolled his eyes at his teammate and prepared to help her, but a few close shots from Aoyama’s laser forced him to back away. Before Shouji’s hold could become too tight on her, Setsuna’s limbs popped off and she fell to the ground, only to regrow them and squat down on all fours. She raced under the arms and began slashing at Shouji with her claws, forcing him to dodge. “Rin, now!”

“Dragon Dive!” From above, Rin dropped down and stomped Shouji’s chest, pushing him to the ground. Once he was floored, Ojiro jumped out from behind Shouji and truck Rin across the face.

“Rin!” Setsuna yelped as she tumbled past her. Ojiro chased after him, but Setsuna fought him off with slashing attacks until Rin recovered.

“Dragon Lance!” Pushing his transformation’s power in his right arm, his hand became a jagged claw that he thrust into Ojiro’s stomach, knocking him away. Shouji had recovered by this point and stuck out his three right arms towards Rin, growing more at an amazing speed.

“Tenta-Cannon!” Setsuna flung herself into the attack, letting Rin run past her to attack Shouji again. Before her could, however, a flash of light in front of Shouji blinded him and Setsuna.

“Light Refraction!” The duo of lizard-like students instinctively shut their eyes to protect them from Hagakure’s blinding light. While they were stunned, Shouji’s tentacles bound Setsuna tightly and Ojiro grabbed Rin with his tail, slamming him into the ground. “Yay! Go, Ojiro!”

“Rrhs, dammit.” Rin groaned as the tail tightened around his body. The hold was too tight for him to wriggle free from, but suddenly, he felt the ground turn to mud under him and he sunk into it, along with Ojiro, Hagakure, and Shouji.

“Planet Waves!” Thanks to a stomping attack from Honenuki, the trapped students sunk further into
the mud. Rin assumed he’d go under the surface, but then felt Reiko pull him out into the air.

“You’re welcome,” she greeted.

“Thanks. Mind dropping me on Shouji?”

“You got it.” Reiko hovered over Shouji and let go of Rin, letting him stomp onto Shouji’s tentacles and free Setsuna. Once the ghost girl was sure her allies were safe, she began to float away to assist others, but then felt something slimy wrap around her. “Woah!” Once she realized she had been caught in Tsuyu’s tongue, she was yanked away by it, pulled down towards her and Tokoyami. “Oh crap,” she growled while bracing herself for impact.

“Let her go!” After hearing Pony’s voice, Reiko felt the tongue around her loosen and she slipped out. Once she landed, she saw Pony attacking Tsuyu while Tokoyami summoned Dark Shadow.

“Dark Shadow, attack!”

“Aye a—”

“SHIIING!” Diving between Pony and Tokoyami was Fukidashi, who conjured a bright light that stunned Dark Shadow.

“Gah! So bright!” Dark Shadow whined. Tokoyami attempted to regain control of his shadow, but Reiko dove at him, grabbing his head and bringing down into the ground with her.

“Phantom Pain!” Once Tokoyami was stunned by the blow to the head, Pony slipped past his shadow and kicked his stomach, knocking him away.

“Tokoyami!” Tsuyu called out while shooting out her tongue. Pony intercepted Tsuyu’s grab for her classmate by grabbing her tongue, prompting Fukidashi to try attacking.

“BO—” His attack was halted when his head was grabbed and slammed backwards. Pony looked and saw the culprit was Sato, but she was unable to help due to Tsuyu’s tongue starting to wrap around her. Sato raised his fist again, this time to attack Pony, but before he could attack, a glob of glue knocked him away.

“Bondo!” Pony looked and saw Bondo locked in a grappling match with Kouda, but was still looking around, trying to support the others with his glue. Grateful that her focus could be focused only on Tsuyu, Pony shot a horn at the frog girl, forcing her to dodge. Her other horn then fired, knocking Tsuyu hard enough for the centaur girl to slip from her tongue’s grasp.

Tsuyu landed on her feet and prepared to attack again, but the familiar feeling of mushrooms growing over her body made her freeze. “Ribbit?” Looking over her shoulder while scraping the mushrooms off, she saw Yaoyorozu in battle with Kinoko and Kendo. “Momo, I’m coming to help!”

“Wait, stay back, Tsuyu!” The Creation Quirk user was too late to stop Tsuyu from trying to assist, which led to Kendo grabbing her with her giant hands. Tsuyu was thrown into Yaoyorozu’s arms, which Kendo followed up with a giant palm strike. An airbag was created by Yaoyorozu to cushion the attack, but her and Tsuyu were still thrown away. Mineta jumped into the fray attempting to help his classmates, but Pony kicked him away from the battle, leaving Kendo to deal with the two other girls.

“Heartbeat Distortion! Stay away from them!” The ground under Kendo’s feet was destroyed by an attack from Jiro, giving Tsuyu and Yaoyorozu a chance to recover. While Kendo was shaken,
Yaoyorozu created a set of bolos that she threw into Kendo’s legs, making her fall to her knees. Tsuyu jumped towards Kendo to attack, but a hairy arm suddenly grabbed her and tossed her away.

“Dynamic Hunter!” Shishida appeared in front of Yaoyorozu and dashed around in a circled, confusing her with his erratic movement before finally body-checking her. After watching her girlfriend be tackled away, Jiro plugged a jack into her boots and blasted out waves of sound. As these waves went out, Jiro was suddenly knocked off her feet, constricted by a net.

“Gotcha!” Awase appeared in front of Jiro and dashed at her, attempting to fuse her to the ground, but she rolled away and another figure jumped out to attack him.

“Red Gauntlet!” Awase jumped back to avoid the incoming punch from Kirishima, but then ran towards him to try a counter-attack. He punched Kirishima across the face, but the red-haired boy withstood the attack and forced Awase back with a punch to the chest. He had no time to relax, however, as Kamakiri’s mandibles suddenly shot out from the crowd, pushing him back.

“Multi-blade!” As Kamakiri ran close, he kept stabbing into Kirishima’s hardened body. Once he was close enough, he slashed his arm blades as well, forcing Kirishima to keep up his blocking. Kirishima tried to find an opening, but saw that behind Kamakiri, Awase, Kendo, and Ibara were waiting. He assumed they were preparing to attack him as well, but realized the real situation when he heard explosions coming up behind him.

“Here we come!” he heard Mina yell. Out from behind Kirishima came Sero, Mina, Kaminari, and Bakugo. “Bakusquad: engage!”

“I told you to stop calling us that!” Bakugo yelled while fighting back a grin. Newly energized from the appearance of his friends, Kirishima threw an uppercut into Kamakiri’s jaw that pushed him away. Ibara attacked the group with her vines, but Mina used her acid to melt them while Kaminari kept the remaining vines occupied with his lightning. Sero pulled himself closer to Kendo and shot out more tape, forcing her to dodge around the strands. Bakugo took on Awase, blasting him with long range explosions while avoiding his hands.

“DIE, DIE!” Bakugo kept shooting off his explosions, but was forced to stop when he felt some go off in his chest. He looked down and saw Monoma phasing out of the ground and chasing him into air. Bakugo smirked at this and began flying with his explosions, meeting Monoma in mid-air to exchange blows. The boys repeatedly summoned explosions into the other, gaining altitude all the while. “ALL YOU EXTRAS ARE GOING DOWN! I’LL KILL YOU ALL!”

“I WON’T LET YOU WIN AGAIN, BAKUGOOOO!” Monoma shoved his hands into Bakugo’s chest and let out a huge explosion, blasting himself towards the ground and Bakugo higher into the air. Despite the pain in his arms, the copycat was prepared to give chase aging, but stopped when he saw Bakugo began spinning towards the ground. He knew in an instant what Bakugo was doing, flashing back to the final round of the Sports Festival. “BAIL! EVERYONE RUN!”

“HOWITZER…” The two classes split away and bolted from the center of the center of the plaza as Bakugo brought down his strongest attack into the center of the crowd, destroying the ground and blowing everyone away. “IMPAAAAAAACT!”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this took longer than expected. Some stuff came up that limited my writing time.
Stay tuned for the finale of this arc next chapter.
Monoma picked his face off the ground and rubbed his head, hissing in pain. Once his eyes were open, he saw the rest his class in front of him. “Holy shit,” he groaned before turning around. Class 1-A was in a similar state, though Iida was already back on his feet and stomping over to Bakugo, who stood in the center.

“Bakugo! How could you do something so reckless?!”

“What the hell do you expect?! You want me to hold back?!”

“You put your classmates in danger!”

“They were in my way!” The two students kept arguing as everyone else got to their feet, but didn’t move. No one knew if the fight was still going.

“My, my. Our students are quite powerful.” The voice of Principal Nezu drew everyone’s attention, and they saw him coming with the rest of the teachers. Among them was Cementoss, who was carrying something over his shoulder – A metal pole with a familiar cape pinned to it.

“That’s… All Might’s cape,” Midoriya realized.

“All right, everyone,” All Might began. “If you want to continue, come over this way.” Slowly, every student worked their way to the teachers, watching to see what would be done with the cape. “That’s what I like to see, my students. You all have that ‘never give up’ attitude. I’m sure you’re all curious about how we’ll declare a winner, so here’s what’s going to happen. Cementoss?”

“Right.” Cementoss stepped forward and planted the flagpole into the ground, then crouching down to put his hands on the cement. Using his Quirk, Cementoss moved the cement and pushed the new flagpole away from the crowd. Once it was far enough away, the ground began to rise up, bringing the cape with it. Before long, the pro had made a giant pyramid with five levels of height and a staircase leading to the top, segmented at each level. “On our mark, you may try and claim the flag that sits on the fifth level. Whoever does will gain victory for their class.”

“A race to the top?” Monoma mused. “Alright then.”

“It’s gonna be mine,” Bakugo declared aloud. The 40 students all faced the cement structure before them, looking up at the cape that blustered on the top level. Many were already preparing to dash forward once the mark was given.

“…GO!” Like a stampede of wild animals, every student took off in a rush for the pyramid. The immediate frontrunners were Iida, Midoriya, Ibara, and Pony, but almost everyone was right behind. Bakugo tried to blast himself ahead, but the physical strain on his arms had finally become too much and he was forced to run. Yanagi had already taken to the sky, but Uraraka leapt up and grabbed her, bringing both to the ground.

Once the crowd reached the bottom of the stairs, Bakugo blasted himself up with the biggest explosion he could muster. He couldn’t go as high as he wished, but he landed at the first level. Before he could run ahead, however, Fukidashi was thrown by Bondo up to the first level, where he grabbed onto Bakugo’s back. “BZZZRRRRRT!” Bakugo yelled in pain from the electric attack,
but could move well enough to blast Fukidashi off his back and down the stairs.

At the ground level, Iida fired his engines at full strength and ran up the inclined wall beside the staircase. Once he reached the first level, he was stopped when a pair of blades caught his sides. Kamakiri’s mandibles had gripped him and he was flung backwards, high over everyone’s heads.

More people began to go up the stairs, bringing the fight higher. Aweise pushed himself up the stairs and started attacking Bakugo. The blond boy fought back as best he could, but his explosion had grown weak enough for Aweise to tank. Just as Aweise raised his fist to punch Bakugo down the stairs, Kirishima appeared and elbowed him away. With Aweise gone, Kirishima and Bakugo turned their attention to the others coming up the stairs. Mina jumped ahead of the others and laid a slippery layer of acid down, slowing them down enough for Bakugo to blast away.

“Black Fallen Angel!” Overhead, Tokoyami and Dark Shadow took flight, avoiding the brawl entirely, but this flight only lasted momentarily. A stream of glue from Bondo hit Tokoyami dead-on, weighing him down into a crash on the third level and sticking him there. Tetsutetsu then threw Fukidashi higher, letting him keep Dark Shadow contained with his light-based attacks. Tsuburaba tried following the example and made a platform of solid air, letting him run above the combat. However, a shot from Aoyama’s laser was enough to destroy it, making the bug-eyed boy fall and tumble back to the ground. Midoriya was next to try getting ahead, making it to the second level, but Ibara’s vines chased him down and grabbed him, dragging him back to the bottom.

“Coming through!” Tetsutetsu and Shishida pushed through the crowd and threw themselves into Bakugo and Kirishima, momentarily clearing the path. Using this opening, Setsuna, Pony, and Honenuki barreled past, while Monoma and Kendo stayed behind to keep the 1-A members back.

“On your left!” Kendo yelled, Monoma whirled around in time dodge a punch from Sato and send him flying with a spinning metal punch. From behind him came Yaoyorozu, who threw a net at Monoma, but Kamakiri’s mandibles came up from the ground level and cut the next apart. Kendo took this opportunity to duck around Monoma and swat Yaoyorozu back. Monoma, in turn, rotated around and locked fists with Kirishima’s while Bakugo prepared to blast him.

“Steel and Hardening!” With two defensive Quirks being used, Monoma endured the attacks from both boys, holding out for Kendo to hit them both away.

“Shishida, help Yanagi!” Kendo instructed. “Sero’s got her in his tape.”

“Roger!” Monoma and Kendo took this chance to ascend the staircase, leaving Tetsutetsu, Ibara, and the others to keep them safe. Once they reached the second floor, they found Pony battling Ojiro while Setsuna held Mina back. Kendo pushed her way through with Monoma right behind, but had to stop to catch Fukidashi, who had been thrown off the third level.

“You OK?” she asked.

“I’m good.” Fukidashi slipped from her grasp just as Ojiro flipped around Pony and attacked. Kendo stepped forward and blocked the tail whip, letting Pony kick Ojiro away from the staircase.

“From behind!” Monoma held out his hands, ready to defend form Shouji’s tentacles that raced up, but before they reached, Yui intervened. At her giant size, she grabbed Shouji and threw him away from the pyramid. She received a shock from Kaminari right after, but held out against the attack and continued to assist in holding back her opponents.

”We’re going up!” Kendo told the copycat. They and Fukidashi reached the stairs and climbed up, seeing Dark Shadow ready to pounce at them.
“SHIING!” Fukidashi shone a light at the shadow, making it shrink away as the trio reached the third level. There, they saw Tokoyami was still held by Bondo’s glue, but Dark Shadow was ready to attack. It swiped at Fukidashi, making him jump away, so Monoma stepped forward, activating Bakugo’s Quirk. The light of the explosions kept Dark Shadow at bay, but all of the sudden, the copycat felt his legs freeze up. A layer of ice appeared at his feet, holding him and Kendo.

“SIZZLE!” Fukidashi’s body heated up rapidly, but he was still stuck when Todoroki passed by.

“Get back here!” Dashing up the stairs was Honenuki, who grabbed the back of Todoroki’s vest and threw him away from the stairs. “I’ll keep him here! You two go after the flag!”

“BOOOM!” Finally free from the ice, Fukidashi set off an explosion that held off Dark Shadow and weakened the ice as Monoma and Kendo smashed themselves free. Honenuki floored Todoroki with a punch and softened the ground, making him sink in. To speed up the sinking, Honenuki attacked with a flurry of punches into his rival’s torso. Todoroki, despite getting light-headed from so many attacks, was able to conjure a slab of ice, holding Honenuki and keeping his hands away. He had sunk into the cement to deeply, though, so they two boys were completely stuck for the time.

“Guess our fight’s done for now,” Honenuki mused with Todoroki giving a slow nod of agreement.

On the fourth level – the last one before the final level with the cape – Kendo and Monoma ran ahead with no one in their path, ready to climb the tallest staircase yet. “Anyone coming?” Kendo asked. Monoma looked back to see Fukidashi still keeping Dark Shadow back, Todoroki and Honenuki still stuck, and no one coming up the stairs near them.

“No one. For now, we’re—” As he faced forward again, a white blur went by his right side. Once the blur raised its leg to kick, he realized it was Iida.

“RECIPIO ENTEEEND!”

“GET DOWN!” Kendo ordered. She raised her giant hands to block while Monoma braced her back, letting her fully absorb the kick. Once Iida’s right engine burnt out, he jumped back and prepared his left for another Recipro attack, but before he could, a box of sloid air formed around him.

“Air Prison!” From above, Kaibara and Tsuburaba came down to assist, dodging laser blasts from Aoyama all the while. At the same time, Uraraka was also descending from her jump. Iida fired his kick and broke the box apart, but Kaibara took this opening to grab Iida and jump down the staircase.

“I’ll keep him occupied! Get the flag!” As the two boys fell away, Uraraka attacked Tsuburaba and cancelled his gravity, throwing him away from the fight. Monoma returned the favor and grabbed her, hurling her into the path of Kuroiro’s Ebony Lure.

“It’s now or never.” Kendo told him. They both prepared for the final push, but Monoma spotted two figures racing up the stairs – Midoriya and Bakugo.

“He’s mine, nerd!” Bakugo screamed. Midoriya ignored his friend and continued jumping up, prompting Monoma to push Kendo forward.

“I’ll hold them back!” As he pushed her ahead, he activated Uraraka’s Quirk, giving her the speed and agility boost that came with Zero Gravity. Once Kendo was dashing up the stairs, Monoma used Tetsutetsu’s Quirk to harden his body in final preparation. We’ve come too far. I can’t let them past me.
“DIE, YOU SHITTY COPYCAT!” Bakugo held out his left arm, trying to blast Monoma as a last insult before going for the flag, while Midoriya seemed to be trying to pass on Monoma’s right with no fight.

“A shitty copycat would lose, Bakugo! I’m a great copycat!” At the last second, Monoma undid Steel and grabbed Bakugo’s bicep, fusing their flesh together. At the same time, he reached out to Midoriya’s arm to do the same, but a beam of light intervened. Aoyama’s laser blast knocked Monoma’s arm away just in time to protect Midoriya. “KENDO! GET IT NOW!” Monoma watched as Kendo reached the top of the stairs and disappeared behind them while Midoriya made quick work of catching up.

“Let go, you fuck!” Snapping back to his senses, Monoma reached down and fused his other hand to the cement just as Bakugo blasted his body. With two quirks active, he had no protection, but refused to unfuse his hands. “I SAID LET GO!” A knee to his stomach took Monoma’s breath, but at this moment, the victory was more important.

I can hold out, he told himself. As long as she can finish this, I can endure anything. Bakugo looked ready to rip Monoma’s arm off, but he wouldn’t get the chance. A horn blared from the bottom of the cement pyramid, stopping every fighter in their tracks.

“The exercise is done,” Nezu declared. “The flag has been claimed.” From the distance, Monoma couldn’t make out any of the teachers’ expression, nor could he see the top level at the angle. All he could do as he unfused his hands was watch the top of the stairs. Time seemed to stretch out in that moment, prolonging Monoma’s heart skipping a beat. The copycat was convinced that time had stopped entirely, but All Might’s cape finally came into view. Holding the pole up for all to see was Kendo. “Class 1-B has won.”

Watching Kendo plant the flagpole and hold her fist up, smiling brightly as the cape billowed behind her, Monoma felt a tear roll down his cheek. This was the moment they had waited for. They were injured, bloody, burnt, and overall in terrible shape, but this was their victory, and with it came a relief that washed all pain away. Tetsutetsu finally broke the silence with his customary loudness. “WOOOOOOO!”

“WE DID IIIIIIIT!” Pony cheered. The two rambunctious students raced upstairs and pulled Kendo into a crushing hug. Midoriya walked by them with a small, congratulatory smile while Bakugo started grumbling about the loss. Monoma finally rose to his feet then, looking out over the others. His classmates were cheering, celebrating, and climbing upstairs to greet their victorious leader. Monoma did the same and reached the top as Pony took All Might’s cape and draped it over Kendo’s shoulders.

“Great job,” he said. Exhaustion was finally hitting him, but he was still able to hug Kendo in gratitude.

“It was close, y’know?” The rest of the class reached the top and came together in a group hug around Kendo. At the base of the structure, they could hear their Vlad King laughing heartily, bragging to All Might and Nezu about how great his students were. As they separated, Monoma heard Kendo breathe a sigh of relief and hold the cape over her body. “I couldn’t have done it alone.”

Once the joint training came to a close, the classes left to return to class or see the nurse. Iida congratulated Kendo on a victory well-earned and she did the same, wishing them the best. Monoma stayed quiet during this, not wanting to let anything that could ruin the occasion slip from his mouth. Once everyone returned to class, the 1-B students, still riding the high of their victory,
waited for their teacher to dismiss them. It wasn’t long before Kan entered the classroom, still beaming. “Congratulations!” he greeted. “You all fought spectacularly! I couldn’t be prouder, my students!”

“Three cheers for Kendo!” Tetsutetsu called out.

“Come on, guys. That’s not necessary,” she told him. “We all fought hard out there. All I did was get the flag at the end.”

“Whatever the case, you should all be proud of your victory,” Kan continued. “From now on, I want you training even harder. The next time you’ll face Class 1-A like this is the next Sports Festival, so you have to keep this up and show the whole world. That’s all I really have to say, so class is dismissed.” As Kan left, everyone packed up quickly and headed for the door.

“Guys, let’s go party!” Pony yelled. “I got a cake in the fridge! Oh, I gotta write ‘congrats’ on it too!”

“You two coming?” Awase asked Monoma and Kendo, who were still at their desks.

“We’ll catch up,” Kendo told him.

“They’re gonna make-out,” Setsuna guessed as the class filed into the hall.

“So,” Kendo began once she and Monoma were alone, “was it everything you hoped for?”

“…Would you believe me if I said it was better?” he asked. Kendo chuckled at this and lightly chopped the top of his head.

“Seriously. You’re done, right? No more ‘crazy Monoma?’ At least, in regard to them?”

“I suppose,” he answered coyly, earning another playful chop to the head. “I promise not to brag or anything. How’s that?”

“And?”

“I’ll try to be nicer to them… except Bakugo.”

“Good enough,” Kendo shrugged. She and Monoma finally left the classroom and trekked down the hall, ready to celebrate with their friends. “I was really focused on winning back there. I felt like you.”

“Is that a compliment?”

“Not sure,” Kendo answered, “but whatever the case, I’m glad we could make everyone so happy.”

“We? You were the victor, Kendo.”

“Maybe, but I wouldn’t have made it without your help at the end.” Kendo’s hand scruffed Monoma’s hair, almost like he was a kid, but he then felt her lips quickly press against his cheek. “You’re a competitive little brat, but you’re MY competitive little brat. Now let’s head home.”
And with that, the second to last arc is done. For now, there’ll be a string of fluff chapters (Last chance for them here, so I'm clearing out my remaining ideas), and then I'll move onto the final arc. The uploads may slow a little as finals approach, but once I'm on break, the last arc will go by quickly.
I can’t believe Vlad talked me into this. Outside of 1-B’s dorm building, Eraserhead internally grumbled over his situation once again before forcing himself to go inside. He could’ve at least come with me. They’re his students. Once inside, he found the common room to be mostly empty, but there was one person around – Setsuna, who was snuggled under a blanket with no intention of getting off the couch.

“What’s up?” Setsuna greeted.

“Is your class rep here? I need a favor and Vlad told me she may be up for it.”

“Yeah, I’ll grab her for ya… KENDO! KENDO!!!!”

“WHAT?!” Kendo yelled back from her room on the next floor up.

“Visitor for you!” Content with a job well done, Setsuna curled deeper into her blanket with a grin. “She’ll be down in a sec, Eraserface.”

“It’s Eraserhead,” the pro murmured while rubbing his temples, trying ease the new headache. Moments later, Kendo appeared from the stairwell.

“Sorry,” she greeted.

"About what?"

“…I-I don’t know. Whenever a teacher besides Vlad shows up, I assume Monoma did something,” Kendo admitted. “Anyway, what can I do for you?” Eraserhead blinked and scratched his scruff awkwardly at the question.

“It’s a bit of an odd request, but I need people to watch Eri for the night. The faculty is having a meeting tonight that will probably run late and my usual helpers are busy tonight, so Vlad recommended you.”

“Is that all?” Kendo asked. “Of course, we’ll babysit. I’ve never actually met Eri before. If she’s staying at U.A., this’ll be a good chance for us to meet her.”

“That’s what Vlad said.” Out of his pocket, Eraserhead pulled out a folded sheet of paper and gave it to Kendo. “Here’s some instructions – basic do’s and don’ts for Eri. She’s been through a lot… so make sure you don’t scare her.” As he spoke, his tone started becoming tenser, to the point where it sounded like a threat. Kendo could’ve sworn his hair began to move as well. “I’ll drop her off later. Yanagi’s met Eri a few times before, so make sure she’s with you so Eri has someone familiar around.”

“You got it,” Kendo told him while reading over the instructions. “Don’t worry about a thing, Eraserhead.”

Later on, Kendo made sure everyone in class knew of the special visitor coming and informed them of Eraserhead’s special instructions. Some continued on like normal, a few didn’t seem interested, but a great number were excited to meet Eri. Once the evening rolled around, Kendo went to the common room to wait for Eri, where she found Monoma and Setsuna already waiting. “Excited to meet her?”
“Dude, kids are cool,” Setsuna responded. “They haven’t been tainted by maturity and bullshit, y’know?”

“Don’t go using that kind of language around her,” Kendo warned. “I don’t want Eraserhead getting angry if she learns some new vocabulary.”

“I know what I’m doing,” the lizard girl assured her.

“Look alive. He’s here,” Monoma warned. In from the main entrance, Eraserhead walked inside with a small girl in his arms. The albino, one-horned girl was looking at the trio of 1-B students warily, holding onto her guardian’s shirt.

“Thanks again for this,” Eraserhead began. “I should be back around 9.” The pro hero knelt down and placed Eri on the ground, but kept his hands on her shoulders. “These are friends of Deku and Mirio. They’ll be looking after you tonight. If you really need me, I’ll be here in a flash. OK?” Eri nodded and watched as Eraserhead stood back up and walked outside. Once he was gone, Kendo approached the younger girl and crouched down.

“Nice to meet you, Eri,” she greeted with a soft smile. “My name’s Itsuka Kendo. I’ll be looking after you tonight, so I hope we can be friends. How’s that sound?” Eri seemed to lose a good deal of her nerves thanks to Kendo’s greeting welcome and nodded to her.

“What’s up?” Tetsutetsu asked, making sure he spoke softly around Eri.

“Apparently,” Kendo began with a furrowed brow, “Monoma’s met Eri before and scared her.”

“Apparently,” Kendo began with a furrowed brow, “Monoma’s met Eri before and scared her.”

“Idiot,” Reiko quietly grumbled.

“Hey, it wasn’t that bad,” the copycat backtracked. “I’m normally nice.” He looked down at Eri and smiled, trying to seem friendlier, but this only made her shrink further behind Kendo’s leg.
“Hey, Eri, do you wanna meet our other classmates?” Yanagi offered while stepping in front of Monoma. Eri pondered the suggestion for a moment before nodding and letting go of Kendo’s leg. Kendo scooped her up in her arms and carried her to the stairs with the others, except for Monoma and Tetsutetsu.

“…Sucks to be you,” the metal boy dimly said.

“Now I feel bad,” Monoma sighed. “I hate having feelings. What can I do to make her like me?”

“Uuuuuuh… dunno, but let’s go with them.” Before Monoma could argue, Tetsutetsu dragged him upstairs to catch up with the others. They arrived to see Kamakiri, Awase and Fukidashi being introduced to Eri. Awase wasn’t saying much, but made himself look friendly, Fukidashi was being his normal cheerful self, and Kamakiri seemed disinterested.

“Hey, you should show her your room,” Tetsutetsu suggested. “Little girls like princessy things.”

“…I can’t tell if you’re being an asshole or not, but I’ll give you a pass since that’s a good idea.” Monoma elbowed his friend’s side lightly and went to unlock his door. “Hey, Eri, do you want to see my room?” The group seemed confused by the question, but Kendo got the idea and urged Eri forward.

“Go on. I think you’ll like it.” The young girl seemed to trust Kendo’s word and cautiously approached Monoma’s room. Once she looked inside, however, her fears were replaced by an innocent wonder.

“It’s so pretty,” she said while looking at the feminine design and furniture. “It’s like the movie Mirio showed me.”

“What movie?” Yanagi asked.

“Beauty and the Beast.” The others snickered at Monoma’s embarrassment by the comparison, but he paid them no mind and focused on Eri’s elation in the design.

After introducing Eri to the rest of the class, Monoma, Kendo, and Reiko went downstairs, leaving Eri with Ibara, Tetsutetsu, Pony and Fukidashi. “I think she’s comfortable around you now,” Kendo noted.

“Not enough. I’m gonna make that child love me,” Monoma declared. “First step: make her a delicious dinner.”

“Too late for that,” Reiko told him while checking her phone. “Her dinner’s here already.”

“What?” Monoma was left aghast that his cooking would be denied as Reiko went to the dorm’s doors, letting Shinso inside.

“Hey, Rei.”

“Yo.” In Shinso’s hands was a bento box with “Eri” written on the front. “Lunch Rush makes Eri’s meals specially,” she told the copycat.

“I finished my homework early, so I’m delivering,” Shinso explained. Monoma watched him place the bento on the kitchen counter and scowled at it.

“Nah. Nah. Toss it. Throw it out.”
“What?”

“I’m gonna make Eri’s dinner. End of discussion.” Monoma’s argument was cut short when Shinso activated his power, shutting him up.

“Like Rei said: these are made specially for Eri’s growth, which is important right now. Your ego is not a factor, so don’t act like you have a say.” Once he released his power, Monoma was left in a belligerent silence while Reiko smiled at her boyfriend.

“Fine. In that case, I’ll make her fruit crepes for dessert.”

“OK, but I’m telling the others you’re making them for everyone.” Shinso grinned smarmily at Monoma, who mulled over the proposal quietly.

“Fine. I can do that.” Now satisfied with his plan, Monoma began looking through the cupboards in the kitchen, making sure he had ingredients. As he mentally tallied off everything, Eri was brought downstairs in Ibara’s arms, along with the others. Once she saw Shinso, she lit up like a light and smiled.

“Toshi!” she exclaimed. Shinso had a small grin as Ibara handed Eri off to him.

“Hey, squirt. How’s things?”

“Good.”

“Getting along with everyone?”

“Mhm.” Shinso scruffed Eri’s hair and sat her at down at a table while Reiko placed her bento down.

“Here’s your dinner, so eat up.” Eri unwrapped her meal and graciously dug in while Shinso looked on with a satisfied expression.

“You two seem close, ‘Toshi,’” Reiko commented.

“Don’t go gettin’ jealous, Rei,” he teased. While they conversed and Eri ate, Pony and Tetsutetsu approached Monoma and Kendo in the kitchen.

“Hey, hey, we had an idea,” Pony quietly announced. “We’ll have a movie night.”

“Pony’s got a big collection, so we’ll sure to find something that Eri will like,” the iron boy reasoned. Kendo mulled over the suggestion for a moment and gave a thumbs-up to the pair.

"We should have time after Eri’s bath. That reminds me, can you ask Setsuna and Reiko to help her with that?”

“You got it!”

A little while later, Monoma and Kendo were hard at work cooking a spread of fruit crepes for everyone. The whole class had gathered for a relaxing movie night with sweets, but were forbidden for eating any until Eri had some.

“OK, we’re done with bath time,” Setsuna announced. She and Reiko brought Eri, who had changed into cat-print PJs, out to the common room, where the smell of dessert immediately caught her attention.
“Hope you’re ready for a treat, Eri,” Kendo told her as she was sat down at a table. “Monoma’s made a special dessert just for you.”

“Here we are.” Monoma then brought over a fresh stack of crepes over to Eri, who was mesmerized by the sweet dessert. “I’ll cut it up for you real quick… uuhh, knife, where’s a knife?”

“I’ve got it,” Kamakiri told him as he approached with a switchblade.

“Woah, woah, hold on,” Kendo interjected.

“Relax. It’s clean,” the bug boy told her. He knelt down beside Eri and cut her crepes into smaller pieces, showing off his knife to her. “Pretty, isn’t it?” he asked the little girl while balancing the knife on his finger. “Perfectly balanced, as all things should be.”

“…Weird, out-of-nowhere Infinity War reference, but OK,” Shinso commented as he and Reiko made their own plates of crepes.

“Yeah, you guys can help yourselves,” Monoma told his other classmates before handing Eri a fork. “Dig in, Eri.” The young girl happily took the fork and took a bite of her dessert, growing a large smile.

“It’s so sweet-” she said with her mouth full. Monoma had to look away from her to make sure he didn’t start ugly crying and just barely avoiding doing so. As everyone ate their desserts, Pony and Tetsutetsu set up the movie on the TV.

“OK, we’re all set!” Pony announced. “We’re watching Matilda! I think you’ll enjoy it, Eri.”

“Oh, that’s a classic,” Kendo commented. Once Eri finished her dessert and was cleaned up, Kendo and Monoma brought her into the class pileup. They set her down next to Shishida, which they called “the comfiest seat in the house,” and set behind her while Reiko and Shinso were on her other side.

“Hey, where’s Ibara?” Tetsutetsu asked.

“Coming!” they heard from the stairs. “Sorry for my lateness.” In her arms was a blue bundle that she brought over to Eri, revealing it to be a hand-knitted blue blanket. “I made sure to finish this today so you’d have a souvenir.” With Kendo’s help, Ibara wrapped Eri snugly in the blanket and took her seat next to Tetsutetsu.

“Are we all set?” Kendo asked. Everyone seemed to be ready for the movie, and Eri gave her a nod. “OK then. Hit it, Pony.”

“Movie time!”
Late on a Friday night, after another long day of classes, the students of 1-B spent the evening relaxing with each other in the common room, and as usual, the couples were together. Shoda and Kinoko had just returned from a study date in the library, Kuroiro and Honenuki were eating together, Kaibara and Tsuburaba were playing videogames with Kendo and Monoma – it seemed happy enough. The only real outlier was Ibara, who sat alone in the corner, peaking her head out of a blanket to enviously watch the other couples.

Look at them all. Showing off how happy they are together. Sinners, the lot of them. As she watched, her anger-filled jealous slowly switched to sadness, and she contemplated going up to her room. Before she could, Ibara felt her phone buzz with a text message.

Setsuna: Come up to my room.

Ibara was confused by the message, but reasoned that Setsuna had been by at some point and noticed her stewing in the corner. Keeping her blanket clutched around her body, Ibara left the common room and ascended the stairs. Once she reached Setsuna’s room, the lizard girl opened up from the other side and let her in. “Hey,” she greeted with less energy than usual.

“Good afternoon,” Ibara replied. “Are you feeling well, Setsuna?”

“Well, y’know, then cold kinda fucks with me,” she answered with a forced chuckle. “…I’ve got a problem. With Rin.”

“I’m sorry to hear that. If you don’t mind my asking, what’s wrong between you two?” Setsuna sighed at the question and began pacing around her room while Ibara took a seat on the foot of her bed.

“I think he’s embarrassed of me,” she finally admitted. “The other day, I overheard him talking to his mom on the phone, and I guess she asked if he had a girlfriend yet, and Rin said ‘no, mom. I’m still single.’ We’ve been dating for, like, almost a year! How has he not told her about me?”

“I’m sure there’s a reason,” Ibara assured her, not exactly sure what to say. “Rin is a good person. I doubt he’d lie for no reason.”

“Yeah, but… he could’ve told me, y’know?” Ibara had no answer to give, so she decided to stay silent. “I just… I need to be pissed for a while. I don’t think this is an overreaction, do you?”

“No at all.”

“Alright, cool.” Setsuna took a deep breath and seemed to calm down, and then sat down next to Ibara. “Now for you.”
“Hm?”

“I saw you getting all salty earlier. I got the feeling you were having a similar problem. What’s on your mind?” Ibara wanted to tell her friend that she was fine, but knew her face would tell a different story. “It’s about Tetsutetsu, isn’t it?”

“…Perhaps.”

“Then spill.” Setsuna’s prodding became too much for Ibara and she held the blanket tighter around her body while gritting her teeth.

“I… I think he’s cheating on me!”

“What?!” Setsuna shot off the bed and started pacing around while wringing her hands around a discarded hoodie to release her rage. “Are you positive? If I’m gonna kill him, I need to be sure.”

“I caught him talking to someone on the phone as well,” Ibara explained. “The way he spoke and what he said… It sounded like he was planning a date. He was talking about going to ‘that place’ and said he’d get ‘the usual’ beforehand. He spoke so lovingly, and when I asked him if he was free tomorrow, he said no and he kept dodging the question when I inquired further. It was like he was hiding something.” As Ibara spoke, she retreated further into her blanket for comfort. Setsuna sat back down and hugged the girl, making sure to speak softly.

“OK, that does sound sketchy, but we’ve got nothing solid yet. Y’know what I think? We gotta trail him tomorrow. Either we’ll see nothing and clear this all up, or if there is something he’s hiding, we’ll catch him.”

“Spying?” Ibara questioned. “I don’t know about this.”

“Do you want an answer or not?” Setsuna looked into Ibara’s eyes with total seriousness, making her give in.

“I do… Alright then. What about your problem, though? I’d feel terrible if I couldn’t help you in return.”

“For now, a distraction is what I need,” Setsuna told her. “I don’t wanna blow up on him if this is just a misunderstanding, so I need time to chill.” She huffed to herself and crossed her arms, but her face slowly shifted into the lewd grin she was known for. “You know, this is how a lot of fun girl videos start.”

“Pervert.”

“What if we just didn’t need guys?” Setsuna playfully asked. “Lemme just slip out of this itchy sweater~”

“Be wary of you own lust, my friend.”

“Heehehehe.”

The next day, Ibara and Setsuna donned disguises and followed Tetsutetsu as he went to his home of Saitama Prefecture alone. Once they were off the train, the pair of girls trailed from a safe distance, looking out for any suspicious behavior. “OK, he’s not crossing,” Setsuna reported. For a disguise,
she wore a black beanie with her hair tied back, along with a medical mask over her face. “Let’s move out.”

“Alright,” Ibara replied. Her disguise consisted of a red scarf over her vines, along with a white and black shawl that was pulled up partially over her face. The girls popped out from the corner they hid behind and walked down the street, keeping Tetsutetsu in their sight. “Is there any place known for romantic rendezvous in this area?”

“I can’t really remember. I’m from these parts, but I don’t know too much about this area specifically.” The two girls kept following, but were forced to hide when Tetsutetsu stopped and began to turn. Once they were safely hidden, Setsuna glanced around the side and watched the iron boy walk into a store.

“What’s going on?” Ibara asked.

“I know that place,” Setsuna began. “It’s a bakery known for really sweet stuff. Lots of couples go there.” She realized the error in her wording too late and saw Ibara deflate next to her. “Hey, this doesn’t mean anything. We don’t have any solid info, so don’t lose hope.”

“Tetsu doesn’t like sweets,” she mumbled.

“You’re worrying over nothing. He may just be getting those for his mom.” Setsuna took a moment away from Ibara to check for Tetsutetsu and saw him exiting the shop with a box in his hands.

“He’s not going towards his home,” Ibara noted at Setsuna’s side as they watched Tetsutetsu walk away from them. “His building is in the other direction.”

“Let’s just follow along some more.” The girls crept back onto the street and followed their target on a long walk, reaching an older, less dense part of the city. Eventually, they were behind him with no one in between, walking alongside a tall concrete wall. “Where the fuck is he going?”

“…I don’t want to know,” Ibara admitted shakily. “If he really is seeing someone else, I don’t… want to see it happen.”

“Hey, hey, you gotta tough it out,” Setsuna told her. “I’ve got your back, so don’t go losing your nerve. We’re still not sure what’s going on, so don’t assume the worst just yet… and if it is the worst, I will personally ruin him.”

“…Thank you, Setsuna,” Ibara said, now calmer. “You truly are a good friend for helping me.”

“You’re welcome. Now, let’s—” Once Tetsutetsu disappeared from sight, Setsuna’s eyes went wide. “…We may have fucked up.”

“How so?”

“I hope my memory’s wrong,” the lizard girl groaned. She led Ibara along the stone wall until they reached an open iron gate, through which they could see lines of headstones. “It’s a cemetery.” Rubbing her neck awkwardly, she looked over at Ibara to see the vines-headed girl already getting teary-eyed.

“How terrible of me,” she scolded herself. “I assumed the worst of him – the man I love… How can I face him now?”

“Well, it’s Tetsutetsu. I’m sure if you explained what happened, he’d forgive you. Hell, he may not even be mad.”
“But he went out of his way to hide this. It must be private. Too painful to speak of.” Setsuna sighed, resigning herself to her lack of answers to give.

“Hey, guys!”

“Wah!” The pair of girls flinched when Tetsutetsu’s head popped out from behind the gate. “H… Hey.”

“What’re you guys doing here?”

“We were following you,” Ibara blurted out, looking down at the ground guiltily.

“And this is where I exit,” Setsuna quietly commented while slinking away. “Sorry for stalking you, dude.”

“F-From the way you were acting, I got worried,” Ibara continued. “I overhead a phone conversation… and I started to think you were cheating on me.”

“Oh, that was probably just my mom,” he told her, still smiling dimly. “Yeah, I was just telling her I was still dropping by here like I usually do ‘round this time of year.”

“I see.” Ibara was still staring at the ground and fiddling with her hands, letting guilt eat away at her. “I’m… I’m so sorry for invading your privacy like this. It was completely out of line. Could… Could you ever forgive me?”

“It was kinda uncool, I guess,” Tetsutetsu considered, “but I guess I wasn’t helping things by not telling you anything and acting suspicious, so I’ll let it slide.” Ibara sighed in relief and wiped her wet eyes, but still couldn’t ignore her guilt.

“I should still make it up to you somehow. You’re entitled to your privacy, Tetsu, but I violated our trust.”

“Eh. It’s fine,” he told her with a shrug. “Hey, you wanna see somethin’? Since you’re here, I might as well show you.”

“I’d be honored,” Ibara told him. “…Before we do, though, could you give me a moment?” The iron boy gave her a nod, prompting her to walk back down the sidewalk to where Setsuna was loitering.

“How’d it go?”

“It’s just as you said,” she reported happily.

“Then I’ll leave you two lovebirds alone.”

“Wait,” Ibara told her. “I’d hate to leave your problem unresolved after you’ve helped me.”

“I told you, it’s fine,” Setsuna explained. “I just need time to cool down so I’ll be ready to talk to him.”

“You say that, but when does it stop? Do you know when you’ll be ready?” The lizard girl tried to laugh off the question, but Ibara’s words cut her deeply. She had no idea how to actually answer. “It’s up to you, but I think you’re ready.”

“…Maybe.” With nothing left to say, Ibara patted her friend’s shoulder and walked away to rejoin her boyfriend. Now on her own, Setsuna pulled out her phone and dialed. After a moment, Rin’s
“Hey.” Setsuna waited a moment to gather her thoughts before finally speaking.

“I heard you on the phone,” she told him. “You told you mom you aren’t dating anyone.” Rin was quiet on the other side of the call, so Setsuna decided to continue. “I know you wouldn’t do this for no reason, but I’d like to know the reason at least. Are you afraid that I’d embarrass you? Or is this still not serious to you after almost a year?”

“Setsuna…” Rin sounded uncomfortable on the other line, and Setsuna could here guilt in his words. “It’s not really about you or me, honestly. My mom is very old-fashioned, and dating moves pretty fast where I’m from. I’m afraid that if I told her, she’d be hounding us to get married already.”

“I don’t care about that,” Setsuna told him. “I just want to be real with you and for you to be real with me. I’m not gonna keep you secret from anyone, so… I’d like it if I wasn’t a secret for you.”

“Setsuna… I’m really sorry.” The lizard girl could feel the regret through her phone and was saddened that she wasn’t in front of him. “You’re right. I should’ve at least told you about this. Tonight, I’m gonna call my mom and tell her everything.”

“I want to meet her,” Setsuna told him. “No matter what she says, I want her to see me. OK?”

“That’s fine by me. Just remember what I said about her being old-fashioned.”


“Right. See you later.”

“Later.”

At U.A., Rin hung up his phone and sat back on his bed, letting Setsuna’s words bounce in his head. Better start saving up for a ring, big guy. He rolled over onto his stomach and placed his phone onto his nightstand, ready to for a long nap.

Jokes on you, he thought. I’m already saving up. Once graduation day comes, you’ll be in for a surprise…

“It’s just up ahead,” Tetsutetsu stated as he led Ibara through the rows of headstones. He spoke somewhat quieter and less spastically, but he was thankfully still smiling. Ibara still felt a strong guilt on her conscious, but her focus had turned to making sure her boyfriend was alright. “Here we are.” The pair came to a stop in front of a stone tombstone, and written into the face was the name Kitetsu Tetsutetsu.

“Is this your grandfather?”

“Yup. On my old man’s side.” Ibara nodded and decided to say a prayer. Next to her, Tetsutetsu opened the bakery box and pulled out a pink cupcake, placing it on the ground. “These were his favorite, so I always leave him one.”

“How long ago did he pass?” Ibara asked once her prayer ended.

“5 years now,” the iron boy answered. “Gramps and me spent lots of time together when I was
“See, that’s why someone like Endeavor can’t really outdo All Might,” Kitetsu lectured while sinking his weathered teeth into a cupcake. Sitting next to him on the stoop of his apartment building was his grandson, who was tracing his finger lazily on the concrete. “He’s got no gusto. People see All Might walking around and get excited. If you saw Endeavor on the street, you’d avoid him. He’s a total asshole.”

“Mom said you can’t use words like that around me.” Tetsutetsu’s voice was meek and listless as if being outside was draining his energy.

“Kid, you gotta stop worrying about shit like that. Can’t really live if you follow every rule someone gives you.” Tetsutetsu sighed and leaned back on his hands, trying to avoid staring at people so he wouldn’t draw their attention. “You’ll never be a hero if you worry about every little regulation. Think All Might worries about stuff like that every second he’s fighting a villain.”

“Can I really be a hero like him?” Tetsutetsu wondered. “I’m nothing like him.”

“You’re young! You can change! Whatever it is about yourself you don’t like, you can change it!” Kitetsu’s exaggerated motions and bombastic voice was more than enough to draw people’s attention, but he paid them no mind. “What do you want to do so you’d be a better hero?”

“I…I want to… be more energized. I want to… be louder. Like you, grandpa.”

“Perfect! The best practice? Loudly complimenting people.” Kitetsu picked himself off the stoop and Tetsutetsu followed suit, waiting to see what his grandfather would do. “Watch and learn.” Tetsutetsu observed closely as his grandfather surveyed the passing people before settling on some high school girls. “HEY!” he called out to one of the girls. “I LIKE YOUR BOW! VERY STYLISH!”

“Uh, th-thank you,” she warily replied before leaving with her group.

“See? All eyes are on us, but they know we’re good people.”

“Hm.” Tetsutetsu scratched his head in confusion before deciding to give it a try. “HEY, YOU!” he screamed at a passing man with a cat-like tail. “YOUR TAIL IS COOL!”

“Thank you,” he said to the young boy.

“Starting to get it?” Kitetsu asked. Tetsutetsu was finally beginning to smile and he pumped his fist up.

“Yeah! I think I got it!”

“Then let’s keep going! HEY, YOUR HORNS ARE REAL SWEET LOOKING!”

“YOUR SHIRT IS VERY PRETTY!”

“I LOVE YOU, DOG!” People were starting to actively avoid the pair, but neither minded. “Now that’s gusto, my boy!”

“Gusto!” Tetsutetsu cheered.

“Hey, you two,” they heard Tetsutetsu’s mother say from the building entrance. “Dinner’s ready, so come up and—”
“I LOVE YOUR COOKING!” the pair yelled together.

“It seems he’s had a real impact on you,” Ibara said. Tetsutetsu had taken out a second cupcake and began chewing on it while looking down at the headstone. “Would you like some time alone.”

“…Yeah,” he responded. Ibara nodded and began to walk away, but then extended one of her vines, wrapping it around one of Tetsutetsu’s hands.

“I’ll be here when you’re done,” she told him. Tetsutetsu didn’t react at first, but then gave her a sharp-toothed grin filled with pink frosting, making her laugh. *I’m surprised he wasn’t always like this.* Ibara began walking away again, and then took one more look at her boyfriend. Too her surprise, she saw someone else and had to do a double-take. It looked like an older, scruffier Tetsutetsu was sat on the headstone. Ibara blinked a few times, but when she focused her sight again, the man was gone. *…Must’ve been my imagination.*
Shinso trudged through the halls of the Gen Ed dorm with his head down, eyes half-closed and arms hanging limply. His wobbling legs were barely supporting him as he went upstairs, aching for his bed. Anyone who didn’t know where he’d been all day would likely assume he was a dead man walking. Those who did, however, could tell he’d been training with Eraserhead all day once again. His classmates were definitely proud and a little jealous of Shinso after he’d been approached by the pro for personal training, but after seeing him in this state time and again, the envy faded quickly.

Shinso reached his door, thankful he didn’t pass out in the common room as soon as he walked in, and unlocked it. Once inside, he tossed his backpack aside and immediately fell into his bed facedown. The girl sitting cross-legged on it watched him silently before nudging him on the shoulder. “You dead?”

“Not yet, Rei. You’re still stuck with me.”

“Dang. Just in case, I call dibs on your PlayStation if you croak.” Reiko unpause and continued playing her boyfriend’s game, now leaning back to cuddle with him. Shinso barely moved, but the lack of heavy breathing told Reiko he was still awake. “Eraser’s really pushing you, huh?”

“Yup,” he murmured. “I promised to give it everything I have, so… yawn… that’s what I’m doing.” Reiko paused her game again and scooted back on the bed, placing Shinso’s head on her lap and running her fingers through his hair.

“I wish you’d let me help you out.”

“I told you, Rei. I wanna do this on my own merits.”

“Fine. Don’t let your awesome, heroic girlfriend help. Real smart, Shinso.”

“I’ve already got a villainous Quirk made for cheap wins, Rei,” Shinso told her. “Let me keep the small bit of pride I have left. I can make it without getting help from anyone but Eraserhead.”

“It’s not villainous,” Reiko told him, “but if you really don’t want me to help you, I’ll drop it. How’d today go?”

“He says I’m getting better with the Capture Scarf.” Shinso reported while nuzzling his head into Reiko’s stomach, almost like a cat. “I’ve also been working with these ‘artificial vocal cords’ that let me copy people’s voices. In terms of combat, he’s been teaching me how to jump around like he does.”

“Nice. Sounds like you really are becoming the Eraserhead Baby outside of just your looks.”

“Oh my god, Rei, I’m already dead inside. Stop killing me.”
“I’m just sayin’,” Reiko replied, letting a chuckle escape from her lips. After a minute of silence, Shinso’s breathing slowed, signaling to Reiko that he was asleep. *He’s really working himself to the bone to catch up with us,* she noted. *Maybe I should ask Eraserhead to let me assist with his training. If he says it’s fine, I doubt Shinso would complain too much.*

A few days later, Shinso went to the campus, which was mostly empty for the weekend, for his training. From what Eraserhead had told him, he’d be practicing with his new gear to rescue a hostage from multiple villains. After picking up his gear from the tech office, he went out to Training Ground Beta where he found Eraserhead along with several others. “What’s with the crowd?” he asked.

“I needed faux villains for you to face and a hostage for you to rescue,” Eraserhead told him. “It was Yanagi’s idea.” Just behind him, Shinso saw Reiko in a business woman costume giving him a thumbs-up.

“It’s technically not helping you. I’m just a prop in the scenario,” she claimed. By her side was Midoriya, who was practicing his “tough guy” look, and Togata, who was doing the same while holding Eri in his arms.

“I heard rumors, but I didn’t know you were really getting tutored by Mr. Aizawa,” Midoriya said to Shinso. “I’m glad I could help you like this, Shinso.”

“Hey, what’s up?” Togata greeted. “I’m Mirio Togata. Eri mentioned you before, but it’s great to put a face to the name.”

“Hi, Toshi,” Eri said with a tiny wave.

“No offense, but I think I could take Eri in a fight,” Shinso joked.

“Don’t get smart,” Eraserhead told him. “Now, here’s the scenario: you’ve come across a robbery gone south. Three villains – Midoriya, Togata, and I – will be inside, and one of us will have a hostage.”

“That’s me,” Reiko announced dryly.

“Midoriya will have free use of his Quirk, but Togata and I will have guns on us. They’re just paintballs, but if you, the hostage, or one of us are hit, you fail.”

“So, I’ll have to fight you?” Shinso asked.

“Getting scared?”

“Not a chance. Let’s do this.”

Once everyone was in place inside the building, Shinso finished his preparations and stood outside, ready to begin. “Ready when you are,” he said into his earpiece. “By the way, where’d you put Eri?”

“She’s in the security room. That means she’s connected to this channel to in case of emergency.”

“Good luck, Toshi,” Shinso heard Eri say.

“…Or in case she wants to cheer you on,” Eraserhead continued. “Training starts now. You have
“Right.” Shinso clicked off his radio and stepped inside to begin. *I don’t know where they are, but there’s only three floors to check. I’ll have to tread carefully and make sure no one spots me.* He began his search by creeping through the mock office on the first floor, coming across a room full of cubicles. He ducked into one and crouched down to stay hidden, listening up for any sign of an opponent. After a few moments, he heard footsteps coming from across the room and peeked out. It was Togata, who was looking the opposite way. Shinso took this opportunity to silently inch closer, but had to duck into hiding again when Togata began to turn around.

“You here?” Togata asked aloud. Shinso could hear the click of his paintball gun cocking and Togata began walking his way. Shinso ducked under the cubicle’s desk and prepared his Capture Scarf, waiting for Togata to come into view. Once he did, Shinso flung out his scarf and grabbed his gun, pulling it into his hands.

“Got you,” Shinso told him. Togata smirked at the comment and threw a punch at Shinso that he just barely dodged. He flipped onto the desk and then sprang backwards, but Togata was following close behind with his fist cocked. “Don’t get too cocky. I may just outdo you.” Despite Shinso’s prodding, Togata wasn’t responding. He threw another punch at Shinso and made contact, throwing him across the room and making him crash into a cubicle.

Damn, that hurt, Shinso thought while holding his stomach. *I can’t beat him head on, and he’s not falling for my comments. I’ll have to use... that technique.* Once Shinso was back on his feet, he saw Togata stalking towards him. Despite his reluctance, he knew he was low on options, so he cleared his throat and resolved to use his trump card. “A-A man walks into a bar with a slab of asphalt under his arm…” Togata paused his preparing an attack in confusion, not sure what Shinso was doing. “He said ‘A beer please, and one for the road!’”

After a beat, Togata’s face scrunched into a grin and he snorted, but kept his laughter contained. Shinso was mortified by his tactic, but needed to press on. “A jumper cable walks into a bar. The bartender says ‘I’ll serve you, but don’t start anything!’” Togata was using all of his will to hold in his laughter, but wasn’t giving in to Shinso just yet. “Two cannibals are eating a clown. One says to the other ‘Does this taste funny to you?!’”

“BWAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!” Togata finally fell apart into laughter at Shinso’s feet, giving the Gen Ed student a chance to activate his Quirk. With his opponent finally immobilized, Shinso took out a roll of capture tape and wrapped it around him, taking him out of play. “Woah-ho, that was smart,” Togata commented once Shinso undid his brainwashing. “I see why Eraserhead took interest in you.” Shinso ignored the compliment and tucked Togata’s confiscated paintball gun into the back of his pants, hiding it in case it was needed. “You’re pretty funny too. Mind if I use those jokes?”

“By all means,” Shinso told him, ready to escape the conversation his overly-cheerful senior. He walked back to the entrance to go upstairs, but had to stop when he heard someone coming. Once he hid, he saw Midoriya coming downstairs and looking around.

“Togata, did you see him? I heard a commotion.” With Midoriya’s Quirk activated, Shinso knew he didn’t stand a chance in a physical confrontation.

He already knows the details of my Quirk, Shinso realized. *I’ve got Togata’s voice stored in Persona Code, but Eraserhead may have told him about that too. I need to make sure he thinks that it’s Togata speaking.* In the middle of his planning, Midoriya turned the corner and saw Shinso peeking out at him. He lunged at him with his fist pulled back, and Shinso responded by jumping back and activating his Capture Scarf. Midoriya threw a punch into the air between them, which created a blast of air pressure that blew Shinso back.
Thinking quickly, he used his Capture Scarf and grabbed a pillar with it, slowing his stop. The strain on his arms was painful, but Shinso was able to work out his momentum and avoid serious damage. Midoriya was chasing him down, however, so Shinso ran out of sight and dipped into a small office nearby. Once there, he pulled out Togata’s paintball gun and fired it a few times into the wall. With that done, he pulled up his special mask and flipped a switch before facing out into the hall.

“Yo, Midoriya! I got him!” With Persona Code activated, his voice came out sounding exactly like Togata’s.

“Togata? Where those shots from you?” Midoriya asked. Shinso smirked under his mask and activated his Quirk.

“Like taking candy from a baby.”

“Looks like Midoriya and Togata are out of the game,” Eraserhead noted as he checked his phone, which was connected to the building’s security system. “Much quicker than I expected, but it sounded like they all made a mess downstairs. A villain in my place would be jumpy and nervous by now.”

“Should we start then?” Reiko asked. For her hostage role, her arms had been bound to her sides and a white cloth was loosely tied over her face.

“Guess so,” the pro responded. He pulled out a paintball pistol from his belt and held it to Reiko’s head while wrapping the other around her torso. “Be sure to make noise and struggle; especially if he gets you away from me. Nervous hostages can be hard to handle.”

“Sure thing. Ready when you are.”

“Geez, those two can really talk your ear off,” Shinso commented. Midoriya and Togata had only complimented him briefly once they were out of the game, but to Shinso, this was still too chatty. Once he ascended the stairs to the third floor, he noticed an opening in the roof panels. Must be some ducts to crawl through. Knowing that his mentor would see him coming from a mile away, Shinso decided to take this alternate route and climbed up into the ducts. Only moments after he was completely inside the roof, he heard someone stomping down the hall.

“I know you’re out there, hero!” Eraserhead’s voice sounded strange outside of its monotone, but Shinso was more put off by Reiko’s whimpering and muffled cries for help.

I didn’t know she could emote that much, he thought.

“Show yourself or my hostage is getting a skull full of lead!”

“Hllmmf!” Shinso slid closer to the opening he got into the ducts from and looked down at his mentor and girlfriend.

I can’t rely on Persona Code for this. He definitely knows the others are out of the game. Once he heard the pro hero going down another hall, Shinso silently lowered himself and looked around the corner. Eraserhead was looking around anxiously and his paintball gun was jittering next to Reiko’s head. I need to disarm him first. Then, I’ll grab Rei and run. Getting the hostage out is higher
Once Eraserhead had his back completely turned to Shinso, the purple-haired student took action. He flung his scarf out and snatched the pistol from Eraserhead’s hand, surprising the pro. As he yanked the gun into his grasp, he ran to Reiko’s other side and hooked his free arm around her torso, pulling her out of the pro’s hold before it could tighten. Shinso thought he could run fast enough to get away, but Reiko’s struggling slowed him so that Eraserhead caught up almost immediately. He kicked Shinso in the stomach, making him crash land down the hall near a ledge that looked over the second floor. Shinso had wisely turned in the air so the ‘hostage’ wouldn’t be hurt, but the gun had fallen away and ended up back in Eraserhead’s hands.

“Die!” Before the pro could shoot, Shinso pushed off the ground and went over the ledge, plummeting towards down to the level below. Eraserhead went to the ledge and aimed down at him, but Shinso used his Capture Scarf to hook onto the railing and swing into the hallway below his opponent.

“That was way too close,” he commented under his breath. Shinso knew the exit was in the opposite direction, but hearing Eraserhead running down the stairs told him it was too late to change directions. With the situation somewhat calmer, he also took notice of Reiko’s melodramatic mumbling and struggling. “Y-You’re safe now, ma’am… Rei, you can stop now.”

“Eraser said to keep making noise even if you got me away,” she told him calmly. Shinso was surprised her muffled speaking had been acting as well, but refocused once he heard Eraserhead’s footsteps reach his level. “He did say I can give you 10 seconds of silence if you asked. Now… MMF! Mmmgmmfff!” Shinso knew Reiko’s crying would guide Eraserhead to his location, but now that he had a moment to think, a plan formulated in his mind. He ducked into an office and put his Persona Code mask on while setting Reiko down.

“OK, ma’am, I need you to be quiet please.” Reiko followed his instructions and stopped her fake crying, but Eraserhead was already hot on his trail. “Let’s see if he falls for this,” he said before switching his mask on. “Mr. Hero, where did you go?” he yelled shakily in Reiko’s voice. “Where are you? Please, I-I’m scared!” Eraserhead’s running slowed to a walk once Shinso’s disguised voice reached him.

“…Did you really abandon the hostage?” he shouted. “Shinso, that’s an automatic fail—” Before he could finish, Shinso activated his Quirk, trapping Eraserhead in his mind control.

“I can’t believe that worked,” Shinso admitted. “That’s some smart thinking.”

“I didn’t even think of copying my voice,” Reiko admitted. “That’s some smart thinking.”

“Thanks.” Once Shinso was done with Reiko, he stepped out to the hall and wrapped his capture tape around Eraserhead before releasing his Quirk. Once it was undone, the pro looked down at him with his usual neutral expression. “So? How’d I do?”

“…Too many close calls to call it a victory,” Eraserhead told him flatly, “but you didn’t lose. Copying Yanagi’s voice was also clever, though it probably wouldn’t work in a real situation.”

“Probably.”

“Still, you’ve come a long way.” Eraserhead’s features seemed to soften for a moment before returning to their usual dull form. “Now that we’re done here, we’ll go train with the Capture Scarf more.”
“Hold on,” Reiko interrupted. “The situation’s not over yet.” Shinso and Eraserhead both looked at her confusedly, so she activated her Quirk and floated into Shinso’s arms. “You’re supposed to carry the hostage outside.” The brainwashing student’s eyes went wide for a moment, but he relented quickly while forcing a blush back.

“Fine,” he responded bashfully and carrying her away.

“…Someone’s got his first fan,” Eraserhead teased.

“Shut up,” Shinso groaned while Reiko’s mouth formed a smirk.

“Oh Shinso, you’re my hero.”

“Can it, Rei.”

“Nope.”
“Alright, listen up!” Fukidashi called out, bringing the table of people to a silence. “It’s been a long
time coming, but welcome to the last session for the ‘Fukidashi Cinematic Universe’ campaign.”

“How the fuck is this gonna work?” Awase asked. “There’s 19 players.”

“We’ll see soon enough. You only have one enemy.”

“Also, what’s going on over there?” Awase motioned across the room where the silhouettes of
Bondo and Hatsume were ducking in and out of a room corner hidden by strung-up sheets with
tools, paint, and wires.

“You’ll see ;D.”

“I need more blue paint!” Hatsume yelped as Bondo handed off supplies and slipped behind the
sheets.

“God, it’s been so long. I barely remember anything,” Rin admitted. “What was I again? A
reptilian?”


“I don’t even remember my character’s name,” Setsuna interrupted. “Was it, like, Vincent?”

“Vodette. Now, let’s—”

“I don’t remember my name ether,” Kendo added. “Was I a princess or am I remembering wrong?”
Everyone else at the table started murmuring about having no memory of the game either, making
Fukidashi sigh.

“OK, OK, how do you want to fix this?”

“I have a suggestion,” Kaibara said. “Since there’s so many of us here and our memories of this are
spotty, let’s just use our regular names.”

“…If you want to take away ALL the immersion just to simplify things—”

“Yes,” the class chorused.

“Fine,” Fukidashi huffed. “Don’t blame me if you suddenly don’t care about this fantasy world.”

“Just do the recap,” Kuroiro told him. Fukidashi gave him a >:C face, but relented and began to
speak again.

“When we left off, Shinso’s character had united the three groups for the same goal of defeating a
shadowy group, who you’ve all learned were called The Gray Hands. Your missions have been
successful in defeated The Gatekeeper, The Mistress, and The Keymaker, but the leader still
remains. Now, with the holy weapon God’s Warhammer in your possession, you’ve convened in
the capital city to defeat the leader before his plan to call forth a Chaos God is put into motion.”

“…None of that sounds familiar,” Monoma said.

“Just shut up and role-play. Now…”
In the smoking ruins of the capital city, 19 heroes sat in a circle to see what their de facto leader had to show. “Now that the minions are taken care of and the city is evacuated,” Shinso began, “it’s time to bring out our secret weapon.”

“We couldn’t have taken it out to kill that fucking dragon?” Kaibara complained.

“I finally saw one,” Setsuna wept. “Best day ever.”

“This thing’s only got enough magic power for one fight,” Awase told them. “At least, that’s what the mechanist told us.”

“She was weird,” Pony commented.

“Sorry, Hatsume.”

“It’s cool!” the pink haired inventor replied from behind the sheet. “I am what I am!”

“Just bust it open,” Monoma requested. “Let’s see this puppy.”

“If you insist.” Shinso undid the case’s lock and slowly opened it, letting out an ethereal light that made him shield his eyes. He flipped the case fully open, and once everyone’s eyes adjusted to the light, they looked. Inside was a rectangular hammer with a short handle, inscribed with bright white Runes.

“Hot damn,” Monoma sighed. “Now that’s something to steal— I mean… no, that was right. I’d steal that shit.”

“But it’s already ours,” Shoda told him.

“Tell that to my throbbing erec—”

“Silence!” Ibara demanded. “Do not utter such indecencies in the presence of a holy woman!”

“…I can’t tell if she’s roleplaying or not,” Tsuburaba admitted. Kaibara shrugged at this. Awase had to hold in a laugh.

“OK, big question time,” Honenuki interrupted. “Who gets to wield it?” Shinso chuckled at the question, as did Monoma and a few others.

“Obviously me,” several people responded.

“OK, I’m the one who told you to get it,” Shinso argued. “I’ve been leading this shitshow, so it’s mine to wield.”

“You’re a psionic. You don’t use weapons,” Awase pointed out. “I’m the weapon’s expert, so I should use it.”

“As a cleric, I’m most suited for the use of a holy weapon,” Ibara claimed. “I already have the power of god on my side.”

“Doesn’t that mean Shoda can too since he’s a paladin?” Kinoko asked.
“I don’t want that responsibility,” Shoda gulped. “Everyone please ignore me.”

“Well, if no one wants, it I’ll take it off the group’s hands.” Monoma casually reached out and grabbed the hammer, but Shinso’s hand gripped the handle just as it left the case.

“If I’m not getting it, there’s no way you’re having it.”

“So you concede,” Monoma responded, hearing only what he wants to hear.

“Y’know, I should really be the one to take it,” Honenuki claimed as he gripped the top of the hammer. “I’m a paladin and a leader.”

“I led that team,” Shinso declared.

“You were the absentee father at best,” Tsuburaba claimed. “I led that group before you, so—”

“I was the leader,” Kaibara interjected.

“Actually, I was,” Honenuki told them.

“I led my own team uncontested,” Pony stated, “so I should be the wielder.”

“You got that job through rock-paper-scissors,” Kamakiri pointed out, making Pony pout.

“I still did a good job.”

“You did, Pony,” Ibara told her, “but I still think I should use God’s Warhammer.”

“Wait, I wanna!” Tetsutetsu yelled from the back of the crowd. “I’m the best at smashing!”

“This is going nowhere,” Kuroiro complained.

“It’s mine!” Monoma shouted as he tugged on the handle, barely budging it.

“Hell no!” Pony barked as she grabbed for it.

“I’m using the hammer!” Shinso yelled. Almost every single adventurer started grabbing for the weapon at that point, trying to find some space on it to grip.

“Everyone, please stop!” Shishida begged from the sidelines. “Fighting amongst ourselves will get us nowhere.”

“Guys, cut it out!” Reiko commanded. No one listened and the childish grab for the weapon continued on. After a while of yelling at each other over who gets the hammer, a rumble made the bickering pause.

“What was that?” Setsuna asked.

“Yui? What’s up?” Rin asked. The shaking had come when the goliath girl stomped her foot on the ground, now staring at the group with a disappointed face.

“Stop,” she told them. “You’re acting like babies.”

“Well, how are we gonna decide who gets the hammer?” Monoma asked while making a sly grab for the handle which was slapped away by Kuroiro. “Whoever gets it is basically the main character here.” Yui didn’t speak her answer, only gesturing to the figure on her right.
“Kendo gets it,” Yui declared. Kendo looked back and forth between her tall friend and the hammer and then nodded.

“Yeah, it’s mine,” she confirmed. “I’m the disposed princess here, so I’m the main character. Hammer’s mine.”

“…Y’know, that’s fair,” Tetsutetsu relented. “I’ll back off.” Slowly but surely, everyone took their hands off the weapon and backed away until only Shinso was holding on.

“It would be better suited for you.” He stepped forward and gave the glowing hammer to Kendo, who graciously accepted it.

“Looks like we have our main character,” Monoma said as he sidled up to Kendo’s side. “Congratulations, princess. How about a hug?”

“You’re gonna try to steal it if I accept,” she correctly guessed. Monoma raised his finger as if he was going to speak, but no excuse came out. “That’s what I thought. Now, let’s find the evil motherfucker that’s been summoning demons, controlling dragons, and is trying to bring forth a Chaos God, and let’s kick his ass.”

The group have a resounding chorus of “Yeah!” at Kendo’s call, but before they could move out, the ground began to shake under their feet. It wasn’t just the ground, though. It felt as if the entire world around them was being rattled apart.

“OH FUCK!” Shinso yelled in a surprising moment of emotion.

“What’s happening?” Shoda asked.

“We were too late,” he shakily told everyone. “He must’ve completed the ceremony long before we arrived.” As Shinso spoke, the sky began to change color at an alarming pace. The shining mid-day sun and its bright blue background were clouded by a mixture of purple and black that inked the world in darkness. A sickening scar of light appeared across the sky, making it seem like the universe was being torn before everyone’s eyes. “It’s here.”

“Spooky,” Kinoko commented while scooching closer to Shoda. The dorm’s lights had been turned off, letting Fukidashi put on an LED that bathed the room in a purple light that phased back and forth to blue and black slowly. Bondo and Hatsume had come out from behind the sheet and were positioned to pull it down.

“From the rip in the sky, you see pulsating blackness,” Fukidashi monologued. “This blackness flooded into your realm, almost as if the sky itself was being absorbed. Once more of this darkness invade, you begin to make out its end. It seemed to be somewhat serpentine in shape, but fatter, almost like a blue whale. Along its massive body are tendrils with claws at the ends. It’s a long while before you finally see its head, which features many mouths, containing spiraling maws of teeth. Just looking upon its form makes you feel insanity creep closer.”

“This is fucking awesome,” Kuroiro commented.

“Finally, the rip in the sky closes, and the Chaos God is hung in the sky above.” Stopping his monologue, Fukidashi motioned to Bondo and Hatsume. Everyone turned to the pair and watched them ripped down the sheet, revealing the statue they had been building. “Ladies and gentlemen, Orathitor!” It was about as tall as Bondo, maybe taller, and was decked out with pulsing light and a voicebox to simulate its roar. The tendrils and claws that were described were moving around as well, making the statue really seem alive. “Keep in mind, this is about to scale compared to your
pieces.”

“It’s that fucking big?” Awase asked, to which Fukidashi nodded.

“We’ve got this,” Setsuna declared. She picked up her game piece and tossed it at the monster stature in the corner, which it uselessly clinked off of onto the floor. “…Never mind.”

“Well fuck,” Monoma complained. “Anyone have any bright ideas?”

“…Punch it,” Tetsutetsu suggested.

“Stab it,” Kamakiri added.

“Punch it AND stab it,” Pony proposed with a proud smile.

“Those’ll have to do,” Kendo interrupted while lugging the hammer over her shoulder. “We’re not giving up here. So what if it’s a Chaos God?”

“Yeah, who gives a fuck?” Awase asked. “We’re gonna die if we do nothing, so let’s die doing something!”

“Agreed,” Shinso said. “It’s 19 against one. We’ve got the upper hand in one way at least.”

“I guess we’re doing this,” Monoma sighed. “I wonder if this thing has anything cool to steal.”

“Alright then,” Kendo began while holding out her Warhammer. “Everyone, what’s our motto?”

“Fight for survival!” the group chanted back to her.

“That’s right! ‘Let’s not die’ on three, guys. One… two… three!”

“LET’S NOT DIE!”
“LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! It’s a beautiful day out here in the U.A. stadium! For all you sports fans out there, get ready for a heart-pounding thrill ride as Class 1-A and Class 1-B take each other on! Their game of choice? Quirkball! …Man, this is way more satisfying when there’s a crowd.” Once Present Mic’s voice stopped echoing through the mostly empty stadium, 9 students from two sides walked the home plate of the field’s temporary baseball diamond. Waiting for them was All Might, who was wearing umpire gear and reading a rulebook.

“OK, are we ready?” he asked, trying to get a rise of enthusiasm from the students.

“You’re all gonna die,” Bakugo growled at the 1-B team.

“Mind your sportsmanship,” All Might told him. “Alright, the game is Quirkball – Baseball, but you may use your Quirks. The normal rules of Baseball still apply, but there are a few extra related to Quirk usage. The main two are these – you may only activate them while the ball is in play, and you may not directly attack someone else. I trust you know the normal rules, so let’s get started. Team captains, shake hands.”

“I look forward to a fun and friendly game, Miss Kendo!” Iida exclaimed. The line-up of 1-A’s team included himself, Bakugo, Midoriya, Kirishima, Uraraka, Mina, Ojiro, Shouji, and Kaminari.

“Same here,” Kendo responded. The 1-B team’s line-up featured herself, Pony, Rin, Tetsutetsu, Monoma, Tsuburaba, Awase, Shishida, and Kaibara.

“Team B, head to the outfield,” All Might instructed. “Team A, return to your dugout and send out a batter.” As the teams took their places, the remaining students in each class in the stands perked up to watch the game begin.

“Woo-hoo! Go, 1-A!” Standing on the edge of the stands, Hagakure was bouncing around in a cheerleader uniform, trying to pump up her classmates. “Take it to ‘em!”

“Fight on, ribbit!” Tsuyu cheered at her side.

“I can’t believe you made those again,” Jiro murmured to Yaoyorozu while watching her friends cheer.

“Well, it’s not like they’re being tricked into wearing them this time,” she replied.

“And what about those two?” Jiro asked, looking over at the two 1-B girls in the same outfit.

“Well, they asked so nicely,” Yaoyorozu answered sheepishly.

“Let’s go, 1-B!” Setsuna yelled, flailing her pom-poms madly. “Reiko, gimme a one!”

“I’m dead inside,” she dryly replied, standing perfectly still.

“Gimme a B!”

“I can’t believe you tricked me into this.”

“What does that spell?!”

“Nothing. It a single number and letter.”
“Woooooo!” Behind the cheerleaders, the remaining students from both classes sat together, trying to mingle in a friendlier way than they were used to.

“What a mad banquet of darkness,” Tokoyami postulated.

“You have a weird vocabulary, dude,” Kuroiro told him. Just behind them, Honenuki sat with Todoroki, who pulled an All Might-themed foam finger out of his bag.

“Hey, that’s a collector’s item, isn’t it?” Honenuki asked. “Can I see it for a second?”

“Sure. I brought a spare.” Todoroki handed him the foam finger and pulled out another from his bag – an Endeavor-themed one with #2 written on it – that he slid onto his left hand. “Woo.”

Out on the field, the game finally begun when Iida came to the plate. Behind him was Tetsutetsu as the catcher, and the pitcher he faced was Awase. Around the diamond was Monoma at third base, Kendo at shortstop, Kaibara at second base, and Rin at first, and in the outfield was Shishida, Tsuburaba, and Pony.

“Hope you’re ready,” Awase said while adjusting his headband. “I’m gonna put a little spin behind this.”

“I’m ready when you are!” Iida yelled back. After grinding the ball into his hip, Awase reeled back and hurled it towards home plate. Iida swung his bat in a perfect arc, almost robotic in his accuracy, but due to the spin Awase put on his pitch, the ball didn’t go any higher. Instead, it was hit straight into Awase’s forehead, flooring him.

“…Man down!” Kendo called out.

“Wait, the ball’s still in play!” Monoma yelled, pointing up at the ball spinning in the air above Awase. As Iida fired off his leg engines and zoomed through first base, Rin transformed his back to grow his draconic wings and flew into the sky to claim the ball.

“Out!” All Might called once the ball was in Rin’s mitt. Iida, who had nearly made it to third base by then, stopped rigidly and sighed before lugging himself back to his team’s dugout.

“Nice one!” Kendo complimented as she approached the pitcher’s mound to check on Awase. “Hey, are you—”

“I’m up!” Awase yelped as he popped back to his feet, startling Kendo. “My headband protected me!”

“You sure? How many fingers am I—”

“Three!” he guessed before Kendo could put her hand up.

“It’s not a guessing ga—”

“Four. No, six!”

“He seems fine!” Monoma said from across the field. Kendo sighed and gave Awase a pat on the shoulder before returning to her position.

“Play ball!” All Might called as Bakugo came up to bat. He smirked as he squatted down and prepared the bat, but then stood up straight and held out his bat to call his shot.

“He’s calling his shot already?” Kaibara asked.
“Strike him out, Awase!” Monoma cheered. Bakugo got ready to bat again and Awase hurled the ball at him. Instead of flying into Tetsutetsu’s glove, Bakugo made contact and the ball was knocked far over everyone’s heads.

“Oh fuck!” Tetsutetsu yelled as the ball went over the outfield. Bakugo had seemingly hit a homerun and looked very prideful over it, but just as it was about to leave the arena, it came to a sudden stop in mid-air. “Hey, Tsuburaba got it!”

“HUH?!” Bakugo screamed. The ball bounced back off the high-up solid air wall made by Tsuburaba and fell into his glove below.

“You’re out!” All Might called. Bakugo threw his bat to the ground and stomped back to the dugout in a huff.

“Ooooh, we got a tantrum, folks!” Setsuna declared. “Someone get his momma, ‘cause this toddler’s rampaging!”

“What’d you say?! I DARE YOU TO COME DOWN HERE AND SAY THAT!” Bakugo’s threat was met by Setsuna popping off her hand and throwing it over to Bakugo, where it landed with the middle finger up.

“How’s that?” she asked while striking a sassy pose. Kirishima had to come out of the dugout and drag Bakugo back with him while Midoriya came out to bat.

“Let’s go, let’s go!” Monoma cheered, excited by how well his class was doing. “Baseball, yes! Do the sports! Gameplay!”

“You barely know the rules, don’t you?” Kendo asked him.

“Maybe, but crushing our rivals like this is a chance I couldn’t pass up. Strike him out, Awase!”

“Yeah!” Awase responded while grinding the ball into his hip. Across the field, he could see green sparks coming from Midoriya, signaling that his super strength Quirk had activated. “Here we go.” Awase pulled his arm back and pitched it straight down the middle, and Midoriya was able to get a dead-on swing. With his strength, the ball went flying forward sat an amazing speed, but it’s low angle meant it was in reach for anyone daring enough to catch it.

“Got it!” Kendo announced. Her ungloved hand grew to its maximum size and she wrapped it around the ball, but the force behind it was enough to pull her off her feet and keep going. “WOAH FUCK!”

“There she goes,” Kaibara droned at second base while Monoma gawked in disbelief. Kendo kept a grip on the ball as she was pulled into the outfield towards Shishida. Her hairy classmate ran into her path and pushed back against her hand to slow the momentum, which led to a painful but thankfully slower crash.

“You’re out!”

“DAMMIT, DEKU!” Bakugo yelled from the sidelines. With three outs, the inning was over and the Class 1-B players went to their dugout.

“Nice work out there,” Kendo complimented while rubbing her shoulder. “Let’s use this chance to take the lead.”

“They don’t even know how good our secret weapon is,” Monoma postulated while patting Pony on
the back. “With her, we’ve got this in the bag.”

“You’re right!” Tsuburaba agreed. “Pony’s half-American! Baseball’s in her blood!”

“I’ll get us started,” Kendo stated as she grabbed a bat. “Get ready to send me to Home Plate, Pony.”

“You got it!” Kendo went out to the home plate where Kirishima was putting on the catcher’s gear. In the field, she saw Bakugo on the pitcher’s mound, Ojiro at first base, Mina at second base, Midoriya as the shortstop, Kaminari at third base, and Iida, Uraraka, and Shouji in the outfield.

“Play Ball!” On All Might’s signal, Kendo raised her bat and grew her hand size to increase the strength of her swing.

“Uuh, you’re kinda blocking the bat,” Kirishima pointed out, making Kendo realize her hands completely enveloped her bat.

“Whoops,” Kendo awkwardly said while shrinking them back down. Once she was ready, Bakugo clenched his teeth and pulled his arm back.

“DIE!” he screamed as he let an explosion out of his palm to make the ball go faster. Unfortunately, the burst made the ball swerve from its path and rocket into Kendo’s helmet, knocking her off her feet.

“Are you OK?” All Might and Kirishima asked.

“Fuck, that hurt!” Kendo growled while sitting up.

“Well… if you can play, then take your base.”

“Yeah, I’ll be fine,” she told them while removing the batting helmet and walking to first base. “Dick!” she spat at Bakugo while still rubbing her head.

“Bakugo, just pitch the ball normally,’ Mina suggested from behind the pitcher’s mound.

“Shut up! I know the problem, so it won’t happen again! I need a stronger explosion so it keeps going straight!”

"Are you sure it won’t just swerve even more?” Kaminari asked nervously. “Don’t kill anyone, OK?”

“Don’t tell me what to do!” Bakugo growled as he caught the ball thrown by Kirishima. Once Pony was set at home plate, he pitched the ball again, this time using an extremely powerful explosion. True to his word, the ball went straight into Kirishima’s glove, but the strength behind it threw Kirishima back at least 10 feet. Pony wasn’t sure what had happened, and All Might was just barely able to dodge before going to check on Kirishima.

“I’m OK,” Kirishima said woozily.

“Uuuhh… ball one?” All might called, making Bakugo grit his teeth even more.

“How about we switch him out?” Mina suggested.

“Agreed!” Iida said as he came infield. “Bakugo, as team captain, I’m switching you out. Trade positions with Midoriya.”
“You’re replacing me with DEKU?!?” Bakugo screamed in disbelief.

“OOHH, IT’S TANTRUM ROUND 2, FOLKS!” he heard Setsuna yell from the sidelines. “Get your earplugs ready, ‘cause this baby’s gonna be cryin’ for a while!”

“I can eject you from the game completely, if you’d rather,’ Iida warned. Bakugo grumbled in rage, but relented and changed positions with his green-haired rival.

“Play ball!” With the game continuing, Rin was next up at bat and facing down a fresh pitcher.

“Go, baby!” Setsuna cheered. “Hit a home run!” Midoriya could be seen with green sparks around him again, but seemed to be controlling the strength to maintain his precision. Once he pitched, it came toward Kirishima’s glove with crazy speed, but to Rin’s surprise, he was able to make contact and hit a ground ball. “Nice one, baby!” Rin took off in a sprint for first base, trying to outrun the ball before someone could grab it. It rolled past third base, where Kaminari grabbed it and lugged it across the diamond to Ojiro, who wore his catching glove at the tip of his tail. With the extra length, the ball reached his glove just before Rin cross the plate, meaning he was out. Ojiro then whipped his tail to toss the ball to Mina at second plate so she could get Kendo out, but the ginger girl slid her leg under Mina and touched second base just in time.

“You’re out!” All Might told Rin. “Kendo is safe!”

“Nice one, Ojiro!” Hagakure applauded. “Put that tail to work!” Once Rin made it back to the dugout, Tetsutetsu went out to home plate and puffed out his chest.

“Gimme your best shot!” he challenged while activating his Quirk, turning his skin to metal. Midoriya activated his own in turn and pulled back his arm to pitch. Once the ball was pitched, Tetsutetsu swung with all his might and hit it, but the angle made it pop up and to the left towards the stands.

“Duck!” Setsuna yelped. Everyone the crowd ducked down as the ball descended towards them, where it bounced off of Ibara’s head.

“You OK, Ibara?” Honenuki asked.

“Of course. Jesus is my helmet,” she claimed as a trickle of blood went down her face.

“Sorry!” Tetsutetsu yelled. Once Midoriya got the ball back, the game continued and he pitched again. Tetsutetsu swung and made contact again this time, sending the ball far into the outfield.

“I’ve got it!” Iida whirred his engines and made a run to grab the ball, but it flew right over his glove when he tried to catch it. Shouji used his Quirk to grow a long string of extra arms, but he was too slow and the ball went by him too. Once the ball hit the ground, Uraraka was able to make a successful grab, having used her Quirk to cancel out her gravitational pull.

“Here it comes, you guys!” She threw the ball back down the field, aiming for Kirishima as Kendo rounded third base. Despite using her Quirk to make the ball weightless, Kendo was able to cross home plate and score the first point of the game while Tetsutetsu stopped at second base.

“Alright!” Monoma applauded. “First point of the game and it’s ours!”

After a long and grueling afternoon, the final inning was underway with a tied score of 6-6. The bases were full as Pony waited at third base to run to home, backed by Rin at second and Tetsutetsu at first. With two outs, Monoma, the final batter, prepared himself to try and finish off the game.
“You got this,” Tsuburaba told him. “If Pony crosses that plate, we win.”

“You can count on me,” Monoma told his teammates. “I’ve got a secret weapon in store just for this.”

“A secret weapon? Like what?” Kendo asked.

“It’s a secret weapon for a reason, my dear.”

“…OK, I know we’re dating, but don’t call me ‘my dear,’” Kendo instructed. “You sound like a spy movie villain and it’s creepy.”

“Just watch,” Monoma told her while quickly leaving the dugout. As he sauntered up to home plate, he saw meeting at the pitcher’s mound between Midoriya, Iida, and Bakugo finishing up. Iida then left to return to the outfield, but Bakugo was the one to stay at the pitcher’s mound while Midoriya claimed the shortstop position. I guess Bakugo’s figured out how to pitch with his explosions more reliably, Monoma realized. That or he’s confident he can strike me out without his Quirk. Either way, I’ve got this in the bag.

Monoma slipped the helmet over his head and gripped his bat tightly, waiting for the pitch to be thrown. Once Bakugo began to wind up, he called upon the Quirk he had been able to copy not long ago – Midoriya’s. Don’t put too much into it, he told himself. It’s a pretty finicky one that may break my bones if I’m not careful. The copycat felt his muscles tingle as he let bits of power leak into them. If I can hit the ball, it’ll definitely be a home run. I’ll end this game in style.

Across the diamond, Bakugo finally hurled the ball forward and let off an explosion just as it left his palm. It flew ahead at insane speed, but Monoma was able to begin his swing in time. Everyone waited with bated breath to see if the bat would connect, but they all realized the ball was swerving. The explosion had sent the ball careening into Monoma’s groin, obliterating his protective cup and impacting the sensitive area underneath. After a moment of stillness, Monoma fell on his side and let out a drawn-out wheeze of pain, almost like a deflating balloon. Bakugo, on the other hand, fell to his knees in a crazed fit of laughter.

“Hey, we won!” Tsuburaba yelled from the dugout. “Monoma gets to got to first base now, and since the bases are full, Pony goes to home plate!”

“He’s right! We win!” Awase realized. The 1-B students in the crowd began to applaud and cheer in victory while the players convened at home plate.

“I doubt that was your secret weapon, but good job anyway,” Kendo complimented.

“We won, Monoma! How you feeling?” Pony asked. Monoma let out another wheeze of pain, but still gave a thumbs-up. Across from them, Bakugo finally stopped laughing and looked around in confusion, as he didn’t hear what had happened after his pitch hit Monoma.

“Dude, you just lost us the game,” Kaminari told him.

“…Huh?”

“You walked Monoma and they scored. We lost,” Mina repeated. Bakugo was shocked silent by this until he pounded his fist into the dirt, letting out two explosions.

“DAMMIIIIIIIT!”

“And that’s tantrum number 3, guys!” Setsuna announced. “It took a while, but we got to number
three! Thanks for coming, folks!”
Heroes on Holiday

Chapter Notes

Happy Holidays to all my wonderful readers! Whatever you're celebrating - Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Festivus - make sure you're spending it with whoever you love, and if you're not celebrating anything, think of your loved ones anyway.

On a day where the lawns and pathways of U.A. High School were capped with white snow, a certain class was busy preparing for a party. On that special day of December 25th, this class began to decorate their halls, their rooms, and almost every single inch of their building with yuletide joy. This seasonal serenity had been spearheaded by a pair of girls with their own special attachment to the day.

“Oh, what a beautiful tree,” Ibara sighed as Shishida and Bondo carried a tall pine tree into the dorm. “Thank you all so much.”

“Thank moneybags over here,” Kamakiri told her as he and Shoda followed the two boys with bags of lights and decorations. “Shishida really shelled out.”

“Only a small sum,” the hairy boy assured his friends. “The smiles on my friend’s faces is well worth any price.” Ibara watched as he and Bondo set the tree to stand tall in the corner of the common room, ready to be adorned with lights and ornaments.

“Let’s get everyone downstairs,” Shoda suggested. “We can all decorate together.”

“Good idea,” Bondo agreed. Ibara nodded and let the boys start unpacking their shopping bags while she wandered over to the kitchen area. There, she found plates of cookies coming fresh out of the oven.

“A perfect batch!” Pony cheered as she pulled the cookie tray from the oven, her festive apron featuring patches of flour. “Rin, you’re so good at this!”

“I guess. Cooking’s always come naturally to me,” the dragon boy told his friend. Just behind him, Setsuna watched him making more dough with a sparkle in her eye as she shaped the dough with cookie cutters.

“It smells wonderful,” Ibara told the baking trio. “Our party will surely be wonderful with these.”

“You sure are in a good mood,” Setsuna noted. “Christmas must mean a lot to you.”

“Indeed, it does,” Ibara confirmed, “and I’m pleased to say today’s been wonderful. I attended mass this morning with my family and convinced Tetsu to attend as well.”

“Is that why he’s been asleep all day?” Rin asked.

“Yes, he woke up earlier than he’s used to on his days off, but that just makes the gesture even sweeter, doesn’t it?”

“Hey, what smells good?” everyone heard from the staircase. Coming into the common room was
Kendo and Monoma, both wearing festive sweaters. "Wow, you guys are really pulling out all the stops," Kendo complimented.

"Thanks!" Pony replied brightly. The sight of her baking with a chipper grin in her holiday clothes was too adorable for Monoma to handle, so he forced himself to turn away to avoid ugly crying. He tried to look back after a few seconds, but then realized she had hung two ornaments from her horns and had to look away again. "Christmas is a big thing back in America."

"It must be hard being so far away from home this time of year, but I’m glad you’ve brought the spirit here with Ibara," Kendo told her.

"Well, this place is my home too, silly." Pony went back to baking happily while Kendo was forced to copy Monoma and try to hold back tears. Once they had both calmed down, they saw more of their classmates coming downstairs to begin dressing up the tree.

"Ibara and Pony have really gone all out," Reiko noted as she entered. Kendo nodded in response and noticed Reiko’s new hoodie, which featured a cartoon ghost with a caption that read “I’m dead inside and out.”

"New shirt?"

"Shinso got it for me," she told Kendo, letting her lips form a grin. "Cute, huh?"

"It sure is." Behind Reiko, Kendo saw Awase carrying something bulky over his shoulder that he took into the common room. "What’cha got there, Awase?"

"Gift from Mei," he replied while setting it down. "She dressed it up to be all festive and shit." Once she got a closer look, Kendo realized it was a space heater outfitted to look like a fireplace.

"How thoughtful. Tell her we all say thanks," Kendo said.

"Hey, Kendo. Can I get a hand with these lights?" Kuroiro asked from behind the tree.

"On my way!"

"Looks like I should start helping out too," Monoma stated as he approached the kitchen. "Get ready for a feast, everyone."

"I’m gonna peace out here then," Setsuna said while removing her apron. "My cooking knowledge begins and ends with cookies."

"We’re ready, Monoma!" Pony announced with Rin at her side. Monoma began to cook up a storm with his two helpers at his side while the rest of the class swathed the dorm in holiday trimming. By evening time, Christmas had effectively taken over the 1-B living space and a spread of food was being set out.

"Nice work, everyone!" Kendo complimented. "Special thanks to our chefs who worked their butts off for all of us." A round of applause went out for Monoma, Pony, and Rin, who accepted graciously. "The guests should arrive any time now, so let’s get this party going!" Once the festivities began for the class, Reiko called Kendo over to the front door with a wave.

"Our guests are here," she told the class rep. Once Kendo opened the door, she found Vlad King standing outside with Shinso and Hatsume by his side.

"Thanks for having us," Shinso greeted while stepping inside.
“Hey hey, babies!” Hatsume added as she followed the Gen Ed student’s lead. Kan went into the dorms as well and ruffled Kendo’s hair warmly.

“You kids really do everything in an impressive way. Throwing a party is no exception. Merry Christmas, Kendo.”

“Merry Christmas, sir,” Kendo responded with a smile. Once Kan was inside, Kendo realized that wasn’t the end of the guests who had arrived, as just outside was four notable senior students.

“Kendo, hey!” Nejire greeted. By her side was Togata and Amajiki, and her girlfriend Yuyu was just behind with a plate of food in her hands.

“Thanks for inviting us!” Togata said with his usual vigor.

“I hope we’re not intruding,” Amajiki added.

“Of course not. Come on in,” the ginger girl welcomed, letting the seniors enter the dorm and join the party. Food was eaten, carols were sung, and the class enjoyed the fruits of their labor. After a while, there was another knock at the front door, to which Monoma answered.

“Hello?” To his surprise, he was staring down the entirety of Class 1-A.

“Good evening!” Iida bombastically greeted. “Is Miss Kendo present?”

“Coming!” Monoma heard behind him.

“What’s the big idea?” the copycat mumbled to Kendo as she came to the entrance.

“Yaoyorozu and I had the idea to combine our parties,” Kendo explained. “That’s not a problem, is it?”

“We brought food!” Kaminari announced as he and a few others held up plates.

“We brought karaoke!” Kirishima added.

“We brought Eri!” Uraraka said, pointing to Eraserhead and the little girl in his arms.

“Then get in here,” Kendo welcomed. The 1-A students flooded into the dorms and were cheerfully welcomed by their counterparts. The last one to enter was Bakugo, who wasn’t smiling exactly, but his usual anger was replaced by simple neutrality. “Is the party ruined for you?” Kendo asked Monoma, to which he smiled somewhat forcefully.

“Tis the season,” he told her. Kendo grinned and ruffled his head before dragging him back into the party. To her surprise, Monoma was able to push aside his normal behavior and get along with the 1-A students – mostly with Midoriya and Aoyama. He did all he could to avoid Bakugo, but this was expected.

“How are all these people fitting inside?” Shoda wondered before the door knocked again. Kendo and Monoma squeezed through the crowd and opened up to see a group of U.A. teachers at their doorstep.

"Evening, my students!” All Might exclaimed while popping back into his muscly form for a brief moment. “Ah-hem. We heard you were having a big party and, well…”

“We wanted to join in!” Midnight interrupted with a tipsy lilt in her voice.
“You kiddies don’t mind some old timers coming in, huh?” Present Mic asked, nearly unrecognizable with his hair down.

“Of course not!” Kendo told them.

“Seriously, how are we fitting so many people?” Shoda inquired to no one.

“Don’t worry about us taking all your food. We brought some ourselves,” 13 told the 1-B representative while handing off a dessert tray to Kuroiro. Power Loader, Ectoplasm, Cementoss, Snipe, and Recovery Girl all handed off food platters as well, which the many students dug into quickly. Hound Dog was the last one in, and in his hairy arms was a box almost as big as himself.

“Is Eraser here?” he asked.

“Is that gift for him?” Monoma asked. “You shouldn’t have.” Hound Dog gave him an irritated growl and carried the box into the center of the room. Everyone’s attention was drawn to it, and in the middle of the circle of people, Eraserhead came forward and set Eri down in front of the box.

“Merry Christmas, Eri!” Nezu exclaimed as he popped out from behind the box. “Since this is your first Christmas as a member of our family, we’re giving you an extra special gift.” The young girl reached up and just barely reached the lid to push it off. Eraserhead then picked her up once again and let her see inside the box, and a huge smile grew on her face. Inside was a collection of plush figures modelled after the heroes she knew – Class 1-A, Class 1-B, the big three, the U.A. staff, a few pros, and even one of Shinso in his U.A. tracksuit with his scarf and mask. Eri was set down inside the box, where she grabbed an armful of stuffed toys and squeezed them with all her strength.

“I love it!” she yelled. Monoma was once again forced to look away to avoid ugly crying, and once he had calmed down, the party was back to normal. It wasn’t long, however, before Vlad King and Eraserhead appeared with big bags of gifts slung over their shoulders.

“Guess it’s time,” Kendo realized. “1-B students, it’s time for Secret Santa! Come get your present!”

“Class 1-A, please form an orderly line!” Iida called out. His instructions were ignored when the rowdier students of both classes rushed to receive their gifts, but he didn’t seem to mind.

“What is it, what is it?!” Tetsutetsu wondered while ravenously tearing the wrapping off his gift and opening it up. “Sweatpants?” he gasped. “Yes!”

“That’s not all,” Kamakiri snickered. “Pick them up.” Tetsutetsu lifted his gift out of the box and watched them unravel, making loose spinach leaves fall out of the leg holes. “I know you like spinach and comfy pants, so I combined them,” the bug boys laughed. To his surprise, Tetsutetsu’s smile only grew bigger and he even started to cry.

“Thanks, dude!” he exclaimed while giving Kamakiri a crushing hug. Once he was freed from the iron grip, Kamakiri was left in a confused daze.

“He liked it? It was supposed to be a gag gift! Dammit, this always happens!”

“You always give people gag gifts that turn out to be very thoughtful and well-received?” Kinoko asked, to which Kamakiri nodded. “Weird. Anyway, Merry Christmas!”

“Oh, thanks,” he said while taking the gift bag Kinoko presented, pulling out a switchblade from it. “Sweet,” he said while popping the blade out.
“Think that’s cool? Press the other button.” On her instruction, Kamakiri folded the blade into the handle and flipped the other button, which made a comb pop out.

“Woah!” he exclaimed with a grin. After giving his mohawk a flip with it, he smiled and ruffled Kinoko’s hair in gratitude. “Shishida, look! I got a knife-comb!”

“How thoughtful,” he replied while accepting a homemade blanket from Ibara.

“I know you’d have no trouble anyway, but this should keep you warm,” Ibara said sweetly before receiving a hug from Shishida. “Oh, you’re very welcome.” As gifts were being exchanged, one last knock at the door came.

“I’ll get it!” Kendo said as she and Monoma went to the door.

“How is there more people?” Shoda asked in genuine disbelief. “I have no idea how we’re fitting this many already!”

“What ever. Don’t question it,” Reiko told him as she handed off a pair of boxing gloves to him.

“Aw, thanks, Yanagi,” he responded. At the door, Monoma and Kendo opened up and let in a large group of out-of-costume pro heroes, four of which jumped out in front and started to pose.

“Lock on with these sparkling gazes!”

“We’ve come to lend a paw and help!”

“Popping in from out of nowhere!”

“Stunningly cute and catlike! We’re the…”

“Wild, Wild Pussycats!” The four Pussycats, plus Kota, were at the head of the group, and just behind them was a handful of other familiar pro heroes.

“Come on in and enjoy yourselves!” Kendo welcomed. “…Hey, do we have enough space?” she asked Monoma.

“I’m sure it’ll be fine,” the copycat told her, sounding unsure. To their surprise, everyone seemed to fit, and the pros were greeted by the students who had invited them.

“Bubble Girl! Centipeder!” Togata shouted while wrapping the pair in a hug. “Happy Holidays, you two!”

“Good to see you!” Bubble Girl cheerily greeted. “How’ve you been?”

“I’ve been great!” he assured her. “Yo, Komori, Kamakiri, get over here!” The mushroom girl popped out from the crowd and ran to Bubble Girl with a wide smile.

“Bubble Girl!”

“Kinoko!” The two heroines embraced tightly for a long while before Bubble Girl finally set her former intern down. “I hardly recognized you!”

“I know, right? I got confident, I got my license – I even got a boyfriend!” Kinoko happily reported.

“You’re like a totally different person!” As they began to catch up, Kamakiri approached Centipeder
and gave him a firm handshake.

“I see you remembered some of my lessons,” the gentlemanly hero began, “even if my lecture about your inappropriate hairstyle didn’t sink in.”

“Well, I’m an inappropriate person,” Kamakiri admitted while using his new knife-comb to style his hair.

“Seems so,” Centipeder relented as the two men shared a laugh. Nearby, Setsuna and Rin went to greet their favorite hero, but were beaten to the punch by Nejire, who wrapped herself around the draconic pro hero.

“Hi, Ryukyu!”

“Hello, Nejire,” Ryukyu warmly responded. Setsuna and Rin were quickly joined by Tsuyu and Uraraka, and once Ryukyu saw the four, she beckoned them closer with a wave.

“Get in here, you all.”

“Yaaaay!” Setsuna cheered before throwing herself into her hero’s arms. All around them, students came to warmly welcome the heroes. Tsuburaba was chatting with Air Jet, Rock Lock showed Awase new pictures of his child, Fatgum was hitting the dessert table with Kirishima, Shoda, and Amajiki, and Crust put Honenuki in a firm hug. Even Best Jeanist was healthy enough to come, which gave Bakugo an opportunity to quietly greet him. The last to come in was the trio of Edgeshot, Kamui Woods, and a tipsy Mt. Lady.

“Mr. Kamui!” Ibara welcomed with a loving embrace. Sero also joined her in greeting the arbor hero while Hagakure and Reiko approached Edgeshot.

“Been a while, sir!” Hagakure said. “It’s me, Hagakure!”

“Of course. You’re hard to forget, Invisible Girl.” Edgeshot’s compliment made Hagakure let out a squeak of delight, and the stealth hero put his hands on the two girl’s shoulders. “It’s wonderful to see you both.”

“Yuiiii~” Mt. Lady slurred. “Yui, come over here and get your hug. Mountain-sized hug, comin’ at’cha!”

“Hi, ma’am,” Yui greeted while taking the pro over to a free spot on a couch. “You should sit down for a while.”

“I’m good~” she claimed before falling asleep.

“Guess they came from another party,” Kendo noted as she and Monoma approached Yui. “Sorry you didn’t get to catch up with her.”

“It’s fine,” Yui told her. The quiet girl took a long look around the crowded dorm and formed a tiny grin. “I’ve never been to a party this big. Christmas at my house was just me and my brother back when he was around.”

“Well, you’ve got a big family now,” Monoma told her.

“That’s right,” Kendo agreed, making Yui nod and smile.

“Yo, Kendo!” Setsuna called out from nearby. “Come check this out!” The ginger girl, along with
Monoma and Yui, went over to find Setsuna standing with Tsuyu. “Show her, show her.”

“A mutual friend of ours sent me this picture, ribbit.” Tsuyu explained while holding up her phone. What Kendo saw was a picture sent by Habuko of her class’s own Christmas party. Her whole class was bunched up together for the picture and in the front was herself, Tadan, Sekigai, and Fujimi.

“Ain’t that blast from the past?” Setsuna asked.

“Yeah, it’s nice to see,” Kendo agreed. “Sekigai sent me that picture too. Looks like they’ve been doing well.”

“That’s not all!” a voice shouted from behind. Kendo flinched and turned around to see Ragdoll poking her head into the group. “Take a look at my little niece’s hand!” Kendo studied the picture closer and, through the crowd of bodies, pieced together that Sekigai and Fujimi were holding hands. “She’s just like her aunt!”

“I guess, in a roundabout way,” Monoma commented.

“That reminds me,” Setsuna interrupted. “Did you ever hear from those Gaikoku dudes?”

“Actually, yeah. I got a picture from them last night,” Kendo revealed while taking out her phone. “They had their own party yesterday, so Victoria sent me this.” Setsuna leaned in close and saw a candid shot from Gaikoku’s own holiday party. Victoria was front and center under a mistletoe, and to the left was Kaikaina, who was yanking Daisuke towards Victoria with a mischievous look. To the right was Gou, who was playing piano while Greta, Kobayashi and Namida seemed to be singing. Miru and Mitch could be seen at a dessert table, nearby a Christmas tree where Bruce and Nasuka were goofing around, and in the corner was their teacher, Aisa, who seemed to live up to her ninja identity by nearly blending in with the background.

“Oh man, that brings back memories,” Setsuna laughed. “Good to see those assholes.”

“You can say that again,” Kendo agreed before an arm wrapped around her shoulders.

“Kendoooooo~” Midnight slurred while holding onto her and Yaoyorozu, who seemed uncomfortable. “I had an idea. I want you and Yaoyorozu to do something with me~”

“Uuuuh, what is it?” Kendo asked warily.

“OK, make sure you’re filming, but be discrete,” Monoma told Kaibara, who nodded in agreement. Jiro was next to the copycat and nodded in agreement. “I can’t believe they said yes.”

“I know, right?” Jiro agreed. “I hope they can at least have fun with it.”

“It’ll be fine,” Monoma said, more for himself than for Jiro. Once they made sure Kaibara was in a good spot to film, they worked through the crowd in time to see Midnight setting up a song on the karaoke machine. She had changed into a risqué Santa dress, and lingering behind her was Kendo and Yaoyorozu, who were dressed similarly. Yaoyorozu’s dress was more modest and still resembled a Santa outfit, but Kendo’s was themed more after reindeer.

“This is embarrassing,” Kendo groaned, to which Yaoyorozu nodded.

“You’ll be fine once the music start,” Midnight assured the pair. “Everyone gather ‘round! Me and my cute students are gonna sing a very special carol for you~!” The party full of heroes and heroes-in-training turned to Midnight and her helpers, who shied away even more from the attention.
“Yay! Go Kendo!” Pony cheered from the crowd.

“Alright, Yaomomo!” Mina added. The support from their friends calmed down the pair enough for them to step forward just as Midnight kicked the song off.

I don't want a lot for Christmas
There's just one thing I need
I don't care about the presents
Underneath the Christmas tree
I just want you for my own
More than you could ever know
Make my wish come true
All I want for Christmas
Is yooooouuuu

Midnight stepped back in line with her students and they began to dance to the rhythm and sing together.

I don't want a lot for Christmas
There is just one thing I need
I don't care about the presents
Underneath the Christmas tree
I don't need to hang my stocking
There upon the fireplace
Santa Claus won't make me happy
With a toy on Christmas day
I just want you for my own
More than you could ever know
Make my wish come true
All I want for Christmas is yooooouuuu
You, baby

Midnight nudged Kendo and Yaoyorozu forward, letting them take over the song once she was sure they had become engrossed in singing.

I won't ask for much this Christmas
I won't even wish for snow
I'm just gonna keep on waiting
Underneath the mistletoe
I won't make a list and send it
To the North Pole for Saint Nick

I won't even stay awake to
Hear those magic reindeer click
’Cause I just want you here tonight
Holding on to me so tight
What more can I do
Baby all I want for Christmas is yooooooouuuu
All the lights are shining
So brightly everywhere
And the sound of children's
Laughter fills the air
And everyone is singing
I hear those sleigh bells ringing
Santa won't you bring me the one I really need?
Won't you please bring my baby to me?

Midnight put her arms around the girls and rejoined the song as they formed a kick-line. They belted out the final verses with smiles, putting the final touch on a fantastic holiday party.

Oh, I don't want a lot for Christmas
This is all I'm asking for
I just want to see my baby
Standing right outside my door
Oh I just want him for my own
More than you could ever know
Make my wish come true
Baby all I want for Christmas is yooooooooo, baby
All I want for Christmas is yooooooooo, baby
All I want for Christmas is yooooooooo, baby
Monoma woke up feeling restless and groggy despite sleeping late, but he still forced himself out of bed. He went through his usual morning routine before heading to the common room, desperate for coffee. “Morning, Monoma,” Pony greeted once he arrived. Monoma gave her a wave as he made a grab for the coffee pot, which was thankfully still pretty full. “Didn’t sleep good?”

“Nope,” he answered after his first sip.

“Bad dream?”

“Maybe. I don’t really remember my dreams, but that could be it.”

“We still gonna do homework together later?”

“Sure thing. We’ll start after—” The copycat paused his speaking once he finally looked around the rest of the common room. The floor of the sitting area had become a giant blanket fort with dinosaur stuffed animals guarding the entrance. “…What’d I miss?”

“Morning, buddy!” Nearby the TV, Monoma saw Tetsutetsu poke his head out. The copycat walked closer to the blanket pileup and saw Tetsutetsu was playing video games while Ibara was asleep next to him, laying her head on his back. “We made a fort!”

“I noticed,” Monoma commented. “Who else is under there?”

“Me~” Setsuna called out while poking her head out near the center. “Me, Rin, and Ibara have established this kingdom in the name of ‘fuck the cold.’ Enter at your own peril, you frigid bitch.”

“Is Kendo in there?”

“I’m sorry, are you addressing me, the queen? You need to address me properly. Your authority is not recognized in… Fort Kickass.”

“She’s not in here,” Rin reported from under the blankets.

“Kendo’s getting ready to go out,” Pony told him.

“Oh yeah. She’s visiting home for the day.” Monoma sat down with his coffee and waited for his brain to finally wake up, which it slowly did. As time went by, more of the class appeared from upstairs, mostly to get inside the blanket fort.

“Finally up, huh?” Now out of his dazed state, Monoma looked up and saw Kendo standing over him.

“Heading out?” he asked.

“Yup. I’m cashing in my Christmas gift,” she happily explained. “My dad’s finally teaching me how to ride a real motorcycle.”

“That explains the outfit,” Setsuna commented. Prompted by the remark, Monoma looked over Kendo’s clothes and found she was dressed up in a biker-style outfit – a black leather jacket, white
shirt, red scarf, blue jeans, and black boots.

“I’ll be back tonight,” she stated before giving Monoma a peck on the head. “Don’t wait up.”

“Be safe,” he told her as she opened the door and stepped out into the cold. He watched her through the window as she walked off and disappeared from his line of sight, and then looked down at his empty mug. “…I need more coffee.”

“Want me to get you a travel cup so you can take it into the blanket fort?”

“…Pony, you’re a genius.”

"Yup!"

Later that day, Kendo walked through the streets of her home prefecture of Chiba with a content smile. “Wow, that was so amazing! The wind in my face, the rumble of the engine – I can’t wait to get my license for real!” With the sun disappearing slowly behind buildings, the temperature was going down considerably, so she zipped up her jacket and shoved her hands in her pocket. The streets were relatively empty, so her trek went on without interruption. “I think I’ll get a Kawasaki when I’m older, or maybe something foreign like a Harley. Those’re cool.” As she pondered her options, the pitter-patter of meek footsteps came up behind her and Kendo felt a tugging on her jacket sleeve.

“U-Um, excuse me.” Kendo turned around to see a girl about her age standing there. Her voice sounded somewhat horse, and she had a brief coughing fit as Kendo looked at her. Her blonde hair was messily tucked into a black hat, and the cold seemed to be making her face very red. She wore a white medical mask over her face along with a thick black scarf and pale-yellow overcoat. “I’m sorry, but could you help me please?”

“Sure. What’s wrong?” Kendo asked, glad to help if she was needed. The girl twiddled her fingers and looked away, but then leaned closer to Kendo.

“I think I’m being followed,” she whispered, making Kendo perk up and become much more aware of her surroundings. “I saw a man in a black hoodie behind me, and he’s been on my trail for the past few blocks. I even went in a circle, but he’s still there.” Kendo nodded and stealthily looked past the girl. True to her word, there was a man in a black hooded sweatshirt with a brown backpack down the block, loitering near an alleyway. “Can you call a hero or the police please?” she half-coughed.

“I can do you one better,” Kendo told her quietly. “I just happen to have a provisional hero license. If it’s alright with you, I can take care of this here and now.”

“You can? Thank you so much. What should I do?”

“Just stay here for now. If he tries to fight me, it’ll be safer if you’re further away. Once he focuses on me, call the police and tell them the situation.”

“Alright. Good luck.” Kendo gave the girl a pat on the shoulder and started her walk towards the man. He lifted his head and seemed to see her coming, so he nervously stepped into the alley.

“Excuse me, sir,” Kendo began as she turned into the alley to follow him. “I’ve been told you’re stalking someone. I’d like to talk to you if that’s alright.” The man turned back and stared at her
while walking backwards. Kendo could see the anxiety in his shaky blue eyes. “I’m a hero student with a provisional license, so I wouldn’t recommend trying to run.”

“She told you, didn’t she?” the man asked fearfully. He whipped around and made a run deeper into the alley, turning another corner as Kendo ran after him.

“Stop right there!” she shouted at him. Once Kendo turned the corner, the man jumped out and swung a garbage lid down at her. She dipped out of the way and hit his chest with a palm strike that made him fall backwards. “You may have been let off with a warning if you had complied, but assault charges can be pretty serious.”

“Fuck you,” he groaned while struggling to his feet, dropping his bag to the floor with an odd clunk. He came closer to Kendo and threw a punch, but Kendo caught it with her left hand while enlarging her right. With the extra strength and size, she pushed him into brick wall, easily holding him in place. “You’re… way too strong,” he grumbled jealously.

“That’s enough outta you.” Kendo pulled the man close and reached out her left hand, chopping the back of his neck. His eyes went wide, and then his body turned limp. Kendo eased him onto the ground near his bag and shrunk her hand, assured that he was out cold. “Well, it’s not the flashiest debut, but I’m glad I could help someone. Now to wait for the police.”

“Wow, that was amazing!” Kendo turned her head and saw the sick girl coming around the corner and approaching her. Her voice sounded a good deal clearer than before, but she still coughed once she reached Kendo. “I didn’t know you’d be so strong.”

“Thanks, but why did you follow me?” Kendo asked firmly. “I told you to stay away in case a fight happened.”

“I know, but I really wanted to watch. I’m sorry.” The girl backed away from the stern semi-pro and meandered around her, ending up opposite the unconscious man. “I just really wanted to see him get clobbered. He really scared me, y’know?”

“Well, next time something like this happens, you should follow the instructions given.” Kendo turned towards the girl and put a hand on her arm in a comforting way. “They’re for your safety, so make sure you listen. OK?”

“You’re right. I’m sorry, Kendo.”

“It’s fine. Just—” In the middle of her sentence, Kendo paused and replayed in her mind everything that had happened since the girl approached her. “…I never gave you my name.” The girl had no reaction to this at first, but then conked her head to the side innocently.

“Didn’t you?” That’s when Kendo realized she had unconsciously turned her back on the hooded man. This realization came when she felt something heavy and bulky being clamped over both of her hands.

“You idiot!” she heard behind her. The man that she had been sure was unconscious yanked her hands behind her back, and Kendo felt whatever held them being connected like handcuffs. Her first instinct in this moment was to trying enlarging them, but the device holding them seemed to cushion the strength of her enlargement, keeping them from growing. Her next plan was to run away, but the man pulled her into a bear hug while his legs hooked around her own. Her final options were to either try wriggling free or to yell for help, but before she could try either, the girl she had helped pulled out a knife and held it to her throat.
“Don’t make a sound,” the girl warned. Despite the mask she wore, Kendo could tell she was grinning excitedly. “Itsuka Kendo… you’re even cuter in person.” Kendo gritted her teeth and glared at the girl, but it had no effect in intimidating her.

“Just knock her out already,” the hooded man ordered. Kendo watched as the girl reached into her coat pocket and pull out a handkerchief, which she then pressed into Kendo’s face. The sickening smell of chloroform invaded her nose, but Kendo held her breath and pushed all her strength into her hands, trying for one last time to break free. She wriggled around in the man’s grasp and knocked his head against the wall, but was forced to stop when the girl pressed her knife closer to Kendo’s neck.

“Don’t struggle now, Kendo,” the girl warned. “Just breathe deeply and go to sleep.” Kendo tried to keep holding her breath, but the girl pulled her leg back and struck Kendo’s stomach, making her finally take a deep breath. The knockout drug took effect almost immediately with the large amount Kendo was forced to inhale, and she felt her strength being sapped.

I… can’t let this… happen. Kendo focused her mind on the girl in an attempt to stay awake and focused, but the chloroform was robbing her of her power quickly. Gotta… fight it…

“You look so cute like this,” the girl commented as she pulled her knife away, confident that Kendo couldn’t fight back anymore. She extended a finger from the hilt and pulled down her mask, showing Kendo a fanged smile. Had the drug not finally forced Kendo to start fading into unconsciousness, she would’ve recognized her attacker as the League of Villains’ Himiko Toga. The last thing she heard before finally succumbing was the breathy voice of Toga again, this time pressed against her ear. “I hope we can be… good friends.”

Hey… Pony…” Monoma lifted his head off his bed and looked over to his desk, where Pony was hard at work. “You ever get the feeling that something really shitty is gonna happen, but don’t know why or when?”

“Sometimes, I guess,” she replied. “Bad dream again?”

“I don’t know. Just a weird feeling in my stomach. That’s all…”

Toga crouched down and let the unconscious Kendo slink down into her grasp, graciously holding her close. “Her skin is really soft,” she commented. “I wonder what her blood tastes like.”

“You’re a real weirdo,” the hooded man muttered as he stood up. “You made sure no one followed, right?” Toga watched as he checked around the corner of the alley, then looked down the other side. They weren’t visible from the street, but that fact seemed to not affect his nerves.

“Just calm down,” she told him. “No one saw a thing, so take a deep breath, Teijo—”

“It’s Seijo,” he corrected with annoyance in his tone. “Seijo Senbo. If you’re gonna be working for Head Games, you better learn our names.”

“I will, I will,” she assured him while cuddling close to Kendo. “Now what?”

“Pack her up.” Seijo reached into his backpack and pulled out a folded-up canvas bag that he handed to Toga. Once she unfolded it, he handed her some rope as well. “Make sure you’re not seen and that she’ll be immobile and silent. I’ll pull the car around. Be ready to put her in the trunk quickly. No stabbing either; the boss wants her in good condition. Be absolutely sure you’re not seen—”
“This isn’t my first kidnapping, buddy,” Toga assured him. “You can count on me.” Seijo huffed and gave the girl an untrusting look, but relented and walked out of the alley. Toga began wrapping Kendo up in rope, taking her time to enjoy herself. *She’s so soft and pretty. This assignment is way more fun than that dumb Yakuza stuff. I feel bad about all the mean stuff they say about Tomura, but this payoff is already worth it.*

Later that Saturday, around 8 at night, Monoma was working at his laptop and periodically checking his phone. *She was supposed to be back right now,* he remembered. He looked at the previous text he had sent, but saw that it hadn’t been read yet. *Maybe her phone broke and she’s getting it fixed,* he reasoned. Deciding he had done enough work for the day, Monoma closed his computer and stretched out in his seat. *I think it’s time for some ice cream and a Disney movie with Pony.* Just then, his phone began to ring and buzz. Looking at the caller ID, he saw it was Kendo finally calling back. “Hey,” he answered. “I was wondering where you were. What’s up?” The other line was silent for a long while, but after a beat, a voice came onto the line. The problem was that it wasn’t Kendo’s voice.

“Is this Neito Monoma?” In that one instant, Monoma felt his blood freeze and his throat fall into his chest.

Chapter End Notes

*It's the beginning of the end, my dudes! And the return of Head Games, the OC villains I semi-introduced back in the internships arc! Man, that was a while ago, huh?*
“So... you’ve received an offer from another gang?” From his seat atop a warehouse crate, Tomura Shigaraki, the leader of the League of Villains, looked over two of his most trusted subordinates and awaited their response.

“Yeah, we did,” Toga reported. “This lady with a cloak approached us and said our talents would be better used if we were with her group. She said a bunch of mean stuff about how the League’s been quiet since the whole ‘Bakugo’ thing.” Next to Toga, the scarred villain Dabi stepped forward and began to speak.

“I recognized her voice,” he stated. “It’s the leader of Head Games - Kashiko Dokasuru.”

“Our support item makers?” Shigaraki questioned, to which Dabi nodded.

“She claims that her group is expanding to become a villainous gang like ours now that we’re, in her words, ‘huddled up in hiding, leeching off people like the Shi Hassaikai and sending puppets like High End to scare people.’”

“It seems like she has some strong opinions and an ambition like ours,” Shigaraki mused. “If she had only known her place, maybe our groups could’ve worked more closely... What do you want to do?”

“Are you asking if we’d actually leave?” Dabi wondered. “You really think we’d do that?”

“No, no,” Shigaraki assured them. “I’m saying that going along with it for now could yield fruitful results. If they try to strike out as a gang and go under, all their technology goes with them. Perhaps, if you’re present when this happens...”

“We steal it!” Toga realized. “So, you’re saying we have to be double agents? What about you, Tomura?”

“I’ll be fine without you at my disposal for the time,” he responded. “This is an important job.” As he spoke, Shigaraki slowly removed the hand from his face, showing his two allies the confident expression he wore. “I have complete faith in you two.”

In the headquarters of Head Games, Dabi lumbered through the halls towards the boss’s room. Once he arrived, he found himself in a dimly lit yet lavish apartment, semi-retooled into a control center of sorts. On his left was a series of monitors that showed the different rooms of the building and the area outside, while to the right was small bar with high-brand alcohol on the wall. Seeing the bar made him feel homesick for his previous base, which was joined quickly by a fond memory of his incarcerated friend Kurogiri.

“Thank you for coming, Dabi.” Turning his attention back to the matter at hand, he looked across the room to his ‘boss,’ Kashiko. She was sat on a couch that faced the door, situated next to the monitors so she could watch them with only quick turn of her head. Her body was hidden by a black cloak, but he could still make out her tan face and full lips.

“Is Toga back yet?” Dabi asked.

“Yes, she and Seijo returned some time ago. They were successful in their task, so once the girl awakens, we’ll begin.”
“That’s good to hear,” Dabi commented before awkwardly rubbing the back of his neck. “So, what did you need from me?”

“Well, I thought I’d give you and Toga a sort of welcome gift. Once she and my two officers arrive, I’ll explain.”

“Officers? You mean the jumpy freak and the armor guy?”

“You should watch who you call freak, you raisin-looking nutsack of a man.” Dabi crooked his neck back to see Seijo coming inside. Now without his black hoodie, he was left in a yellow tank top and blue jeans, and his blond hair was free to stand up. “What’re you doing alone with the boss?”

“I invited him, Seijo,” Kashiko explained. “He just happened to arrive first. Even if he’s new, you should have some trust in him.” Seijo got close to Dabi and looked him over before brushing past and leaning against the bar.

“I don’t trust people easily, boss. I’d also rather stay by your side next time you meet with these newbies.”

“I’ll keep it in mind,” the boss replied off-handedly.

“Still as anxious as ever, Seijo.” came a voice from the doorway. “You may not feel so nervous if you just gave up and used the weapons we have.” The voice was distorted and deepened in an obviously artificial way, letting Dabi recognize who it was instantly. Once he turned, he saw a man in hi-tech armor entering, equipped with many firearms. The armor was thin and looked lightweight, but the way it contoured to his frame and moved fluidly clued Dabi in to how well-built it was. It’s coloring was dark blue over a black bodysuit underneath, and the all-encompassing helmet was a purple color with two blue lights that formed the shape of eyes.

“We’ve been waiting for you, Hush.”

“Tch. Like I’d need armor or weapons like you,” Seijo spat back. Dabi ambled back as the two men came close to each other, ending up in a staredown. Despite Hush standing a head taller, Seijo looked ready to lash out. “I bet you want me to start going by a stupid alias like you, eh, Hush? I’m a real man, so I fight with my fists. Take away all that dumb tech and what are you?”

“It doesn’t matter,” Hush replied while grabbing a pistol at his hip, “because I do have them.”

“Boys, please,” Kashiko interrupted. “Try and set a good example for our newest member.”

“I don’t mind,” Dabi said with a shrug. Once Seijo and Hush backed away from each other, Kashiko received a message from Toga on her phone.

“What a surprise. Toga says that our guest is already awakening.”

…What… What happened? As consciousness returned to Kendo, a splitting headache was the first thing she felt. Her mind was fuzzy at best, and her first priority was to try remembering what she had been doing. I was… home… and then I was… walking down the street… The memory of her assault came in hazily, but didn’t truly sink in until Kendo tried moving her arms. Once she felt the restraints over her hands, as well as the strain of rope around her upper arms and torso, the situation finally hit her. This… This can’t be real! I have to be dreaming! Kendo begged with all her heart that it really was a dream, but the soreness in her body and mind were too great to ignore and she
was forced to accept the reality.

*Don’t freak out. Don’t freak out, Itsuka. Think logically. Assess the situation.* Despite her internal chant to keep calm, Kendo had unknowingly begun to hyperventilate. After testing her bonds and trying to speak, she concluded that her arms and legs were tied together and she was gagged. Once she tried to roll her body around, she realized she was inside a duffel bag, which also explained the darkness.

*Stay calm, Itsuka. If they put so much effort into capturing you, they wouldn’t kill you. At least, not right away.* Despite convincing herself that her life was secure, the fear of death still gripped Kendo like a vice around her chest. *That girl knew my name without me giving it, so this wasn’t random. I was their target from the beginning. Based on these special hand restraints, they knew about my Quirk as well, and that means they must know I’m a U.A. student as well. Is it the League of Villains again? Have they captured anyone else?*

With no clue of her surroundings and no way to free herself, Kendo was forced to stay still and silent. Once her headache finally began to ease, she heard a door opening and approaching footsteps. “Oh, Kendo~” she heard, recognizing the voice of the girl who attacked her. “Are you awake yet?” Deciding to bide her time, Kendo didn’t move or respond. “I can hear your breathing heavy, silly. No point in lying.” The girl stomped down on Kendo’s stomach as punishment, making her grunt in pain. “There you are! Now that you’re up, I’ll take you to the boss!”

“Mmmf!” Kendo was picked up and draped over the girl’s shoulder, who then carried her off. She found it pointless to struggle, so she clenched her teeth and endured the treatment. After a minute of being carried, Kendo was placed down and the bag was unzipped. Despite the low lighting of the room, the light from the monitor screens she faced was enough to make her clench her eyes shut. Once she was out of the bag and sitting on the floor, she was able to adjust her eyes to the light and see the five figures standing before her. She recognized Dabi and Toga from the news, but the identities of the other three were a mystery to her.

“Once again, splendid work, you two,” a woman in a cloak said to Toga and Seijo. “Good evening, Itsuka Kendo.” With no other options or a way to respond, Kendo had to settle for glaring at her captors. “Oh, what a scary look,” the woman mocked as she pulled her hood back. Her hazel colored eyes fixed on Itsuka’s, sending a chill up the student’s spine. “You’ll be our guest tonight, so I’ll introduce myself. My name is Kashiko Dokasuru and I’m the leader of the criminal gang called Head Games. These are my two officers – Hush and Seijo.” Hush didn’t move at the mention of his name, only keeping his gaze trained on Itsuka. Seijo looked around for a sign of what to do and found none, so he gave an awkward half-wave. “And these two are our new recruits from the League of Villains – Dabi and Toga.”

“Is this what you called us up for?” Dabi questioned impatiently.

“Not exactly, but having Itsuka as an audience was too good of an opportunity to miss,” Kashiko admitted. She removed her arm from her cloak and pressed a few buttons on the monitor set-up nearby. Kendo watched as the largest monitor switch from a view of outside to a familiar picture.

*So, this isn’t just about me,* she realized. *It’s about all of us!* The image was from the Sports Festival and showed all 20 of Class 1-B together.

“I’ve called you four up to have the first picks of prey,” the boss explained. “Tonight, our plan to make a name for our group of villains begins, and to do this, we’ll do what the League of Villains never could – kill an entire class of U.A. students.” Upon hearing those words, Kendo’s fear became an indescribable anger far greater than she ever felt. The urge to beat the woman in front of her was so powerful that Kendo began to shake in rage. In a last desperate attempt to free herself,
she tried growing her hands once again, but just like before, the restraints kept them small and secured. The frustration was too much to bear and she snarled and screamed behind her gag, though it only seemed to entrance Kashiko further. “Oh my. You seem angry, Itsuka.”

“Let’s just get this over with,” Hush suggested. “I’ll go first—”

“Hold on. I’m going first,” Seijo interrupted. “I have a very specific person in mind.”

“I do too, so let’s just pick at the same time. The odds of us having the same person in mind is slim.” Hush went closer to the monitor, but then turned back at Seijo. “If we do have the same person in mind, though, you can answer to my pistol.”

“Just shut up and pick,” Dabi complained. The two officers glanced back at him, but then refocused on the picture before them. Kendo looked up from her seat on the floor as they both raised an arm pointed to the classmate they wanted to kill.

“Her.”

“Him.” Kendo’s eyes went wide at their choices, which only drilled the situation into her further. Hush was pressing her finger into Yui’s image while Seijo’s hovered over Monoma.

*I can’t let this go on!* Kendo internally screamed. *I won’t let my friends die to these bastards!* She leaned back and then lurched forward, trying to rock herself onto her feet. *If I’m awake, then I can fight! I don’t care if I’m restrained or outnumbered – I won’t let them kill my friends!*

“Toga, be a dear and hold her,” Kashiko requested. Kendo felt a set of hands on her shoulders pressing down, keeping her in place to stew in her anger. “Now, do you have a preference for your opponent?”

“Hmmmm… Just give me someone cute. Dabi, you pick for me.”

“Fine,” the scarred villain sighed. He got close to the monitor and squinted, looking each student over carefully. After a few moments of uninterested murmuring, he froze on one. Kendo couldn’t tell who it was, but he began chuckling to himself. “Hey, are you sure all these kids are still alive?”

“They are.”

“Then I want this one.” Dabi stood straight again and leaned back from the monitor, pointing down at Rin. “I’ll finish what I started with him.”

*Finish what he started?* Kendo wondered. *When did... the internships! Rin’s burns! He was the villain Rin fought!* Dabi smirked at the image and lit a small blue flame at his fingertip.

“I didn’t know he survived,” he mumbled. “Maybe I will have some fun tonight.”

“Oh! Oh!” Toga called out with her hand raised. “I’ll take that one next to him!” she outstretched her arm over Kendo’s head, letting the ginger girl see she was pointing to Setsuna. “That smile is just too cute.”

“Indeed it is,” Kashiko agreed. “Hush, you’re in charge of dividing the remaining students between the others.”

“Yes ma’am,” the armored man replied while handing his boss a phone. Despite the low lighting, Kendo recognized it as her own. “I’ve already unlocked the phone for you. You can make the
call whenever you’re ready.”

“Excellent. Seijo, what’s the time?”

“About 8, boss.”

“Then I think we’re ready.”
“Is this Neito Monoma?” The situation dawned on Monoma almost immediately, but he started to think of any alternative he could use to deny what his heart knew.

*It's fine. Someone found her phone on the street. My phone glitched and it's not actually from Kendo’s phone. This is all some elaborate prank.* Despite these attempts to reason out the situation, the feeling that something horrible had happened was too great to ignore. “S…Speaking.”

“Are you alone, Neito Monoma?” It was a woman’s voice on the other line – one that seemed familiar, but couldn’t be placed by its listener.

“I am.”

“Good. I’ll inform you now that no Pro Heroes or police can learn of this phone call. The life of your friend depends on it.” The confirmation of the situation was enough to take the strength from Monoma’s legs, planting him further in his chair. “Do you understand, Neito Monoma?”

“Yes.” He reached out to his desk and gripped the edge, turning his knuckles white.

“Excellent. For now, I want you to gather your classmates together. I’ll call again in 10 minutes.”

“Hold on,” Monoma requested. “How do I know this isn’t a bluff? You may just be a hacker playing around, or some pickpocket who snatched Kendo’s phone.”

“…You want proof?” Monoma felt sick at how entertained the woman sounded by the question. He wanted to say yes, but felt that if he said no, he might go on denying the situation was even happening. Before he could continue to speak, he received a text from the caller and he opened it. It was a picture that was sent – one that struck fear into the deepest recesses of his mind. One of Kendo restrained on the floor of a dark room, trying to look defiant. Despite the glower she wore, Monoma could practically sense her fear. What he felt was more likely another wave of his own, however. “Is this proof enough?”

“…Yes.”

“Then gather your remaining 18 classmates. 10 minutes, Neito Monoma.” The other line hung up abruptly, letting Monoma drop the phone from his shaking hand. After just one phone call, he no longer felt like a semi-pro. He had become a powerless child once again.

“This seriously couldn’t have waited?” Kuroiro questioned as he flopped down onto the common room couch next to Honenuki. With his arrival, 19 of Class 1-B’s students had gathered on Monoma’s request. The copycat was sat on a chair at the edge of the common room, looking down at his feet.

“What was so urgent you had to interrupt my annual Land Before Time viewing?” Setsuna asked. The copycat raised his head slightly, finally finding his voice.

“Guys… it’s bad.”

“What is?” Shoda asked anxiously.

“Did you run out of hair-care products?” Reiko wondered.
“No… Listen, I-I don’t know how to say this.” With his head raising up more, the class could see his sickened expression clearly and finally realized how serious he was. “It’s Kendo. Someone’s got her.” The room became absolutely silent once Monoma stopped speaking. No one moved a muscle. No one looked each other in the eye.

“What you mean ‘got her?’” Pony asked hesitantly.

“I mean she’s been kidnapped,” he blurted out.

“Are you absolutely sure?” Kuroiro instantly questioned. “Do you know, with 100% certainty, that Kendo was kidnapped? Could she just be missing?” Monoma couldn’t reply vocally to the questions, but took out his phone and opened up the picture he was sent. Once he turned it to his classmates, the truth hit them all just as it had hit them. Some like Kuroiro, Kamakiri, and Reiko became enraged, barely containing their anger. Some like Honenuki and Pony were staring wide-eyed at the picture, as if they couldn’t even believe their eyes. The worst to see by far was Ibara, who couldn’t look for more than a second before turning away in tears.

“No, this can’t be!” she sobbed into Tetsutetsu’s shoulder. “Kendo… no…”


“I’m not sure,” Monoma told them. “All I’ve been told is that no pros or police can learn what’s happening. The kidnapper will call me back in about a minute. I don’t know what she’s planning, but she wanted us all together.”

“Is that all you know?” Shishida asked.

“…Actually, now that I’ve had some time, I think I remember where I’ve heard this voice before,” Monoma continued while turning to Reiko, Yui, and Ibara. “You three would recognize it too. I’m pretty sure this is the woman we confronted during our internships from last Spring.”

“You mean the mission?” Reiko inquired further. “You’re saying it’s the woman who met with Giran and hired Overdrive?”

“I think so.” Before the conversation could continue, Monoma’s phone rang again and he answered, silencing the worried class.

“Everyone is gathered,” he told the person on the other line. “No pros.”

“Very good,” the woman purred. “Put me on speakerphone.” Monoma followed the instructions and set the phone down on the coffee table in front of himself.

“You’re on.”

“Good evening, all,” she greeted. “I’m sure your classmate has explained the situation to you, so I won’t mince words. You want your friend back, correct?”

“HAND HER OVER, YOU BITCH!” Awase barked.

“Shut up, you idiot!” Setsuna shouted while clamping a hand over his mouth.

“It’s quite alright,” the woman on the phone responded. “I expected such a response. As I was saying, you do want Kendo returned safely, yes?”

“That’s right,” Monoma replied.
“…Then come here and get her.”

“Say what?” Fukidashi asked.

“I’ll send you our address,” she continued. “There’s a train leaving from the station near U.A. in 30 minutes that you can take. I want to play a little game with you all, and if you win, Kendo is free to go.”

“So, it’s a game?” Kaibara questioned as he stewed in rage. “You’re playing with us?”

“I am. Do you accept?” Before anyone could give the obvious answer, Monoma put his hand up to pause them.

“Before we do, let us talk to Kendo.”

“…Of course. She’s been listening in to our conversations, but I’ll let her speak.” The class held their breaths in anticipation, waiting to hear their friend’s voice and know she was alive for certain.

“…Guys? Can you hear me?” Hearing Kendo speaking sent a wave of relief across the room, the greatest of which was Monoma’s.

“We’re right here, Kendo,” he said. “Are you OK? Did they hurt you?”

“I’m not injured,” she told them. “Listen to me closely, Monoma. You and the others absolutely cannot come here.”

“Wh-What?”

“What’re you saying?!” Kamakiri yelled at the phone. “You think we’re just gonna leave you?!”

“That’s what I’m telling you to do,” Kendo continued. “This is some sort of death game. They want you to come so they can kill all of us. Monoma… you have to promise me that you won’t come here or let anyone else try.”

“But—”

“No buts!” she snapped. “Listen to me for once and stay put!” It was obvious to everyone from her cracking voice that Kendo had to fight through her orders. Monoma couldn’t respond. He used every drop of willpower her had to not break down in the moment. Thankfully, someone else picked up the phone and said exactly what everyone wanted to say.

“Kendo, it’s Yui. I’m sorry, but we can’t do that. We’re coming to save you and that’s final.”

“Yui…” Kendo looked down at her phone and bit her lip, trying to contain herself. “This is my problem. I got myself into this mess… so don’t risk your lives for mine.”

“You can’t ask us something like that!” Kendo heard Tsuburaba yell. “We’re a family, bitch!”

“That’s right!” Shishida agreed.

“Just sit tight! We’re coming to save you!” Setsuna added.

“Everything will be OK!” Ibara shouted. “Don’t worry!” Hearing her friends so resolute in saving her didn’t push Kendo to cry, as she thought it would. Instead, she smiled. She knew how dearly she was loved.
“We’ll be there soon,” Monoma told her, “and we’re not leaving without you. All of us will leave together.”

“If everyone is in agreement, then I’ll send you your directions over text,” Monoma heard the kidnapper say over the phone. “Remember what I said about not telling pros and police about this. If you have no questions, then I’ll be hanging up.”

“Hang on,” Monoma said. “Let me ask you something.”

“Yes?”

“You were Overdrive’s employer, weren’t you? You’re partnered with the League of Villains and make their tech.”

“…So, you recognized my voice? And after so much trouble to stay anonymous. You’re correct, Neito Monoma, and for your astute observation, I will give you some new information as a reward. My name is Kashiko Dokasuru. I am the leader of the weapons manufacturer turned criminal gang called Head Games, and we are no longer associated with the League of Villains in any official way. That is all I will tell you. You’ll receive directions through text soon.”

“Understood,” Monoma replied. He wanted to say more in case Kendo could still hear him, but Kashiko hung up before he could. “We’re leaving for the station in 15 minutes,” he told the class. “We won’t be able to get our costumes in that time, so wear clothes you won’t mind being destroyed.”

“I’m gonna go pack some knives,” Kamakiri announced. “Does anyone want a knife?”

“Yo, hook me up,” Setsuna requested. As the class dispersed to prepare, Monoma waited for almost everyone to be gone and made sure Pony, Tetsutetsu, and Ibara stuck around.

“Guys… I need you to help me with something.”

“What’s up?” Tetsutetsu asked.

“I… have no experience with this. Every time I’ve fought a villain, I’ve had a pro with me, and I’ve never fought a villain when they control the situation. I’m lost here. I need information, and the only people I could really ask among us are Kendo and you, Tetsutetsu. I need… advice.”

“I’m not really sure what to say,” the iron boy admitted.

“We can’t ask our teachers for advice either,” Ibara pointed out.

“That’s not who I’m going to ask,” Monoma told her before a long, contemplative pause. “…Maybe this is all karma. Some sort of punishment from the universe.” No one had an answer, but Tetsutetsu put a firm hand on Monoma’s shoulder. In the copycat’s mind, a memory played out – one that only furthered his idea that this was karmic punishment.

*If it were us at the USJ, we’d be in the spotlight.*

“This is the end of the road,” he mused. “The end of the path I started us on.”

In the dark headquarters of Head Games, Kendo was sat on the couch next to Kashiko with her head down. Dabi, Toga, and Hush had left, leaving herself, her captor, and Seijo, who was standing near
As she listened to her captor, Kendo’s feelings of anger and defiance were being drowned out once again. Being next to this woman unnerved her, and hearing her story only enhanced this feeling. She tried to slyly shift away, but Kashiko’s arm lashed out and wrapped around Kendo’s shoulders.

“I simply wanted to learn how it worked,” she divulged with a chuckle. “Since then, my focus switched to machines, so my interests have become less messy, but when a person has my attention, I can’t help myself. I need to seem them laid bare, with no secrets.” Kashiko pulled Kendo in close and leaned forward. With their foreheads touching, Kendo had a clear view into the merciless eyes of her captor and felt her skin crawl. “When someone is in mortal peril, or someone they love is, their true person shows itself. That is the moment where no secrets are kept. That is what I want to see.” Kendo could feel the woman’s eager breath on her face, and for the first time that night, she felt in full how much danger she was in. “Keep no secrets from me, Itsuka. There’s so much I want to learn about you.”

*Everyone... please... don’t come here...*
“Everyone, your attention please!” Iida demanded as he stood in the kitchen area of the dorm’s common room. “I have come to the conclusion that the dirty dish situation was not begun by multiple parties, but you should be aware that this is not an excuse to let them pile up.”

“If you know who’s doing it, why don’t you go annoy them?” Bakugo growled from the couch next to Kirishima.

“Because the culprit is in this room… Ashido!”

“You have no proof!” the pink girl declared, instantly getting defensive.

“Hey, guys?” Kaminari said from near the window. “I think we have visitors.”

“What is it?”

“Uuuh, I think it’s some Class B guys. Looks like Monoma, Tetsutetsu, Shiozaki and Tsunotori.”

“If Kendo is not with them, I doubt it’s something school-related,” Iida guessed. He went to the door and politely opened up the doors for the four visiting students to enter. He could tell as soon as he saw Monoma that something was off, but couldn’t place why. The copycat looked around the area sullenly, checking on who was present. In the common room was Iida, Midoriya, Kirishima, Bakugo, Todoroki, Kaminari, Mina, and Yaoyorozu.

“Is your teacher here?” he asked.

“Mr. Aizawa is not around right now. Do you need a teacher?”

“No. The opposite, actually. No teacher can hear what I have to say.”

“Oh, this should be good,” Bakugo commented without looking up from his phone. “Come to tell us off? Got a night off from the redhead so you’re getting into some trouble?”

“That’s not it,” Monoma explained, letting his words trail off an uneven breath.

“There’s an emergency.” Tetsutetsu chimed in to take over for his friend. “We can’t let any teachers know, so promise you’ll all keep it a secret.”

“What is it?” Yaoyorozu asked, standing up and coming closer to the 1-B students. “Is there something you need help with.”

“It’s complicated, but here’s the simple version. Kendo’s been kidnapped.” The same tense stillness took over the 1-A students just as it had for their counterparts, but Iida was quick to speak up once the initial shock left him.

“That’s horrible!” he exclaimed. “Do you know who or where? Why can’t you tell the teachers? Do you require our assistance in rescuing her?”

“We have an idea of who, but the ‘where’ is more complicated,” Tetsutetsu told him. “The person who has her called and told us to come save her. We’re getting directions over text, but we don’t know where exactly we’re going. Only the 19 of us are allowed to go. No police or pro heroes can know, and you guys can’t come. This is all some sort of game to them.”
“That’s awful,” Yaoyorozu said. “Is there anything we can do to help you? I can create something if you’d like.”

“I can’t really think of anything like that,” Tetsutetsu admitted. “Monoma?” The copycat shook his head, so the iron boy just shrugged.

“That’s really terrible, guys,” Midoriya chimed in. “If you can think of anything you need before you leave, just ask.”

“Yeah, we’re pulling for you!” Kirishima cried out. “Go kick some ass!”

“Hey, I got a question,” Mina said. “I don’t wanna sound rude, but why did you come and tell us if we can’t really help?”

“Monoma said he has questions,” Pony clarified. The attention of everyone went to Monoma again, who finally looked up from the floor.

“I…” Speaking seemed to cause him great trouble, but after a deep breath, he continued. “I’ve never done this sort of thing without a pro hero with me, and I’ve never fought back against villain who were attacking and controlled the situation. All of you… Even if it was just the USJ, you’ve all been through this; some more than others. I need…I need advice. Please.” Monoma couldn’t bear to raise his head. The 1-A students were shocked over how he acted, but still sympathized with his plight. Unfortunately, none of them knew how to answer.

“Monoma… I’m sorry but I don’t know what to say,” Iida told him. This finally got a reaction from the copycat, who gave Iida a shocked look.

“What do you mean? Iida, you fought the Hero Killer. You helped rescue Bakugo. You have to know something I don’t.”

“I-I really want to help you, but there’s no secret to be found. You’ve been a hero student as long as us, so you should be up to the task already.” Iida hoped that his words would encourage Monoma, but the blond boy turned away and looked to Todoroki.

“What about you, Todoroki? You have experience too. Can’t you tell me something?”

“Sorry, but I’m not sure how to answer,” the stoic student told Monoma. “I think you guys can handle this.”

“B-But—” Monoma had begun to shake where he stood as no one could answer his question. In his desperation, he turned to Midoriya, trying to smile as he normally could. “Midoriya, you’ve dealt with villains more than any of us. The USJ, the hero killer, the summer camp, the Kamino incident, the Yakuza – hell, you fought a villain right before the cultural festival.” He staggered towards Midoriya and put his hands on the boy’s shoulders. “If anyone can give me the information I need, it’s you, so let me have it.”

“M-Monoma…” Midoriya gulped loudly and broke eye contact from the copycat. “I really, really want to help you, but I, um—”

“What’s the problem, dammit?!” Monoma snapped. “Just give me some advice! I’m not asking for much!” He gripped onto Midoriya’s shirt with balled fist as tear streaks appeared on his cheeks. “I’m out of my depth here, so just give me some advice!” Everyone was shocked still from Monoma’s tearful outburst, but one person was able to move, and he stood up from the couch to approach the screaming boy. “Do you want me to get down on my hands and knees and beg, ‘cause I’ll do it!” he cried. “Tell me what to do!” Midoriya was close to crying as well, unable to find the
right words for Monoma, but before he could the confrontation was finally interrupted.

“Move, Deku.” Both he and Monoma looked and saw Bakugo approaching, his face unreadable. Monoma’s grip faltered and Midoriya was able to step away, letting Bakugo take his place. Everyone waited, curious to see what the explosive boy would say. “You’re pathetic,” he growled before slapping Monoma across the face.

“Kacchan!” Deku yelped.

“Monoma!” the three 1-B students said as well.

“Shut up! He needs to hear this!” Bakugo’s shout silenced the incoming protests from everyone, so he grabbed Monoma’s shirt and hoisted him up, getting close to his face. “All you do is go on and on about how great your class is compared to ours, but here you are, begging us for help. You want to be a hero? Huh? If you’re acting like this at the first sign of danger, then you’re just a pathetic waste of a Quirk. You think someone’s gonna hold your hand for every new problem? HELL NO! You have to buckle down and face your problems head-on! If you can’t do that, then what the fuck are you doing at U.A.?!?” Despite the harshness and volume of Bakugo’s words, Monoma was able to piece together the true meaning behind them. Slowly, the strength returned to his legs and he was able to stand without Bakugo holding him up. “Now stop crying, pull your balls outta your purse, and go save your friend, or else I’ll suit up and do it myself!”

“…That won’t be necessary,” Monoma finally replied, his voice steady once again. “We can handle this on our own.” Bakugo released the copycat from his grip and walked away, jumping over the couch to return to his seat.

“Then leave already. I’m sick of lookin’ at you.”

“Hey, before you go, you should copy my Quirk,” Kirishima offered. “Can you keep the copies for longer if you hold on for a while?”

“If you can, then take mine as well,” Todoroki said while walking to Monoma.

“Mine too,” Kaminari added while stretching over the couch to reach.

“It doesn’t work like that,” Monoma clarified, “but… thanks. It means a lot.”

“We should head back to the dorms,” Ibara interrupted. “We still need to prepare.”

“You’re right,” Monoma said as he walked back to their side.

“Good luck out there!” Mina cheered.

“Be safe, everyone,” Yaoyorozu wished.

“I’ll be sure to keep this a secret!” Iida added. “Best of luck to all of you!” Once the four 1-B students left the dorm, Monoma rubbed his sleeve over his face to remove the last of his tears.

“Feelin’ better?” Pony asked.

“Much better.” He shoved his hands into his pockets and hurried down the path to his own dorms building, ready to begin the night. “We’ll save her no matter what.”
Hang on in There

The train ride was mostly silent, and as Class 1-B went along the tracks, less and less people appeared. On their second to last stop, almost everyone remaining besides them got off. “That’s a good sign,” Kuroiro snarked.

“We must be entering a bad neighborhood,” Ibara noted as she adjusted the headscarf protecting her vines. “A fitting area for criminal scum.” The train continued on in its nearly-empty state until the class reached their designated station minutes later. Once they got off and looked over the dingy, dilapidated neighborhood, Monoma took out his phone to contact their enemy.

“Man, if this place isn’t a ‘pee in the gutter and pass out in it’ neighborhood, I don’t know what is,” Tsuburaba joked. No one laughed, so he just looked around awkwardly for something to change the subject. “Pony, does your jacket say ‘Rockin’ Horse’ or am I just crazy?”

“You’re seein’ right,” she told him while flashing her bedazzled denim jacket to her classmates. “Cute, huh?”

“Very.”

“OK, listen up,” Monoma called out. “We’re heading out. I have the address. It’s a 10-minute walk from here.”

“Finally,” Awase growled. “I need to punch something.”

“We’ve kept her waiting long enough. Let’s go,” Reiko added. Without hesitation, the crew embarked on the last leg of their journey. The area of the city didn’t get any nicer as they went on – in fact, it somehow got worse – but the night air was still crisp and they sky was still clear. Their directions led them to its very edge where they could see a more rural and mountainous area on the horizon.

“We aren’t too far from the Pussycats’ compound,” Shoda realized. “I remember seeing this place on our bus ride to the camp.” On their group’s right, they saw a quarry that looked long abandoned. Piles of trash, old cars covered in rust, and a ramshackle building that sported plenty of graffiti on its walls. Most of the buildings in the area seemed decrepit and deserted as well, or at least not well-maintained. The only place that didn’t look like it’d fall apart from a strong breeze was the four-story-tall building ahead of them, and even that seemed long-abandoned.

“That’s the place,” Monoma told everyone.

“Looks kinda shitty for an evil lair,” Kamakiri commented. “Especially for a gang that makes hi-tech weapons.”

“They care about staying hidden and anonymous – at least, they did in the past – so a hideout that looks run down is good camouflage.”

“So, who’s betting Kendo’s in the basement and who says top floor?” Setsuna asked. “Takin’ all bets, guys.”

“Inappropriate,” Ibara told her.

“Let me cope,” she whined back. “Comedy hides the fear.”
“Mood,” Kuroiro chimed in.

“Let’s just head inside,” Monoma instructed. The group of students were closely packed together as they approached the building, with the more combative students on the outskirts. They were all prepared to fight at a moment’s notice. Monoma headed the pack and was the one to reach out and open the front door. “Anyone home?”

“Asskicking delivery!” Tetsutetsu called out. “Who ordered one?! Trick question; you all did!”

“Nobody’s here,” Shishida realized. As everyone filed into the lobby, they looked around and saw no enemies. In contrast to the battered exterior to the building, they found the ground floor of the building to be neat and tidy, if somewhat barren.

“They must be waiting in the wings, ready to pounce,” Kuroiro reasoned while posing with Pony copying him.

“At least we’re out of the cold,” Ibara added while loosening her headscarf to fall around her neck.

“I’ll call and tell them we’ve arrived.”

“There’s no need, Neito Monoma.” The copycat clenched his teeth once he heard the familiar voice of Kashiko coming from a speaker in the ceiling.

“She must have security cameras set up,” Kinoko pointed out.

“OK, so you can hear and see us,” Monoma said aloud. “Well? We’re here. What now?”

“What now? Well, the game begins now.” At the front of the lobby, between a pair of elevators, was a TV screen that clicked on. The class looked up at it and saw Kashiko’s hooded figure, but their eyes were more to Kendo behind her. She didn’t look there way, only keeping her head down and eyes on the floor. “Now that you’ve arrived, it’s time to split you up.”

“What’s to stop us from running wild through the place and kicking your ass first?” Kamakiri questioned, which Kashiko snickered at.

“What’s stopping you is the fact that your dear class representative is still within my grasp. If you decide to break my rules or spoil my game, I have no problem killing her right here and now.”

“We’ll play your game,” Monoma told her quickly, “but I want your word that if we win, Kendo and all of us are free to go.”

“Absolutely. What fun is a game if you can ignore the rules? I promise that I will uphold my promises and free Kendo if can win.” Monoma’s classmates could see he was still on edge, but hearing a promise of Kendo’s safety made him give a quick sigh of relief.

“Then what are we doing?”

“It’s simple, really,” Kashiko told them. “My underlings are positioned in and around this facility for you to come and challenge them. If you win, you are free to do as you please. This includes coming to the fourth floor, where Kendo and I are waiting, or even going to assist your other classmates. Some of you have been selected specifically for a challenge while most are free to group up as you wish.”

“Just tell us who’s where already,” Tetsutetsu growled. “Let’s get this over with already.”
“How eager you are,” the villainess commented. “As you wish. We’ll begin with you, Tetsutetsu Tetsutetsu. You and Ibara Shiozaki have been requested in the basement. You can use one of the elevators to get there.”

“Got it,” the iron boy responded with Ibara nodding in agreement.

“Neito Monoma, you have the distinct honor of fighting one of my officers. He’s waiting here with me and Kendo on the fourth floor. Yui Kodai will be meeting my other officer further in the first floor.”

“Understood,” Yui and Monoma replied.

“Hiryu Rin and Setsuna Tokage, your opponents are not in this building, but one just outside. You can find them in a deserted flower shop called the Lily of the Valley. Finally, Pony Tsunotori will be going to the parking lot just behind this building.”

“Guess we’re going together,” Setsuna said to Rin with a nudge in his side. “Are you gonna be OK, Pony?”

“I’ll be fine,” she confidently stated.

“That’s my girl,” Monoma commented. “What else?”

“Those are the only specific requests,” Kashiko stated. “The rest are simply the amounts you may group up in. For example, we have a request for four people to go outside to the quarry. As a bit of advice, I’d recommend sending someone powerful.”

“Then I’ll go,” Honenuki declared.

“If you’re going, I’ll go too,” Kuroiro stated. “Who else wants to come?”

“You’ll need a long-range attacker, so I’ll come,” Fukidashi offered. Bondo stepped forward as well, completing the group.

“Another group of four has also been requested,” Kashiko told the class. “They will go to the third floor.”

“I’ll go there,” Reiko said with a shrug. “Might as well.”

“I will go as well,” Shishida declared.

“Same here,” Kamakiri added.

“Me too!” Kinoko squeaked. “I-I’m ready to fight!”

“Lastly, two pairs will go separately to the second floor.”

“Guess we’re one of them,” Tsuburaba said with a cheeky smile while giving Sen a playful punch in the shoulder. “That leaves you two as the leftovers.”

“I guess so,” Shoda replied while looking over at Awase.

“That’s everyone,” Monoma realized. “Hands in, you guys.” He extended his hand into the center of the group and made sure to copy everyone’s Quirks as they circled up and put their hands on his own. “Before we split up, I just wanna say you’re all amazing. Watch each other’s backs, don’t underestimate your opponent, and above all – survive. We’re leaving this place together.
“Understood?”

“Yeah,” they all said back.

“How about a ‘fight on’ on three? One, two, three!”

“Fight on!” they all yelled while throwing their hands up.

“That’s the spirit!” With a flip of his coat, Monoma strode towards an elevator alongside Tetsutetsu and Ibara, who went to the other one. “Hang on in there, Kendo, ‘cause there’s an army of badasses here to save you!” Once the elevator opened for him, he slipped inside and pressed the button to send him upstairs. “It’s hero time.” His wind of confidence that had carried him this far was suddenly jerked from his body when the elevator abruptly stopped after only seconds of being ridden up. “Woah, what the fuck?!” he yelped as he hit the floor.

“Apologies, but we’re not quite ready for you,” he heard from the elevator’s emergency radio. “You may come up once your Quirk’s time limit runs out.”

“Seriously,” he groaned. “Ugh, fine. I recently hit the 10-minute mark with it. Cross my heart.”

“Then you will stay for 10 minutes. For Kendo’s sake, I hope you aren’t lying.” Once the radio clicked off, Monoma was left with nothing but silence. He adjusted himself to sit more comfortably and leaned back on the wall to wait.

“For your sake, I hope you’re not lying about letting her go.”

“Alright, who wants some?!” Tetsutetsu screamed as the elevator doors opened. To his disappointment, there was only a wide, empty hallway before him. “Where are you?!”

“Our opponent must be further inside this facility,” Ibara reasoned. Once they left the elevator and began walking through the metal hallway, Ibara looked over the many rooms they passed and came to a conclusion. “This must be where they test their weapons and machines. Somewhere sturdy where no one will hear. I doubt the basement of this building was this extensive before they arrived here.”

“They must be packing some big guns.” Tetsutetsu reached into his coat pocket and pulled out several metal bolts that he chomped down with a sneer. “I don’t care what they throw at us. I’m gonna beat the hell outta them. No one messes with my friends.”

“Agreed. We will deliver a divine vengeance upon them.”

“How’re you holding up?” Tetsutetsu asked. “Seeing that picture of Kendo must’ve brought back some bad memories.” Ibara shuddered as painful thoughts invaded her mind again, but after a deep breath, she looked over to her boyfriend calmly.

“Whatsoever I may feel is irrelevant right now. If anything, they will only fuel my will to retrieve Kendo as soon as possible. To do this, we must first defeat the opponent in our path.”

“Now you’re speaking my language,” the iron boy snarled as the pair approached an intersection in the hallway. “Hey! Which way do we go?!”

“Continue straight ahead,” a voice said from a loudspeaker. The voice wasn’t Kashiko, but a nasally, higher-pitched man. “It’s not a long walk, I assure you.” Ibara’s skin crawled at the slimy arrogance the voice dripped with.
“Who the hell are you?” Tetsutetsu asked as he lumbered forward.

“An excellent question. You may call me Yusen Setsuzoku. I am the head scientist and weapon developer of Head Games.” As the U.A. students continued forward, they came upon a barricade that blocked their path. To their right, they saw a TV screen on the wall that clicked on as they approached. On it was a young man with blond hair that fell forward into one large bang while the rest trailed backwards. He had thin glasses balanced on his nose, just above a snake-like smile. If it wasn’t for the extreme cockiness his expression gave off, he could even be called handsome.

“You gonna let us in?”

“Just a moment,” Setsuzoku assured them. “I’m just making the final preparations for my test.”

“Your test?” Ibara questioned.

“I aim to collect combat data from you,” the scientist explained. “You two impressed me very much in the Sports Festival finals, so you will be test subjects for my masterpiece.”

“Your masterpiece?” Tetsutetsu asked. “Stop talking and just let us in.”

“I’d thank you to not dismiss my project so flippantly,” Setsuzoku told him with a quick adjustment of his glasses. “I will revolutionize the way combat is done, so your participation in this experiment is quite important to me. By collecting information from different fighters with different combat styles, I may create countermeasures for all possible opponents and make my… well, you’ll see soon enough.” Once he stopped talking, the TV screen clicked off and the barricade opened upward like a garage door, signaling Ibara and Tetsutetsu to step inside.

“This guy’s a douche,” he commented with Ibara nodding in agreement. Once they were both inside, they realized it was pitch black and the barricade was closing behind them, blocking the exit. Once the hallway’s light had left, another light appeared before them. This one showed Setsuzoku in the flesh, though he seemed to be in a cockpit of some sort across the room. Despite the distance, they could both make out the cocksure smile of his.

“Welcome,” he greeted insincerely. “You’ve come a long way to participate in this testing, so I thank you for that.”

“Dispense with your mocking words,” Ibara growled. “Just let us begin.”

“You’ll regret asking for that. You may have lived longer if you stalled.” Accompanied by the sound of whirring engines, smaller lights appeared around the room that gave shape to the mechanical behemoth. Setsuzoku rose up as the machine he controlled was powered on. Once the lights brightened, Ibara and Tetsutetsu could make out the tank-like shape before them. The war machine was round with a treads on the bottom while short turrets lined it’s outside, built into the hull. All of the panels along the sleek machine implied that even more weapons waited inside, and in the center was the cockpit where Setsuzoku rode. “This, my friends, is the future of combat that will make Quirks absolutely obsolete. Even with your powerful Quirks, you cannot hope to stop it.”

“If I punch it enough, it’ll stop!”

“With God’s protection, I shall destroy your wicked machine!”

“How cute,” the mechanist sneered. “Illogical concepts like determination or divine protection won’t help you now. I’ve spent years creating the perfect machine that no hero could match, no matter what their Quirk is! Endeavor, Best Jeanist, Hawks, Ryukyu – none of them could hold a candle to my glorious invention! Even All Might in his prime wouldn’t be able to stop it! You will both fall to
the undeniable strength of my magnum opus – the Goliath Maxim!”

“Just shut up and fight me!”
“Just shut up and fight me!” With a mighty scream, Tetsutetsu dashed at the tank before him. He leapt up onto the hull and rushed towards the cockpit, bringing his fist forward for an iron punch. Setsuzoku didn’t seem fazed by this and let Tetsutetsu attack the glass around him. To the Iron boy’s dismay, he pulled his hand back and saw his attack hadn’t even scratched it.

“This cockpit is protected by thick bulletproof glass, you see,” the scientist explained. Now pressed against the glass, Tetsutetsu looked inside and saw his opponents’ fingers were somehow plugged into the machine’s circuitry.

“What’s up with your fingers?”

“My Quirk allows me to control machines as if they were a part of my body,” Setsuzoku said slowly, as if he were speaking to a child. “This machine can be operated manually, but this gives me more of an edge.”

“So, you’re using your Quirk anyway, ya damn hypocrite?!” Tetsutetsu barked while pounding the glass.

“A dull power-enhancing Quirk user like you wouldn’t understand anyway. No matter. It’s time to test how you hold up to the Goliath Maxim’s attack power.”

“Tetsu, behind you!” Tetsutetsu craned his neck back and saw that a turret had appeared behind him. He ran around the cockpit so the bullet proof glass would protect him as well, but in his path, a panel opened on the hull and another turret popped out. From the gun came a ball-shaped projectile that shot into Tetsutetsu’s stomach and exploded on contact, throwing him from the tank. “Tetsu!” The turret continued to fire once the iron boy was on the floor, but a wall of vines appeared to protect him.

“Ibara,” he gasped while clutching his stomach. Ibara raced behind the vine wall, which held tightly to protect them from the concurrent blasts, and came to his side.

“Are you alright? Can you move?”

“I’ll be fine,” he told her, “but we’ve gotta escape and find a place to lay low and strategize. There’s nowhere to hide in this room and he’s got weapons all around that tank.

“I’m sorry to say this,” they heard Setsuzoku say, “but escape from here is impossible. Don’t assume these vines can protect you either. It’s an easy counter to set them alight.” Ibara’s eyes grew wide and she ran away from the vine wall with Tetsutetsu. As soon as they were out of range, a flamethrower appeared from the tank and blasted the vines, burning through them with ease. Once they were in Setsuzoku’s sight, however, the bombardment of explosive shells continued.

“The door we came in on! I’ll break through it!” Tetsutetsu pushed his Quirk to its limit and slammed into the wall, denting it immediately. “HEAVY METAL!”

“Shield of Faith!” Ibara’s vines formed a wall once again, but unlike before, a flamethrower was already preparing to attack it. Behind Ibara, Tetsutetsu swung his arm into the barricade and ripped through, creating a hole big enough for a single person.

“Let’s go!” he shouted before seeing a bright flame shooting towards them between Ibara’s vines. On instinct, grabbed Ibara and shoved her through the hole in the wall, blocking the flamethrower’s
blast with his back. Ibara crash landed and looked up to see her boyfriend wreathed in fire. “Don’t worry! I can take this!” He tried to smile at her as the flames consumed him, but soon after, and explosive shell impacted his back, making him slump forward.

“TETSU!” Ibara lurched forward to catch him, bringing him through the hole in the barricade and into her embrace. His Quirk was beginning to falter from the extreme damage, but as far as Ibara could tell, he wasn’t dying.

“You may have made it out the door, but escape is still impossible.” Once she heard Setsuzoku’s mocking voice again, she stood and ran down the hallway, leaving behind bundles of vines to cover her exit. She could feel the rumble from the tank’s chase under here feet, but at that moment, she was far more concerned with the limp body in her arms. “Why do you run when I can chase you anywhere in this facility?”

“Lemme at him…” Ibara heard Tetsutetsu groan. “I’mma… break his face…”

“Just hold on. I need to get you somewhere safe.” Far behind her, Ibara heard her vines being scorched by flamethrowers and cut apart by saws. The machine was coming slowly, however, and even with Tetsutetsu weighing her down, she outsped it and made a left turn at the intersection. Now out of its sight, she ducked into the first room she saw and set the iron boy down.

“Next time I see him… he’s dead.” His jacket and shirt had been shredded and burned, only holding onto him by a few damaged strips of cloth. His back was burned and bruised as well, but his defenses had thankfully held up far better than Ibara had thought at first.

“How do you feel?

“Just fine,” he coughed. “I can keep going. I’ve gotta.”

“Yes, please do,” Ibara heard a voice snicker. She turned around and faced the wall opposite her to see a series of monitors, each of which clicked on to show Setsuzoku’s face. “I can always use more data for you brawler-type fighters, so by all means, return and fight. I’m sure your ‘determination’ can help you now.” The joking lilt he put on the word “determination” angered Tetsutetsu even more, and he raised his head to scream at his opponent.

“You’re nothing but a gutless coward! I’ll bet you’ve never even thrown a punch! Someone like you could never understand true determination! YOU’RE NO MAN!”

“Oh, but I am. A man of science, that is.” With an adjustment of his glasses, Setsuzoku grinned at the pair through the monitor, like a snake preparing to feast on cornered mice. “This thing you call determination is a simple chemical reaction in your brain. Your body has a limit that I can quantify and counter with barely a thought. This idea that you can push yourself to greater height by simple willpower is preposterous.”

“Speak no further, you abhorrent villain,” Ibara commanded, barely containing her own rage. “As God as my witness, I will destroy that machine and defeat you.”

“Another laughable concept,” Setsuzoku declared, making Ibara gasp. “You think you can gain strength from an invisible helper? I can’t help but pity you.”

“How dare you,” she seethed. “Do you only take joy in causing pain and insulting others? If I were not a holy woman, I’d…”

“What? What would you do?” the villain asked venomously. Ibara wanted to answer immediately, but before she could, her mind flashed back to the picture of Kendo she was shown. The idea that
her friend was going through the same treatment she had received years ago pushed her rage to a point she didn’t think possible. She stood up from the floor, planted her feet firmly, and let this rage carry her words.

“I’D TEAR EVERY VILE LIMB OFF YOUR CONTEMPTUOUS BODY AND SUFFOCATE YOU WITH THEM! I’D FLAY THE SKIN OFF YOUR VERY BONES AND POUR SALT IN YOUR WOUNDS! I’D CUT THE WICKED TONGUE FROM YOUR MOUTH AND SHOVE IT WHERE GOD’S LIGHT COULD NEVER SHINE! I’D PUT YOU THROUGH EVERY SINGLE LAYER OF HELL FOR DARING TO INSULT MY LOVE, MY FAITH, AND MY SPIRIT! AND THAT’S NOT EVEN THE BEGINNING OF WHAT I’D DO TO YOUR LOATHSOME ASSOCIATES FOR DARING TO HURT MY BELOVED COMRADES!”

Once Ibara stopped screaming, the room was absolutely silent. She took a deep, ragged breath and then sent her vines forward, smashing the monitors into pieces. “Woah,” Tetsutetsu dimly commented as Ibara made the sign of the cross and mumbled a prayer.

“Apologies,” she said to him.

“Don’t apologize! That was awesome! Very manly!” Ibara smiled at the comment and extended her hand to Tetsutetsu, who was able to stand again. From the rumbling in the ground, they both knew Setsuzoku’s weapon had finally made it to the intersection. “He’s coming.”

“Yes.”

“I’m gonna break that bulletproof glass,” Tetsutetsu snarled while discarding his destroyed jacket and shirt, “and then I’m gonna break his face.”

“Go right ahead,” Ibara told him. “I will make sure none of his weapons harm you.”

“Thanks.” Tetsutetsu took the first few steps towards the door, but then turned back to Ibara. He hooked his arm around her waist and pulled her close, kissing her deeply. Ibara responded in kind, returning the affection with her lips.

“Are you ready?” she asked once they separated.

“Yeah.” Once his skinned hardened into iron, Tetsutetsu took off like a bullet, hooking around the doorway and barreling down the hallway. Ibara ran right behind him with her vines at the ready. Up ahead, they could see the Goliath Maxim tank in the intersection.

“There you are,” they heard Setsuzoku say. From the hull of the tank, explosive rounds were fired out, lining the hall in flashes of heat and destruction. Tetsutetsu ran through the barrage and jumped towards the tank, his fist raised for an attack, while Ibara’s vines created blockades to protect herself.

“HEAVY METAL!” The iron fist shot down into the glass barrier, but couldn’t break through. “IRON APOCALYPSE!” Focusing solely on attacking, Tetsutetsu began to pound at the cockpit with every ounce of strength and speed he could muster.

“A fruitless endeavor,” Setsuzoku told him. “You’ll reach your limit long before you even scratch the surface.”

“I HAVE NO LIMITS! YOU HEAR ME!?” As he kept striking the bulletproof glass, several hatches across the hull opened up, and out of them rose a deadly assortment of weapons.

“Stay still and this will be over quickly.” A pair of machine guns took aim at Tetsutetsu, but before
they could fire, Ibara’s vine wrapped them up and plucked them from the tank.

“I won’t let you hurt him further.” Setsuzoku scoffed at this and sent a pair of buzzsaws over the cockpit to cut into Tetsutetsu’s arms. The spinning blades met his shoulders briefly, creating a lightshow of sparks, but more vines came to snap them away.

“Why do you insist on destroying my work!??” Setsuzoku yelled. “You’ll never defeat it, so just—” That’s when a new sound caught his attention. The sound of cracking glass. The scientist froze up in shock, and then crooked his neck up to see a jagged line across his glass shield. Tetsutetsu paused to catch his breath, but once he saw the crack, he smirked and continued his barrage, reinvigorated. “How did—this is bulletproof glass!”

“I’m not a bullet, idiot!” Tetsutetsu yelled mockingly. Setsuzoku’s brow furrowed and he took the control of the Goliath Maxim again to bring out even more weapons. While the explosive guns focused fire on Ibara, flamethrowers and machine guns appeared to fire on Tetsutetsu.

“I have enough data on your fighting style, so just die already!”

“Via Dolorosa!” As soon as the weapons appeared, they were wrapped in vines and ripped from the hull.

“How?!” Setsuzoku yelped. “Those are just plants! How can they rip metal away?!”

“What a fool you are,” Ibara told him. “My vines contain my own willpower, which is fueled in turn by the strength of God.”

“You can’t be serious!” Setsuzoku held his tongue again when he heard more cracks forming in the cockpit. Instead of slowing down like he expected, Tetsutetsu was energized by his progress and sped up his barrage of punches. “This is… This is impossible! I’ve built this tank to endure attacks from the strongest opponents possible! YOU CAN’T BE THIS STRONG!”

“He is that strong because he needs to be.” Setsuzoku heard Ibara’s words, but couldn’t bring himself to look away from the attacks that tore away at his defense. His cocky smirk was long gone as well, replaced by a grimace of terror. “By threatening our comrades, you’ve given him the motivation to reach this height and push even further. You honestly think that you can calculate someone’s strength? I’ve never heard something so moronic.”

In a last-ditch move, Setsuzoku plugged himself back into the Goliath Maxim and forced it to move towards Ibara. “I’ll just have to run you down!” To his shock, the tank couldn’t move. Once he fearfully turned his head, he saw vines had dug underneath and held the treads back, rendering them immobile. With no weapons left and no way to move, all he could do was watch as the glass shield broke further, buckling under the weight of the iron punches.

“Isaiah 13:11,” Ibara began. “‘Thus, I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless.’”

Once a chunk of glass fell into the cockpit, Tetsutetsu reeled back for one last punch and Setsuzoku cowered, holding his arms out feebly. “Wait, I surrender! I SURRENDER!”

“Despair to the conceited. Show him, Tetsu.”

“I’LL BREAK YOUR FAAAAAAAAACE!” With a final scream of rage, Tetsutetsu rammed his iron fist through the weakened glass, soaring down to Setsuzoku’s face and impacting his cheek. His glasses shattered immediately, and once he was pushed into the tank’s control panel, his head was
indented into the machinery. Teeth and blood spurted from his broken jaw and his consciousness faded away, putting an end to the Goliath Maxim’s rampage. Tetsutetsu lifted his arm from the cockpit, worn and bloodied at the knuckles, and held it up in triumph. “Ibara?”

“Yes?”

“We’re done here. Let’s go.”
“She said second floor, yeah?”

“That’s right.”

“Then we’re here.” Awase lifted his leg and kicked the door open, nearly knocking it off its hinges. The boom from its opening echoed through the second floor and made Shoda flinch. “Get ready. We may be attacked from anywhere.” Awase lumbered out of the stairwell and looked around warily, seeing the many opened rooms. “Whoever it is, they’re lurking around to attack.”

“Geez, this is freaky,” Shoda commented while cracking his knuckles. “Think the others are OK?”

“Definitely, but don’t worry about them for now. Worry about your opponent.”

“Yeah.” Awase took the lead and went down the hallway with Shoda watching behind them. The shorter boy stuck close to his classmate, keeping his eyes peeled for any sneak attacks, but they both came to a sudden stop halfway down the hall. “Are you the guy we have to beat up?” With their opponent found, Shoda took a deep breath and turned around to face him.

Standing across from the two students was a boy about their age, around Shoda’s height but much thinner, with a white face and completely bright red eyes. He was dressed in an obviously villainous costume consisting of a gray bodysuit, black cloak and cowl, and black gloves and boots. Around his waist was a chunky yellow utility belt, and crisscrossed over his chest was two black sashes with metal discs attached.

“Well? You gonna say something?” Awase barked. The villain reached into his utility belt, prompting Shoda and Awase to take fighting stances, and he pulled out a small box with a speaker at the end. He pointed it at the pair and pressed a button, but instead of firing out a projectile like they expected, a voice came out.

**Hello. My name is Suberidai Musei. Due to a complication with my vocal cords, I am mute and communicate through prerecorded messages. Please be patient with me.**

Awase and Shoda shared a confused look, and then shrugged. “Uh… OK,” Shoda responded. “Are you our opponent?”

Yes.

**I am a weapons designer for the group called Head Games.**

I am very cool.

“He has ‘I am very cool’ as a prerecorded message?” Awase questioned. “Wait, if you’re just a scientist, what’s with the outfit?”

I am very cool.

“He’s probably just gung-ho about the switch from tech makers to full-blown villains,” Shoda guessed.
“Hm,” Awase shrugged. “Well, whatever. Here’s the deal, guy. We’re gonna beat the shit out of you for kidnapping our friend and threatening all of us.” The headband wearer took a step forward, but as soon as he tried to make another, Musei was gone. “What the…”

“What was that?” Shoda wondered. “Did he turn invisible? Was that super speed?”

“Was it even a Quirk?” Awase interjected. “We don’t know what kinda tech they can make, so—” In the middle of Awase’s sentence, Musei reappeared right in front of him. In his right hand was a metal disc that he shoved into Awase’s face. Barely seconds later, he disappeared again and the metal disc exploded.

“Awase!” Shoda watched as his classmate was blown backwards and landed flat on the floor. He rushed to his side and saw blood trickling down his face from his forehead.

“Fuck!” Awase snapped while sitting up. “What the hell was that?” While he was rubbing away the blood with his sleeve, Musei came into view again, this time holding out his speech box.

These are Concussion Discs; a weapon of my own designs. Please contact me if you are interested in purchasing—

The villain flipped off his speech device in the middle of its sentence and held out another disc, which he flung at Awase. Shoda dove in its path and threw himself to the ground, absorbing the blast into his stomach. “Shoda!”

“I’m OK,” he said with a huff. The kinetic energy of the blast activated Shoda’s Quirk and two clumps of hair stood up in its lightning-bolt shape. Musei looked over the change in Shoda and disappeared once again. “We have to figure out how he’s doing that.”

“If I can just get my hands on him, that’ll be it,” Awase figured. “I can weld him into place, and he’s a pretty shrimpy guy, so I doubt he could take many hits.” Once they were both on their feet, they went back-to-back once again. Shoda kept his eyes peeled for any movement, but in the second he blinked, Musei appeared down the hall, holding something long and metal over his shoulder.

“There!” he yelped, prompting Awase to turn around to fight. He pressed his boot into the ground to push off in a sprint, but before he could, he realized what Musei was holding.

“Get down! That’s a bazooka!” Musei fired a rocket from his weapon down the hall, and in turn, Awase fell backwards while pushing Shoda down with him. The rocket passed over them and kept going until it hit the wall, where it burst on impact. “Holy shit,” Awase muttered as he sat up.

“What the hell was that?” Shoda wondered. He watched Musei disappear again as he expected, but this time, he felt something – a brief gust of wind that moved his hair. Shoda rose to his feet quickly and turned around to see Musei reappear down the hall, so he pushed his built-up kinetic energy into his foot and hand. “Flash Impact!” With a mighty kickoff, he soared down the hall and threw a palm strike. His surprised foe dipped around the hit, but Shoda pushed his advantage and attacked a few more times. In the span of a few seconds, Musei dodged each attack, and when it looked like the last one would hit his chest straight-on, he vanished once again.

“What the hell was that?” Awase questioned as he rejoined his classmate. He looked on the ground and saw that in his rush to escape, Musei had dropped a Concussion Disc.

“I think I have his Quirk figured out,” Shoda told him. “Keep an eye out for him and I’ll explain.”

Yes.
“OK, lemme hear it.”

“It’s definitely not invisibility or teleportation, but some sort of movement-based Quirk. After we dodged that rocket, I could feel a wind go by. That must’ve been him moving past us to the other side of the hall. I don’t think it’s running either. He hasn’t been out of breath or anything to suggest he’s sprinting. It seems more like… sliding.”

“Sliding?”

“Yeah. I think his Quirk is the ability to quickly slide across the floor. He’s making us lose track of him and panic when he seemingly ‘disappears’ or ‘teleports.’ Whenever he’s gone for a while, he must be in one of these rooms where he’s stored weapons like that rocket launcher. He must have some distance limiter though, and based on our last exchange, he may have a time limit as well. He was forced to dodge my attacks for a couple of seconds before sliding away, so it’s not a long time, but there’s at least a moment after using it where he can’t slide again.”

“Man, that’s some detective-level shit your pulling,” Awase complimented. “In that case, we have to catch him just after he reappears.” After another few moments of waiting, Shoda saw Musei appear across the hall from him.

“There!” He pushed off the ground into a sprint and Musei responded by tossing more Concussion Discs into his path. There were at least five from what Shoda could count, but he didn’t stop running. I can take it! I’ll absorb their force! Just as the projectiles approached him, Shoda felt Awase grab his jacket and duck into a room just in time to avoid the discs’ explosion. At the same time, Awase had thrown the disc he had picked up and they heard it explode down the hall.

“Don’t get cocky, man!” Awase shouted while pulling close to Shoda’s face. “I know you’re tough, but just one of those hurt like hell! Five at once will kill you!” He gave Shoda a quick smack on the head as a final word on the subject, and then went to check in the hallway.

“You’re right,” Shoda said. “Sorry.”

“It’s fine. Looks like he bailed to get more weapons. Watch the door for me.” Shoda swapped positions with Awase to keep lookout, but took a quick glance around the room first. In it, he saw a work bench with tools and half-finished contraptions littered around.

“Guess this floor is where they build weapons,” he guessed.

“Reminds me of the Support Course workshops,” Awase commented as he fished through the piles of scrap. “I’ll use this… and this… any sign of him?”

“No. Maybe he was seriously injured from the disc you threw at him?”

“I doubt it. I only caught a glimpse, but it seemed like he dodged the brunt of the explosion. I’m ready for him, though, so come over here.” Shoda took one last look into the hallway before backing away towards his classmate. He saw that Awase had made a makeshift battering ram with welded-together metal that he had slung over his shoulder. “When he comes in here after us, hit the back of this with a palm thrust. I’ll aim it so it goes right into him.”

“Alright.” Awase got down on one knee and held out his battering ram, resting the end on his shoulder. Shoda took his position behind and held his palm out against its end. They waited in a cold silence for the black-clad figure to appear in the door so they could enact the plan. With this lull in the action, Shoda’s nerves caught up with his body and he began to sweat and shake.

“Deep breaths… Deep breaths,” he told himself while trying to steady his hand. Awase looked over
his shoulder at Shoda to try and calm him down, but in that instant, Musei appeared in the doorway with another rocket launcher. “There!” Shoda yelped. He pushed his hand into the butt of the battering ram, but with his shaky hand and Awase’s momentary lapse in attention, their shot went astray. Musei jumped back in surprise from the attack, and in his flinch, moved his bazooka into the slipshod ram’s path, which knocked it from his hand.

“I’ve got him!” Awase dove after Musei and swept his leg under him, trying to avoid any quick escapes. The villain took the bait and jumped, so Awase grabbed him in a bear hug. “You’re not going anywhere!” Musei didn’t give a reaction to Awase’s threat, only grabbing two Concussion Discs and setting them off on Awase’s back. “SHIT!” Awase’s grip faltered from the damage and he dropped Musei, but Shoda made a dive for him.

“Come here!” Shoda was able to grab one of his sashes, but Musei still slid away, leaving the two boys alone again. Shoda gripped onto the sash bitterly before going over to Awase. “Hey, are you OK?”

“Been better,” he groaned. His shirt had been torn and his back was brunt and cut up, but it didn’t seem to impede him.

“Can you move?”

“Oh yeah.” Awase forced himself to stand and tightened his headband, snarling. “I’m gonna rip that little fuck to pieces. Just gotta catch him.”

“Then I’ll—”

“Listen, if you’re not up for this, then don’t bother.” Awase didn’t look back at Shoda as his terse words left his mouth. “You were doing fine at first, but you just fell apart on me back there. We almost had him.”

“…I know. I’m sorry, Awase.” Shoda held tightly to the belt of explosive discs as he internally bereted himself. What am I doing here? I’m… I’m letting everyone down.

“Kendo’s counting on us here. So, either get your head straight, or just stay outta the way.” Awase balled his fists tightly and walked away from his classmate, intent on hunting Musei down and beating him senseless. However, metal clicking behind him caught his attention.

“You’re right. Kendo’s counting on us. I need to be at my best.” Awase finally turned around to see Shoda placing the sash around his body. “I can take it!” Before Awase could speak up, Shoda slapped his arm down on the Concussion Discs, and after a moment, they exploded.

“SH-SHODA!” The gray-haired boy was blown backwards, landing in a smoking, immobile heap. Awase was shocked to his core, but a sudden surge of guilt assaulted his mind. “You moron!” he screamed. “Fucking idiot! What’d you do?!” His insults were accompanied with punches to his own head and Awase fell to his knees, clenching his eyes shut to avoid crying. “Fucking… FUCK! Shoda…” As tears leaked out from his tightly sealed eyelids, Awase felt a brief gust of wind behind him, and then felt the muzzle of a pistol against the back of his head.

As you can see, my weapons are quite impressive.

“Shut the fuck up,” Awase muttered. He whipped around and grabbed hold of Musei’s gun, fusing the hammer and trigger in place to render it inoperable. “You fucks are gonna pay dearly for this!” For the first time that night, Musei’s eyes seemed to grow wide in shock. He tossed away his gun and tried to slide backwards, but Awase grabbed his gloved hand and fused his own hand to it.
“You’re not going anywhere, you mute bastard. I’m feeling real shitty right now, so I’m gonna take it out on you!”

Musei activated his Quirk and slid backwards, but with Awase’s weight adding to his momentum, they both crashed into the wall at the end. Awase took this opportunity to weld Musei’s cape to the wall and unfused his hand to make a fist. “You little shit!” he yelled before pounding the villain’s stomach. “You just had to push him, huh?! You just had to push him!” After hammering the villain enough to stun him, Awase doubled over and pulled his headband down over his eyes, trying to hide his crying. “Dammit… Dammit, I… I’m sorry, Shoda. I’m sorry…”

“It’s fine.” When he heard a familiar voice down the hall, Awase froze up. He hesitantly lifted his headband back-up, seeing silver light in the corner of his eye. Once he tilted his head, he could see Shoda standing down the hall, his hair standing up in spikes and glowing brighter than ever before. His hands where held out in front of his chest, and in between his palms was silver energy pooling together in a sphere of light. “I’ll finish this now. You may want to move.”

Once he recovered from the shock of seeing Shoda alive, Awase stood up and looked back to Musei, who was fearfully watching the formation of Shoda’s final attack. Awase smirked and smacked Musei’s face into the wall, fusing him to it so he couldn’t escape. “Have fun with that,” the headband wearer told him before leaving the villain to his fate.

“I’ll take every hit you’ve given us… and pay it back.” Shoda pushed his hands out, aiming the orb of kinetic force forward. “Mirrored Punishment: Surge Impact!” With a burst of power, the ball of light escaped Shoda’s grasp and rushed down the wall, splintering the walls as it flew ahead. Musei looked frightened, but after a sigh, he seemed to accept the outcome and reached for his speech box. I hope you’ve enjoyed this demonstration of—

The kinetic attack engulfed Musei and exploded once it crashed into the wall, leaving Awase blinded for a moment. Once his senses returned, he sauntered over to the damaged wall and saw Musei was down for the count. “Good riddance, you bastard.” A thud from further away caught his attention next, and he looked to see Shoda dropping to the ground. “Shoda!” Awase sprinted to his fallen comrade and flipped him onto his back to check over his injuries. To his surprise, Shoda was still conscious.

“Hey,” he croaked.

“You’re a real crazy bitch, y’know?” Awase laughed. “I underestimated you, Shoda. All that stuff I said, I… I’m sorry, man.”

“it’s fine. I think I needed that to push me.”

“Alright, let’s get you cleaned up. You look like shit.”

“That’s about how I feel too.”

Chapter End Notes

Happy New Year, all!
First of all, I hope you’re enjoying this arc so far. Here’s an announcement! Coming up on January 5th through the 11th is 1B ship week! You can find the rules and prompts on
the Tumblr called 1bshipweek2019. I'm going to continue with this story for now, and once this is done, I'm gonna go back and do these prompts as a sort of epilogue to this story, but during the actual dates, you guys should give it a go!
Young Lust

“This is the place,” Kaibara said as he and Tsuburaba exited the stairwell. The section of the second floor they went to was much less put-together then the rest of the building, looking less like an evil lair and more like the abandoned apartment building the exterior presented. “Not what I expected.” Once the boys took a look around, they saw an arrow painted on the floor, pointing to the room at the very end of the hallway.

“I wonder where we should go?” Tsuburaba joked.

“I thi—”

“Dammit, give us a sign!”

“Call me crazy, but I get the feeling we go this way,” Kaibara chuckled. The boys followed the arrow down the hall, ending up in the doorway of a large room with a wooden floor and black curtains. In the corner was a table with a sewing machine and several unidentifiable tools, and nearby was a rack of costumes and clothing materials. “This must be where they make costumes for villains.”

“Should we… do something to them?” Tsuburaba asked as he wandered inside. “Like, do we shred ‘em up or something?”

“Nah. They’ll be confiscated by the police once we beat everyone here,” Kaibara guessed.

“My, how confident.” The boys jumped once they heard another voice in the room, and they both took fighting stances. The voice came from the shadows in the corner of the room, but they could tell it was a woman’s. “Sen Kaibara, Kosei Tsuburaba, it’s a pleasure to meet you.” The voice was low and sultry, but in a way Kaibara could tell was practiced.

“If you’re our opponent, then come out of the shadows,” he demanded. The women gave a mirthful laugh at this and sauntered into view. She stood a full head taller than both boys with pale skin and long, raven-black hair that covered one eye with its waves. She wore a short purple jacket with no shirt underneath, mostly unzipped to show off her ample chest and toned stomach. Below that was a black skirt with a slit up the side to expose her right leg, which was clad in a fishnet stocking.

“Welcome to my workshop,” she greeted breathily, staring into Kaibara’s eyes. “I am the costume designer and head seamstress for Head Games, Airi Yokubo.” Kaibara couldn’t put his finger on why, but making eye contact with this woman gave him a strange sensation. He ignored this and shook his head to return to his senses.

“If you’re our opponent, then come out of the shadows,” he demanded. The women gave a mirthful laugh at this and sauntered into view. She stood a full head taller than both boys with pale skin and long, raven-black hair that covered one eye with its waves. She wore a short purple jacket with no shirt underneath, mostly unzipped to show off her ample chest and toned stomach. Below that was a black skirt with a slit up the side to expose her right leg, which was clad in a fishnet stocking.

“Let’s just get his done,” he snarled, which seemed to shock the woman. “Kosei, you ready?”

“Oh, wow,” Tsuburaba muttered to himself. Kaibara looked back to his boyfriend in confusion to see him red-faced, looking over their foe in great detail.

“Kosei!” Kaibara barked to snap him back to his senses.

“Right! Sorry! I’m not distracted!” Tsuburaba backtracked. “I wasn’t staring at her those two perfectly round, pillow-like knockers.”

“My eyes are up here, young man,” Airi told Tsuburaba, drawing his gaze up to hers. Kaibara looked back and forth between the two, but when neither made a move, he decided to attack. He ran
to Airi and threw a spinning punch, which she dodged away from. As she tried to counter with a kick, Kaibara grabbed her leg and threw her across the room, where she landed between him and Tsuburaba.

“Use your Air Prison!”

“Right!” Tsuburaba lifted his hands to use his super move, but before he could, Airi rolled out of the way from the attack. Kaibara, having watched closely, could see Tsuburaba had hesitated.

“What’re you doing?” he asked.

“S-Sorry,” the oval-eyed boy answered before looking over at Airi. “It’s weird… I’m feeling weird, man.”

“Well, get your head straight.” From her workshop table, Airi reached into the drawers and pulled out a pair of tonfas that she stated to spin around. “Let’s try this again.”

“Yes, let’s,” Airi agreed while sneaking another look into Tsuburaba’s eyes. Kaibara attacked with a spinning kick but Airi was able to dodge again and counter with her tonfas. They struck Kaibara’s crossed arm and to his surprise, they released an electric shock into him.

“Shit!” he yelped while jumping back. “Those’re Tasers too, huh? Kosei, I need some defense.” He looked to his boyfriend for support, but saw he was still staring lustfully at their opponent.

“Kosei!”

“Huh?!”

“Snap out of it and attack her!”

“Yes, try and attack me,” Airi dared. She stopped spinning her tonfas and stood up straight, looking to Tsuburaba for what he’d do. It looked to Kaibara that Tsuburaba was struggling with what to do, but after a moment, he was finally able to move. He dashed at Airi with his arm cocked and threw his fist up towards her face, but at the last second, he swerved the attack away.

“What’s wrong?” Kaibara asked, starting to get suspicious. “Why’re you pulling your punches?”

“Sen… I’m sorry, but… I can’t hurt something so beautiful.” He lowered his arm and looked up at Airi in awe while she looked down into his big eyes. Kaibara had gone mute in surprise, trying to figure out what had happened.

“What’d you do?!” he finally yelled. “You did something, didn’t you? This is your Quirk, isn’t it?!”

“You’ve finally figured it out,” she snickered. “You seemed to be immune to my charm, but this boy here was all too easy to control. Young Tsuburaba has fallen victim to my spell of lust.”

**Airi Yokubo. Quirk: Lust. She can hypnotize people through eye contact, and the time it takes to do so is based on how attracted that person is to her.**

“Kosei, listen to me,” Kaibara commanded. “She’s messing with your mind. You have to fight it! Think about Kendo! Think about our classmates fighting for their lives!”

“Don’t listen to him,” Airi instructed while ruffling Tsuburaba’s hair. “All you need to do is love me.”

“OK~”
Kaibara clenched his teeth in anger and spun his arm faster than ever before, ready to defeat his opponent as fast as he could. “If you won’t let him go, then I’ll beat you into the ground!” He jumped up to attack and threw his arm forward at Airi’s cocksure grin. However, the impact of his attack fell short by a few inches. His punch had been halted by an invisible wall between them. “…Kosei?”

“Sorry, Sen, but I can’t let you hurt her.”

“That’s right, my little love slave,” Airi said. “Kill him for me.”

“Yes, ma’am.” Tsuburaba rushed Kaibara and attacked with a flurry of punches. With no other options, Kaibara kept up his guard to avoid serious damage.

“You have to fight it, Kosei!” Tsuburaba blew out a Whistle Spear that Kaibara just barely dodged, so he decided to counter. “I don’t know if this’ll help, but it’s worth a shot! I’ll beat the mind control out of you!” His spinning punch was dodged by Tsuburaba, who blew another Whistle Spear, this time lodging it into Kaibara’s right shoulder. “Urg! Kosei, you have to—” He was interrupted when Tsuburaba landed a punch to his jaw and pushed him to the floor.

“You shouldn’t have tried to attack her,” Tsuburaba said. He stomped down on the fallen boy’s stomach and leaned in closer, grabbing the collar of his shirt. Kaibara tried to throw a punch with his undamaged left arm, but Tsuburaba shot another solid air spear into his left shoulder, staking him to the floor. “What should I do now, ma’am?”

“I told you to kill him, didn’t I?”

“Right. Yes, ma’am.” Aiming down at Kaibara’s forehead, Tsuburaba inhaled and formed the beginning of a Whistle Spear in his lips.

“Kosei…” Kaibara grunted as he struggled to free himself. He gave Tsuburaba one last pleading look in his eyes before leaning his head back. “Do what you have to. I couldn’t fight you at my full strength even if I had too.” Kaibara watched and waited for Tsuburaba’s last attack to come, but instead, the solid air in his mouth disappeared. He didn’t move his body, but the oval-eyed boy had seemingly frozen.

“What’s wrong?” Airi barked. “Finish him off!” Tsuburaba still didn’t move. The hand gripping Kaibara’s shirt grew weak and started to shake. Kosei’s face wasn’t changing from the blank expression, but Kaibara could still see the fight in his eyes.

“You’ve underestimated him,” he laughed. Airi growled at this and grabbed Tsuburaba by the jacket, yanking him off Kaibara. She brought his face close to hers and looked deep into his eyes for a long while.

“Don’t forget who you serve,” she told the hypnotized boy. Kaibara took this chance to break the solid air spear in his arm. Once he started climbing to his feet, Airi refocused on him and took out her tonfas. Kaibara tried swiping at her legs, but a shock from her weapons stopped him. “I’ll just finish you myself!” she shouted before jabbing Kaibara’s chest with her tonfas, letting electric shocks into his body. “You shouldn’t have pushed him to fight! You may have died quicker that way!”

Kaibara grabbed the floor and spun his arm, using the leverage to move his body away. He tried rolling onto his feet, but his opponent gave him a swift kick to the ribs that stopped him, followed by another electric shock. “Naughty, naughty boy,” she mocked, her voice losing the breathy tone and becoming shrill. “You know, I wish you did fall for my Quirk’s power. You’re quite nice looking yourself.” After another shock, Airi kicked Kaibara on his back and kneeled down next to his
You have such beautiful eyes. Not quite as beautiful as mine, but still very nice to look at.” Out of her jacket’s pocket, she produced a needle and thread that she pointed down at his face. “I think I’ll sew your eyes shut, and then I’ll move onto that pretty little mouth.”

“You bitch,” Kaibara snarled, which Airi laughed at. Her unnerving titter made Kaibara clench his teeth in rage and he started forming a plan of attack. Before he could, however, the hand Airi held her sewing needle in spurted out blood without warning. She shrieked in pain and held her damaged hand closely before turning to see the culprit.

“You… how dare you! How COULD you!” Standing over her kneeling form with a scowl was Tsuburaba, who followed up his Whistle Spear attack with a kick that sent Airi across the room.

“You said your Quirk is based on attraction,” he began. “After what you’ve done to Sen, how could I find someone like you attractive?”

“Don’t be so rash,” the villain backtracked while making eye contact with Tsuburaba. “Just look into my eyes. Everything will be much simpler then.” He did as she said and stared back into her eyes, but this time, he had a disgusted glare.

“You make me sick just looking at you,” he spat. Airi gasped at this and gripped her tonfas tightly before making a mad dash at the boy.

“Then I’ll just kill you both the old-fashioned way!” She swung out her weapons at Tsuburaba, but made contact with an air wall protecting him. Without waiting for her to regain her bearings, Tsuburaba reached around and grabbed her head, slamming her face into the wall and causing a spray of blood to come from her nose. “Aaaagh, my nose!” she cried while dropping to her knees. “I think you broke it!”

“It’d probably be an improvement,” Kaibara commented as his boyfriend helped him to his feet.

“Can you move?” Tsuburaba asked.

“I can do more than that. Mind if I finish this?”

“By all means.” Kaibara stepped around the air barrier and saw Airi was still distracted and distraught over her damaged face. With her not noticing him, he began to spin his arm while pulling it back.

“I’d say that this won’t hurt a bit, but… I’m gonna make it hurt.” When she finally looked his way, Kaibara hurled his drilling fist forward and plowed into Airi’s face, pushing her head into the floor. The wooden boards cracked and fell apart under the pressure and a burst of blood and teeth came from the seductress’s mouth. Once Kaibara removed his fist from the defeated opponent, he looked over the damage and laughed to himself. “Yup. Definitely an improvement.” While rubbing his bloodied knuckles across his jeans, Kaibara stood back up and saw Tsuburaba looking away from him. “Kosei?”

“Sen, I…” Tsuburaba took a deep breath to calm himself, but was still teary eyed when he looked over at Kaibara. “I’m so sorry.”

“It’s alright,” Kaibara told him. “You were brainwashed. I don’t blame you—”

“You should though… I still hurt you.”

“Yeah, but I don’t, and that’s that.” Kaibara could tell how upset Tsuburaba was with himself, so he reached out and grabbed onto his shoulder. Pulling him close, he planted a kiss on the boy’s cheek.
“We’ve got too much to worry about right now, so forget about it.”

“…Right,” Tsuburaba replied, finally smiling again. “OK, let’s get you patched up and head out!”
“This is it,” Reiko told her group as they arrived at the third floor. “Kendo should be just above us.”

“We’re all eager to rescue her, but remember what we were told about interfering with other challenges,” Shishida warned.

“He’s right,” Kinoko added. “We’ve gotta do ours first before we can head somewhere else.”

“Then what’re we waiting for?” Kamakiri asked. “Let’s get this done.” He reached out and pulled the door open, letting the group of four walk inside. They found themselves in a circular room with a monitor on the wall and a door opposite them with a keypad next to it. “Yo! Who’re we fighting?!”

“Hey, look.” Kinoko pointed up at the monitor as it clicked to life. On its screen was a young woman with small eyes and a black bob haircut. She looked petite and wore a lab coat, so the students correctly guessed that she wouldn’t be coming to them for a fistfight.

“Thank you for coming,” the woman greeted with business-like formality and stoicism. “We’ll begin with the experiments immediately.”

“Hey, hold up. Who are you? And what experiments?” Kamakiri questioned.

 “…Apologies. I tend to get ahead of myself at times. My name is Densen Byoki and I am a scientist for Head Games. My job is to collect data on fighting abilities, Quirks, mental acuity, and physical traits, among other types of information, on heroes and heroes-in-training. I have four trials planned, designed to test your intelligence, speed, strength, and fighting prowess.”

“Then let’s start already,” Reiko demanded. “What’s first?”

“First is this.” In the center of the room, the floor opened up and a table holding four glasses rose into view. “In those glasses is a solution that I’ve designed to help me use my Quirk. I’m able to look at people and see what parts of their body are worked the hardest at certain points, and the chemicals in those mixtures help with this. Please drink them.”

“…How can we be sure these ain’t just poison,” Kamakiri asked.

“Because poisoning all four of you won’t help me. Please drink them or we won’t be able to begin.”

“Let’s just do it,” Reiko sighed. Cautiously, each student approached the table a took a glass.

“Bottoms up.” They all drank their mixture in one go and set the cups down to begin.

“OK, we’re ready,” Kinoko told the woman on the monitor. “What’s the first trial?”
“Your first trial involves your intelligence,” Byoki warned. “On the keypad is several puzzles you must complete to unlock that door. I’d be quick about completing this. You only have 11 minutes to finish all four trials.”

“What happens in 11 minutes?” Kamakiri asked before feeling a tap on his shoulder. The bug boy turned around to see Reiko violently shivering, looking paler than usual.

“Guys, I’m not… feeling so great.” The goth girl fell forward into Kamakiri’s arms, who could feel a cold sweat all over her. “Guys, guys… something’s wrong.”

“What did you do?!” Shishida roared at Byoki.

“The mixtures that you’ve all consumed were not as I said,” she explained. “My Quirk is not related to my data-gathering job, but is instead known as Toxic Blood. Miss Yanagi has ingested 2.5 fluid ounces of my own blood, while you three were given placebos so that you would be more open to the idea. In 11 minutes, the toxin will shut down her immune system completely and begin dissolving her internal organs. If you want to stop this, you can get the antitoxin at the end of the last trial. I’d begin your challenges soon if you want her to survive.” Before anyone could give a response, the monitor shut off. Reiko coughed and gagged in her friend’s arms, which prompted Shishida to rush to the keypad near the door.

“Give me two minutes tops,” he told them. “Logic puzzles are a hobby of mine.”

“Reiko, just hold on,” Kinoko said. “We’ll get through this real quick, OK?”

“We’re wasting too much time,” she groaned. “I’ll just phase through the wall… and skip these stupid trials.” Reiko activated her Quirk for a moment, but with a pained spasm, her body untransformed.

“Guess her Quirk can’t be easily used with that poison in her,” Kamakiri realized. Him and Kinoko were forced to wait and comfort Reiko while Shishida slowly completed the first challenge, finishing after three minutes.

“Let’s move on.”

“Geez, at least wait for me to actually die before you move on,” Reiko joked.

“Don’t say that,” Kinoko pled. “I’m nervous enough as is.” Kamakiri took the lead and went through the door first, but after only a few seconds, he rushed back out.

“Get behind the wall!” The others took his advice and put their backs to the wall, waiting to see what would come out. “There’s machine gun turrets in there. Lots of them.”

“What now?” Kinoko asked.

“This is the speed challenge.” The monitor buzzed on again and they heard Byoki’s voice. “The turrets will activate unless you reach the other door within 6 seconds. The distance is 50 meters. Good luck.”

“You’re a real bitch!” Kamakiri quickly spat before the monitor could turn off. “OK, what’s the plan? I’m not that fast.”

“And I’ve got tiny legs,” Kinoko whined.

“If I have someone on my back, I could still run that fast,” Shishida claimed. “Maybe I could ferry
“you down the hall one at a time?”

“You’d definitely run outta steam after one or two dashes,” Kinoko told him. “What if I spread my spores into the guns to jam them with mushrooms?”

“The moving parts would just grind them into paste,” Kamakiri told her, “but maybe… if you can just hold off their fire for just a couple of seconds, I could stab them off the walls with my mandibles.”

“It’s worth a shot,” Shishida said. “Yanagi, what do you think?”

“I think I’ll barf if you piggyback me that fast.”

“Mushroom plan it is.” After another minute of waiting, Kinoko’s spores spread down the hall and into each turret. “They’re ready.”

“Let’s do it.” Kamakiri jumped into the hallway and shot out his mandibles, stabbing into the first two turrets. He then ran forward, cutting into the metal walls and destroying the turrets he passed by. The guns further down the hall buzzed on and began turning to fire at him, but the mushrooms grown inside slowed them just enough for the bug boy to cut them all down. Once he reached the end, each gun was in pieces strewn across the floor. “Done and done. Fuck your tests! We work smart at U.A.!”

“So it seems,” Byoki said through a speaker as the next door opened. The students walked on and found themselves in another hallway, but one with no guns.

“…Nothing?” Kinoko asked.

“No, this is the next trial room – the trial of strength.” The four of them moved forward carefully, keeping their guard up for the next challenge.

“Guys, Yanagi’s not doing so hot,” Kamakiri told his companions. Reiko was slumped over on his shoulders and shaking like a leaf, no longer capable of standing on her own.

“I’ll be fine,” she told them, “but I am starting to see things. Looks like the ceiling’s coming closer.”

“The ceiling?” Reiko’s claim intrigued Shishida enough to look up, where he realized that the ceiling actually was coming down. “Run to the exit!” He put his hairy arms up and held against it, but the enclosing metal pushed him down. Kamakiri was forced to set Reiko down to assist, but even with his added strength and staking his mandibles into the floor, the ceiling still closed in.

“We’re gonna get smushed!” Kinoko cried out as the ceiling reached her too. She pushed up against it as well, and despite her strength being comparatively smaller to her other companions, the ceiling finally stopped.

“The amount of power you’re putting out is exactly enough to keep yourselves from being crushed,” they heard Byoki say over the loudspeaker, “but for it to stop, you must press the button at the end of the hall. One of you must stop pushing up. I’ve heard that people in emotional situations can summon above-average strength, so I’d like to see if that will happen.”

“Gotta be you, Komori,” Kamakiri said. “We’re doing the real heavy lifting here.”

“Hey, I’m contributing!” Kinoko claimed.

“Hold on,” Reiko slurred as she crawled across the floor. “I’ll get it.” The others watched and held
against the ceiling as Reiko slid her limp body down the hallway. Eventually, she made it the end and reached up for the button.

“Press it! My arms are gonna pop off!” Kinoko cried out. Reiko hesitated for a moment, but she finally extended her arm up and hit the button. Her companions immediately felt the weight lift from their bodies and the ceiling began to rise. “Phew!

“That was too close,” Shishida commented. The three walked down the hallway to continue, but before they could reach Reiko, the section of ceiling above her abruptly fell. None of them had a chance to move before Reiko disappeared from sight underneath the heavy metal.

“REIKO!”

“YANAGI!” The three students were stunned silent and watched the floor, hoping for a chance she was still alive. Eventually, the ceiling rose up again, revealing that she was able to activate her Quirk just in time.

“Oh, thank fuck,” Kamakiri sighed as Reiko’s Quirk finally gave out and she collapsed to the floor.

“That was too close,” she mumbled on the floor. With the third trial cleared, the students picked up their fallen friend and entered the last room, finding it pitch-black.

“This is the last one, yeah?” Kinoko asked while feeling Reiko’s clammy forehead.

“That’s correct,” Byoki told them. The students huddled together around Reiko and waited for the final challenge to start. The lights in the room came on one by one, and the first let them see a great number of robotic silhouettes lined up before them. “Using the combat data I collect, I’ve programmed a fighting A.I. that adapts to many different scenarios.” As more lights came on, the shapes came in clearly. At least 35 humanoid robots were standing at attention. Their bodies were a smoky gray with bright yellow faces, shoulder, and knees. “These robots are controlled by the A.I. and are equipped with several weapons such as swords, Tasers, and guns. Their individual limbs can also function on their own, so they cannot be defeated easily. Your last trial will be to find the key hidden in one of these robot’s heads. Begin whenever you’re ready.”

As Byoki finished her explanation, Reiko let out a sickly cough and fell limp in Kinoko’s arms. “She’s running out of time,” Kinoko realized. “Sh-Sh-she’s gonna…”

“…It’ll be fine,” Kamakiri told her. “Yanagi, just hold out for a minute. Komori, protect her. Shishida, you’re with me.”

“Do you think we can win in time?” he asked. Kamakiri scoffed at the question and took out the two large knives at his waist.

“I may not be the best student or the best hand-to-hand fighter, but you should remember something. When I fight, I have to hold back. My powers can easily kill or maim someone if I’m not careful. Robots, though… That’s a different story.” The bug boy walked forward towards the army of mechanical foes, who whirred into motion in response. “What we have here is a chance for me to blow off some steam and show you all what I can REALLY do.” His assault began with the closest robot in his path. Kamakiri jammed his knives into its head and used the leverage to vault over, taking the head off at the same time. He then dashed forward into the center of the hoard, where his mandibles thrusted forward. He whirled around and swung his face-blades through the crowd, cutting through a large swath of robots at once. “Crescent Hunter!”

Behind Kamakiri, more robots tried to attack his back, but they were interrupted when an orange blur
plowed through them. “Dynamic Hunter! We’ll tear them apart and find that key!”

“Right on!”

As they two boys tore through foe after foe, Kinoko stayed with Reiko, holding her protectively while spreading her spores into the dismantled pieces of the fallen robots. “Their so fast,” she mumbled, “but at this rate… we’re not gonna make it in time.” She looked down at Reiko’s motionless form and teared up, holding her close. “Just hold on…”

“…I’ll be fine.” Reiko’s quiet mumbles gave Kinoko a jolt of surprise, and she pulled away to see her friend was still conscious. “I’m not gonna die here,” she resolved while gripping onto Kinoko. “They can take as much time as they want. I’m not gonna quit… because I never quit on my friends.”

“Reiko…”

“Komori, catch!” The mushroom girl perked up when she heard Kamakiri call her name. She instinctively put her hand up and caught the small object thrown her way, which she realized was the key. “Get Yanagi to the next room! We’ll cover you!”

“On it!” She hoisted Reiko onto her back and moved forward towards the door, trusting that her companions would keep the two of them safe. A pair of robots burst out in front of her to attack, but were lanced by a set of blades just as quickly.

“Scissor Runner!” Kamakiri ran past Kinoko and let his mandibles loose on another handful of foes on his path. “Now, Multi-blade!”

“Spinning Cannonball!” Kinoko heard a crash behind her as she continued on, but didn’t look back. Her mind was solely focused on saving Reiko. When she finally reached the door, she put the key in the lock and opened it, seeing another room just like the first one waiting for her. Instead of a monitor, however, there was a glass panel that showed another hallway where Byoki stood.

“Congratulations on reaching the end,” she greeted. After pressing on the tablet in her arms a few times, a table rose up from the floor with the antitoxin waiting. Kinoko rushed to it and set Reiko down.

“Open up, Reiko.” She tipped the glass down and let the cure flow into Reiko’s mouth. After only moments, Reiko’s ghostly complexation slightly colored and the shaking ceased.

“Hey, how’d we do?!” Kamakiri asked as he and Shishida rushed inside.

“We were just in time,” Kinoko reported.

“Thank goodness,” Shishida said. “Yanagi, how do you feel?”

“Waaaay better,” she told them. “Are we done?”

“You are finished, yes,” they heard Byoki say. “Thank you once again for participating. I’ll be taking my leave now.”

“You’re just gonna bail before we can kick your ass?!” Kamakiri barked. Byoki ignored his threat and walked off, looking over her collected data on her tablet. “Son of a bitch.”

“Don’t get pissy just yet,” Reiko told him. “I think I’ll go pay her a quick visit, but first… well, thanks for saving me, guys.”
“Of course,” Shishida replied.

“Anytime!” Kinoko added while Kamakiri huffed and tried looking flippant. Reiko gave them a smile before activating her Quirk, using it to phase into the hallway.

Once she caught sight of Byoki, she silently floated after her. The scientist was completely engrossed in her data, reading it over while quietly humming to herself. “Love what you do, don’cha know that you’re toxic~?”

“Hey.” Reiko’s callout made Byoki whip around defensively, but the ghost girl floated behind her, remaining out of sight. She floated above Byoki and snatched the tablet from her hands before throwing it into the ground, shattering it.

“…That was expensive. I hope you’re prepared to pay for that.”

“Actually, I was looking for some payback myself.” With a single fluid motion, Reiko grabbed Byoki’s head and floated downward, making the villain crash face-first into the floor and knocking her unconscious. “Phantom Pain!”
As Yui walked through the battered, ruined hallways of the first floor, she began to wonder where her opponent could be. *I can’t waste much time with this. I have to save Kendo as soon as I can.* Turning another corner, she realized she had reached the other side of the building. Past the litter and roadblocks was an open door that Yui guessed was where her opponent waited. *I wonder if the upper floors are this messy,* she wondered while pulling her skirt up to step over a fallen wooden beam. On the walls she passed was colorful graffiti, which she noticed was in her favorite shade of violet.

Once she turned into the open door, Yui found herself standing across from the man she’d have to fight. Hush was leaning back on the wall opposite her, his expression hidden behind his helmet. “Yui Kodai, I presume,” he said in his artificial voice. “Or would you prefer Minmax?”

“I don’t care,” Yui told him while pulling her scarf off and unzipping her coat. “Give me a minute and I’ll be ready.”

“This isn’t school, little girl. This is the real world. You can’t ask for time outs or…” Hush trailed off when he saw Yui undoing her belt and letting her skirt fall to the floor, and then moved onto her sweater. With her outer layers shed, Yui was left in a purple jumpsuit of the same material as her costume.

“You didn’t seem ready either, so I thought I’d take them off normally instead of using my Quirk.”

*Is that a spare costume your wearing?*

“Sort of. I wear this plain version under my normal clothes in case of an emergency. My mentor told me it was a good investment.” Yui placed her discarded clothing to the side and cracked her knuckles in preparation. “Let’s get started.”

“You seem eager.” Hush stood up straight and slid a panel on his gauntlet open, revealing a small keyboard that he typed on. “If you’re ready, then we’ll start, but I’ll warn you now that I don’t show mercy to my enemies.”

“Do you think I’d run now?” Yui asked. Hush didn’t respond. He reached up to the neck of his armor and clicked a hidden button, which caused streams of smoke to spray out in front of him. Yui took a step back as the smokescreen engulfed her opponent, and by the time it dissipated, he was gone.

*With so many holes and cracks in the wall, he’s got plenty of shortcuts and hidden routes. He must know this building like the back of his hand.* Yui walked out into the hallway and looked around, but didn’t see any sign of Hush. Instead, she heard a strange humming noise that approached from down the hall.

From around the corner, a drone appeared, flying close to the ceiling and out of her Yui’s reach in her normal size. On its top was a pair of rotors while on the bottom was a wide gun barrel with a camera attached. *He must be trying to lead me into a trap by attacking me with that drone. I should destroy it quickly.* Yui prepared to increase her size, but before she could, the drone’s gun fired. Yui shrunk on instinct, letting the round sail over her head. Once she was about a foot tall, she looked behind her and saw the round impact the wall, where it exploded in a bright flash. *Explosive rounds. At this size, just one could be fatal, but if I grow to strike the drone and it dodges, it may be able to kill me anyway. I can’t get much larger than my normal size in this hallway either.*

The drone aimed its barrel down at Yui and fired again, but the shrunken student made a run for
cover. The shell exploded against the fallen wooden beam Yui passed under and she disappeared before it could fire again. She ducked into another apartment and shrank further, climbing into a hole in the wall. *If it follows me in here, I may be able to break it with a sneak attack, but then I'd be wide open. That villain must be nearby, waiting to take me out if I show myself. The drone is bait. I need to find a way to destroy it without leaving a blind spot.*

The drone entered the room and circled around a few times, searching for Yui. Despite her small stature, it was able to find her in the wall. It fired another shell at her, but she jumped out past it, letting it explode behind her. Once she hit the ground, she grew to her normal size in an instant and dove to the other side of the room, looking out the door at the same time. There in the hall was Hush, standing with his pistol drawn. He fired a shot at Yui, but she shrunk and dodged the shot, landing on the other side of the room. *Just as I thought. If I attacked the drone then, I’d be dead.*

In the wall nearby where she landed was another hole that led to the next apartment. Yui ran though just as Hush tossed a smoke grenade into the room behind her. *If he thinks I’m still in there, I can use this time to think of a strategy.* Yui grew to her normal size and surveyed the apartment, noticing a hole in the ceiling. She grew as tall as she could fit and put a hand in the hole, then shrank again. Now far above the floor, the tiny Yui climbed in and looked down just the hum of the drone came closer. Her new position gave her a bird’s eye view of the whole room, but she still couldn’t see the hallway. *He must be in the hallway like last time. I’ll need to get the drop on the drone without being visible from the hallway. Once it goes offline, he’ll notice and rush in, so I’ll need to escape again.*

The drone came into view and began circling the room in the same pattern as before. Yui watched its pattern closely while also watching the door. Once it flew out of view from the front door, she jumped down from the ceiling and grew to her normal size. She wrapped her arms around the drone and squeezed, breaking the rotors off. Once she hit the floor, she smashed it into the floor and broke the body, putting it out of the fight. *He’s in the hallway like last time. I’ll need to get the drop on the drone without being visible from the hallway. Once it goes offline, he’ll notice and rush in, so I’ll need to escape again.*

She tried to use her Quirk, but couldn’t find the focus to do so before she was pushed into the wall. As her sight returned, she saw Hush holding her and throwing a punch into her stomach. The impact made her double over and sputter, and with her senses still in a daze, Yui was completely defenseless. Hush flipped her over his head and slammed her to the floor. Yui’s mind finally recovered from the shock of the flashbang just then, but her body was still completely immobile for the time. Above her, Hush reached into his utility belt and pulled out five horseshoe-shaped devises. With fluid precision, he stakes them into the ground around Yui’s wrists, ankles, and neck, locking her into the floor.

*“It’s over;” he told her while taking a breath. “You’ve lost.”* Yui struggled to push her bonds out of the floor, but as she tried, they gave off an electric shock. *“If you try to move or use your Quirk, these restraints will give you a shock. There is no escape. It’s over.”*

*“I don’t care.”* Yui pushed against her restraints again, trying to power through the electric shock, but was stopped when Hush stomped his boot on her stomach.

*“You’ve lost.”* He circled around Yui and stood above her body. Crouching down to lean in close, Hush let the soulless blue lights on his helmet pierce into Yui’s eyes. *“You’ve lost because you’re weak. You’re no hero.”*

*“Shut up.”* Hush’s response to Yui’s defiance was to pull out his pistol and press it into Yui’s
“You don’t seem to understand the situation. Let me explain it clearly.” He ground the end into Yui’s forehead, cutting and bruising the skin. “You’re not at U.A. right now. This is the real world.” Watching his finger rub against the trigger, Yui’s breath became uneven and shaky. “Your life is in my hands and mine alone. No one can step in to save you now.” Her eyes twitched in fear as they looked up into Hush’s mask. “If you were strong, this would be a different story, but I’m stronger. I’m smarter. I’m better.” It felt to her as if Death itself had its fingers clenched around her neck. “Because of this, I control you. I control your life. The people who control the world are the ones who don’t care about saving others or doing what’s right. There will always be people you don’t know about that pull your strings, and these strings can be cut at any time.”

“…You kidnapped my friend. I don’t care what you say.” Yui had summoned up all of her willpower to say that one sentence, and after a beat, Hush laughed in response.

“That’s why someone like you will always end up dead.”

And then, Hush pulled the trigger and shot Yui’s forehead. “At least… that’s how real life is… but not tonight.”

Yui’s vision became red, and for a long moment, she thought it was her own blood. The color stung her eyes and she blinked a few times, letting her mind catch up with the events happening. “Red… paint?” The round fired into her forehead turned out to just be a paintball. “Why?”

“Why what?”

“Why didn’t you kill me?” Perhaps it was because the villain didn’t kill her in that moment, or perhaps it was how close she thought she was to dying, but at the time, Yui’s nerves returned to her. “You said that you never show mercy to your enemies. Why didn’t you kill me?” Hush paused after hearing her question again. It didn’t seem contemplative, more that he was taking her whole being in slowly. After a long while, he pulled his gun away and holstered it.

“A fair question.” Still looking down at Yui, Hush reached up to his helmet and clicked another button, which made the blue lights disappear. “The answer is simple.” His voice distorter was gone as well, letting Yui hear it unfiltered. The deep yet youthful character behind it sent a shiver across Yui’s entire body.

No…

“The reason is…” Hush placed both hands on the helmet and lifted it off his head. His shiny black hair flipped down over his pale skin, but he brushed it aside quickly, letting a pair of Cerulean eyes look down into their matching pair. “I could never see you as my enemy, Yui.”

“…Mugon. Big… brother.”
“Big Brother?” Mugon flinched and his hand slipped from the knob. Turning halfway back, he saw his younger sister standing in the doorway of her room. “What’re you doing?” she yawned, rubbing the sleeve of her nightgown against her eyes.

“…Just getting a headstart on the day,” he told her.

“But the sun’s not even up,” she responded.

“Yeah… Yui, have you ever watched a sunrise?”

“No.”

“How about you and I watch since we’re both up?”

“OK.” Mugon placed his bag down subtly and went to the couch he called his bed. He pushed it to face the single window in the apartment, which could just see the highway at a certain angle, and saw the sun was about the start rising.

“Alright, come on up.” Yui sleepily stumbled over and pulled herself on to the couch. Once Mugon sat down, she sidled closer to him and leaned her head on his leg. Only moments later, the sun began to appear over the highway. “Pretty, eh?”

“Mhm.” Mugon reached over to his bunch up blanket and pulled it over Yui’s body. Not a minute later, the young girl was asleep. Mugon brushed his hands through her hair briefly, looking over her resting face and memorizing every little detail. This could only last for a brief time, however. Mugon willed himself off the couch, making sure not to wake his sister, and stood up. He began to walk back to the door, but not before retreating one more time. He knelt down beside Yui, and in the light of the rising sun, he placed a single kiss on her young cheek.

“Goodbye.”

“It’s been a long time,” Mugon said, still looking down at Yui, who was frozen in surprise. “I’ve been hearing a lot about you. You’ve been working as a sidekick for Mt. Lady, right?” He reached down and removed the electric bonds from the ground, freeing Yui, before standing up. “How long has it been now?”

“…8 years.”

“Right. 8 whole years.” He stepped away from Yui and leaned back on the wall opposite her. “How have you been and all that?” Yui was finally starting to move again, sitting up to get a better look at her brother. Her normally blank face was starting to distort as well. Her lip quivered and her brow furrowed as tears welled in her eyes.

“Big brother…” Yui stood up slowly, still shaky from her battle injuries, and looked up into Mugon’s eyes. “Why are you… where did…?” Breaking eye contact as quickly as it had started,
Yui looked to the floor and softly cried. Mugon stepped towards her and reached out, putting his hands on her shoulders.

“I have a lot to explain, Yui. I know that, but for now…” Hush trailed off and wrapped his arms around Yui, who leaned forward into the hug. Despite his armor, it still felt warm and familiar to her. Mugon held her in his protective embrace for a long while, not saying a word. Their hug had to end eventually, though, and it was Yui who ended it. She put a hand up to Mugon’s chest and pushed him away.

“Big brother.” Her words had become terse, losing the unstable emotion behind it. Yui rubbed her face and finally looked back into Mugon’s eyes, this time with a spark of resolve in her own. “Tell me why you left. Tell me now.” Her forceful question left Mugon with no way to deflect, so he sighed and prepared his answer.

“I left to protect you, Yui. After mom and dad left us, we had no money and no way to get it. No one would hire a flunking high schooler with no real-world skills. So, I started to make weapons for criminals.”

“You mean you became a criminal.” Mugon cringed at Yui’s words and gave her a glower. “Whatever they did with those weapons is on you too. You became a criminal, big brother, and now you’re a villain.”

“…Yes, I did, but I did it for us—”

“Don’t make this about ‘us,’” Yui demanded, her voice gaining more anger. “If it was really for us, you wouldn’t have left.”

“I left to protect you,” Mugon told her. “If my clients found out about you, your life would’ve been in danger.”

“If that really was your concern, you never would’ve started.”

“Would you prefer if we starved?!” Mugon snapped.

“We could’ve worked something out. Instead, you left me in foster care to be a criminal. All I wanted… was for us to be together.” Yui quiet wish was enough to calm Mugon down, and the older brother took her hands in his own.

“Yui… we can be together now. It’ll be you and me again, just like the old days. But for that to happen, we have to leave now.”

“I can’t leave,” she told him. “Kendo and the others are still in danger.” Mugon grimaced at this and turned away slightly.

“Not just this place. Yui, we need to leave Japan. This country won’t be safe for long.” Yui softly gasped at this and looked up at her brother for an answer.

“What do you mean?”

“Yui, I’ve worked with a lot of dangerous people, but what’s coming… Some of our clients are very, VERY dangerous people, Yui, and they’re biding their time for something big. Something that will endanger everyone in the country, and with you being a U.A. student, you’re sure to be in the crossfire.” Yui could see that just speaking vaguely about what he knew put Mugon on edge. “Whatever the hell’s coming is too dangerous for you.”
“Big brother, I… I can’t just leave.” Yui was both baffled and frightened by what her brother said, but in the face of this cryptic warning, she steeled her determination. “No matter what’s going to happen, my friends will be here. I want to protect them and the citizens of this country. I can’t just leave.”

“This isn’t up for debate. We’re leaving. End of discussion.”

“No, it’s not,” Yui stated. She yanked her hands away from Mugon’s and backed away. “I want to be a hero, so whatever it is, I’ll face this danger.”

“If you do, you’ll die.”

“Big brother… you’ve been gone for a long time. I’ve grown up,” she declared, now standing straight and firmly. “You’re not trying to protect me. You’re trying to control me. You can’t accept that I’ve become strong.”

“I know you’ve become strong, but it’s not enough. Don’t you get it?! Nothing is going to be enough!”

“Then let me grow! I’ll become strong enough!” Yui hoped that her words would reach Mugon, but the older sibling reached down and took his helmet from the floor.

“We’re leaving one way or another. You can come quietly or I’ll drag you away from all of this. It’s up to you.”

“…You kidnapped my friend. I don’t care what you say.” With her intentions made clear, Yui clenched her fists and put them up.

“I wish we didn’t have to do this,” Mugon said as he slipped his helmet back over his head. With the blue lights reappearing in place of his eyes, Yui no longer saw her brother – only Hush. “You’re leaving with me. That’s final.”

“Stop talking and just fight.” On Yui’s demand, Hush stepped forward and swung his fist towards her face. Using her Quirk to shrink, Yui dodged and moved forward. Once they were side-by-side, she returned to normal size and elbowed his lower back, making him stagger forward. She tried to follow it up with a kick, but Hush recovered in time to block. From his utility belt, he grabbed two Concussion Discs and threw them at Yui’s stomach. In response, she increased her size and let them sail throw her legs, impacting and destroying the wall behind her. Hush threw another towards her head, but Yui shrank again while jumping, ending up perched on his shoulder. From there, she jumped behind him and grew back to a large size for an attack. She kicked Hush hard enough to knock him through the damaged wall into the hallway, but his armor protected him enough that he immediately stood back up.

“Where was all this power in our first fight?” Hush questioned while pressing buttons on his gauntlets. The left one extended over his fist into a blade while the right was alight with electricity. Yui was undaunted by these changes and rushed ahead while shrinking. Hush sent out a right hook, but Yui’s height shrank further in that instant and she dodged. However, Hush rammed his knee in her head, sending her flying back and undoing her transformation. He then rushed ahead and punched her into the wall with his electrified fist while his other hand grabbed the bonds from his belt. He was able to stake one into the wall that held her right wrist, but Yui recovered from the attack and elbowed the wall, making the bond fall away as the drywall crumbled. With her hand free, she grew in size and threw a devastating punch into Hush’s helm, sending him skidding backwards. The damage caused the left eye-light to disappear among the cracks, and when he spoke again, the damage to his voice filter made his normal voice drift in and out.
“I just want to protect you, Yui!”

“I don’t want you too!” Yui pushed herself forward and swung a kick at Hush, but he blocked it with his right arm, sending volts of electricity through her body. The blade on his left gauntlet came down into Yui’s shoulder, making her cry out as her blood splattered onto Hush’s armor.

“Why don’t you understand?! I’M DOING THIS FOR YOU!” With a rush of adrenaline pushing her, Yui steadied her legs to stand firmly and grabbed Hush’s left arm. She pulled the blade from her shoulder, but Hush grabbed her left arm with his electric right hand and held on, hoping to shock her into submission.

“I won’t let you control me,” Yui promised. Forcing her body to move against the attack, her right arm cocked as her body rose higher than Hush’s. “I won’t run away! I won’t abandon my friends or my dream!” With one final push, her fist crashed down into Hush’s head and he was rammed down into the ground. “I WILL BE A HERO!” The metal helm shattered into fragments on impact and Yui kept pushing until it broke away. By the time her attack stopped. The left side of his helmet was completely gone and Hush was out of the fight.

With her battle finally finished, Yui looked down on her brother and he looked back. “How did this happen?” she wondered. “How did you get here? How… did we end up like this?” The fallen villain exhaled and cracked a small grin at the question.

“What can I say?” he croaked. “They made an offer I couldn’t refuse.”

“Excuse me, do you have a moment?” Taking a moment away from the car engine he was working on, Mugon pulled his head out of the front hood and turned to the garage’s entrance. Standing there was a well-dressed woman with deep tan skin and a high black pony tail, and by her side was a disheveled blond man.

“If you’re looking for an appointment, make it with the boss inside,” Mugon told her.

“I’m here to see you, actually. You’re known as The Mechanist, yes?” Mugon finally became wary of the woman and put his hand close to his toolbox, eying the pistol hidden inside.

“Who wants to know?”

“Someone with a proposition,” she continued. “A man with your talents can’t flourish in a place like this. Trying to do it all yourself and keep a grueling cover job can be taxing, can’t it? I should know.”

“Same line of work, then?”

“Correct. I’m putting together a group of weapon and support item specialists like us. A group that can stick to the shadows and make some money for ourselves. We won’t spread chaos ourselves, but those who want to will pay us a great sum. Does something like this interest you, Mr. Kodai?” The mention of his real name startled Mugon and he grabbed his pistol. Once he pulled it out, the blond man took out his own gun and stood in front of the woman.

“How do you know that name?” Mugon questioned.

“I have friends in the area who can be a bit nosy. Since I answered your question, I’d like for you to answer one of my own.” The woman reached into her skirt pocket and produced a phone with a
picture pulled up – one of a middle-school girl with black hair and cerulean eyes. “Is this your sister?” Upon seeing the picture, Mugon’s breath hitched and he lowered his gun. The blond man lowered his as well, now seeming a bit more confident. “She’s quite the cutie. Wouldn’t you agree, Seijo?”

“Oh yeah,” the blond man answered. “A real cute one. Would be a real shame if something were to—”

“Shut it!” Mugon demanded.

“Oh, hush,” the woman mockingly instructed. “Now, I'll ask again. Does my proposition interest you, Mr. Kodai?”

“Yui… I’m sorry you had to see me like this,” Mugon began, “but you’re right. I am a villain. I built weapons and gear for criminals all over Japan and I never gave a thought to who’d get hurt. I never cared.” As he spoke, Yui gave no reaction. She just stood over him and listened. “I thought I could save you, but I’ve fallen too far… I’m no good for you.”

“Big brother… I’m sorry, but I need to go. My friends need me.”

“Understood,” Mugon told her. “Then go ahead. Don’t let me stop you.” Yui turned her back to Mugon and lumbered towards the broken wall to leave. You were right, Yui. You’ve grown up. You’ve become better than me. Far better. Please… keep growing. With someone like you, maybe things will be alright. And even if this reunion wasn’t great, I’m so happy to have seen you again.

“Big brother… goodbye.”

“Yui… goodbye.”
Run Like Hell

Once she split off from the rest of her class, Pony circled the building and headed for the back alone. She made sure to take deep, slow breaths in order to calm herself, but the situation still weighed heavily on her. *Whatever happens, I can’t rely on anyone else stepping in. No pros or police know about this and everyone else has their own challenge. I’m completely on my own… but that doesn’t matter. I won’t lose here.*

Pony turned another corner and arrived at her destination – the empty parking lot behind the building. Waiting there was a tall figure silhouetted by a flickering street light. “Thanks for coming,” the villain greeted with an excited snicker. “You ready?”

“Just tell me what we’re doing,” Pony demanded as her opponent stepped out of the shadows. Standing well over a head taller than her, even with her horns, Pony could see the man had a toned runner’s body under his tight black bodysuit. His was face sharp and mocking with a pointed nose, small goggles over his eyes, and a buzz cut. On his feet were special shoes that left his orb-shaped heels bare, which Pony guessed was related to his Quirk.

“We’re gonna have a little race, y’see. I saw the footage of you during that Sports Festival. You’re fast.”

“Fastest in my class,” Pony confirmed.

“I wanna race that Iida kid too, but you’ll be my stepping stone to that. Now put this on.” Leaning down, the man grabbed a metal ring off the ground and tossed it to Pony. He then took another one for himself and unclasped part of it. Now opened, he put it around his neck and locked it back into its circular shape. Pony was anxious to put it on, but after thinking of Kendo, she locked it around her neck.

“What is it?”

“A shock collar. The loser is gonna get a killer zap, y’see.” The villain began to stretch out his legs and Pony did the same to prepare.

“Who are you?” she questioned.

“Doesn’t matter. If I win, you’ll die and telling you won’t matter. If you win, I die and I won’t matter.” Pony furrowed her brow at the villain and finished her stretches, ready to begin.

“What do you mean you won’t matter?”

“If I’m not the fastest thing in the world, then I’m garbage, and who would bother knowing the name of garbage?”

“…Then I’ll ask it like this. What’ll you be called if you’re the fastest?”

“What, like a title?” The villain scratched his chin and pondered the question for a while. “I think I’ll go by Rocket. Rockets are pretty fast, eh?” Content with his new name, Rocket directed Pony to a hastily painted starting line in the parking lot and motioned to the city they faced. “Here’s how this work. I’ve got a single key to these collars waiting near the train station. It’s hung on a streetlight outside of a dive bar called Sachi’s. Did you see it on your way here? It’s got a blue and purple neon sign.”
“I did.”

“If you get that key, you can unlock the collar, y’see. Unless you undo it with the key, the collar will go off in five minutes, starting when you click the button on the back. When I say so, press the button and the race’ll start.”

“I understand.” Pony told him while getting down on all fours. As she reached up to the button, she looked at Rocket’s heels, which were spinning around while he stood on his tip-toes. *Makes sense that the speed freak has a speed-based Quirk. I’ll have to pull out all the stops to win.*

“On three,” Rocket told her. Pony tensed her muscles and ground her hoof into the asphalt, ready to run. The road was ice cold against her hands, but she gave it no mind. “One… two… THREE!” Pushing off immediately, Pony flew across the parking lot and took an early lead. Once her hooves hit the road, she made a hard right and took off down the empty street. On her right, she could see Rocket cutting across the parking lot and steadily picking up speed. Just as she had seen before, his heels were spinning around, letting him race across like an ice skater.

*A racing style like that could be trouble, but he never said we couldn’t attack each other. If I get the chance, I should strike. If he crashes, I’ll be able to gain a huge lead.* Once the two racers reached the intersection, Rocket overtook Pony while she made the turn. Now behind her opponent, she aimed her horn and fired. To her surprise, Rocket was able to slip out of the way and dodge.

“Sorry, but death races are my thing!” Rocket yelled back at her as she caught her horn and put it back on her head. “You can’t mess with my rhythm, y’see!” He then made another left turn and Pony finally lost sight of him.

*I’ve gotta speed up! I’ve gotta looked for shortcuts!* Looking ahead at the turn, Pony realized the there was a thin alleyway with a high chain-link fence in her path. *He must’ve skipped that shortcut because he can’t jump that high.* Instead of preparing to turn, Pony kicked off at an even greater speed. *Let’s see if I can!*

Situated between two taller buildings, the fence was nearly 12 feet in height. Once Pony was in the alleyway, she pushed off and leapt towards the top. Once she tucked in her legs, she was just high enough to go over, so she pushed them out again and kicked off the top of the fence. Now above even the buildings, Pony could see Rocket coming towards her from the left, having made the U-turn she would’ve made if she didn’t use the shortcut. He didn’t seem to notice her, so Pony rolled forward and aimed her head towards the street, firing a horn out. The horn went down and lodged into the street right in Rocket’s path, making him stumble for a brief moment. A moment was just what Pony needed though, and she somersaulted into him, planting him into the street with a powerful stomp.

“Stay down!” she warned while grabbing her horn and sticking it in her head. She kicked off his back and continued the race, now in the lead. To her surprise, she had entered a more populated area of the city. People were walking drunkenly down the sidewalks and a few cars were around, though not enough for Pony to change her course.

*The train station isn’t far now,* she realized. *That shortcut really helped.* As she raced ahead, the sound of Rocket’s skating caught her ear. Intent on keeping her lead, she ignored her opponent and pushed herself to run even faster. Blisters and cuts were forming on her palms and her fingers were chilled to the bone, but this didn’t stop Pony. Even though her lungs were on fire, her resolve to survive forced her body ahead.

“You’re doing better than I thought!” she heard Rocket say, now close behind her. “You don’t have much time to spare! Two minutes remain! YAHOO!” In the corner of her eye, she saw Rocket
make his move and approach on her right. She bucked to the side to try ramming him, but he nimbly avoided her and took the lead.

*There’s one more turn, and then a straight shot towards the station and the key. I can’t afford to slow down!* Now approaching the four-way intersection, Pony looked for any way to turn and keep her momentum. There seemed to be no option for her, but at the last second, a car came speeding into the intersection. Rocket swerved to avoid the reckless driver, but Pony pushed off and reached out to it, grabbing onto the spoiler on the trunk. Her sudden appearance made the driver violently brake and Pony let go, letting the momentum carry her through the sky. Civilians on the sidewalk watched her fly by and Rocket sped past them, catching up to Pony with ease.

Once she hit the ground and took off, Pony was once again tied with Rocket. Looking ahead, she saw the neon sign and the streetlight she was aiming for. Hung by the light was a key on a string, waving idly in the wind. *No more turns or tricks. This is the final stretch. The rest of this will have to be…* Ignoring the pain in her hands, the burning feeling in her legs, the tight squeeze on her lungs, and every other sensation telling Pony to stop, she drove herself into a powerful gallop and took the lead. *FORCE OF WILL!*

Both racers jumped for the key, but in the end, Pony snatched it and landed with it firmly in her hand. “Damn, you’re fast,” Rocket gasped as he slowed down, “but this ain’t over yet. There’s still 90 seconds left, y’see.” He zipped towards Pony and made a grab for the key, but she was able to narrowly dodge him. “Don’t think I’ll let you win just like that!”

With her hands too shaky to unlock her collar while under attack, Pony took off in a dash again, now holding the key between her teeth. The strain on her body had grown too great, however, and Rocket was easily able to keep up with her and attack. All of her focus was put into dodging, but she could practically hear her seconds ticking down in her head. *I can’t keep this up. I have to escape and unlock this collar!* In her frantic state, Pony leapt away from Rocket and galloped down the street. Her teeth pressed painfully down into the metal key, desperate to hang onto it. Rocket was building up speed though, and she could hear him skating closer. As she dove through another intersection, the fear encompassed her mind and drowned out the world for just a moment.

And in that moment, a car appeared on her left side and struck both Pony and Rocket.

The two racers were thrown down the street and crashed on the asphalt. When Pony’s body finally came to a halt, she was flat on her back. Coming back and forth between being awake and unconscious, Pony heard the car screech to a halt, back up, and escape into the night. The pain was, at first, too intense to be felt, so all she could feel was the cold night air. Her blonde hair, now caked with blood, was strewn messily across the asphalt and her limbs felt numb – almost like they were disconnected from her completely. The streetlights came back into view slowly, and once they did, the pain finally hit Pony. A pain greater then she had ever felt. A pain that made her cry with no resistance.

Still, even with agony across her body and a fading mind, she was focused on her goal. Her right arm, thankfully not broken or severely injured, took hold of her jacket and yanked up. With this leverage, she was able to roll onto her stomach, sending a flash of misery through her body. She allowed herself a brief whimper, but then refocused on the shiny object not too far away. *The key… I need the key.* She had lost track of time, but knew it was running short. So, with her life on the line, she began to drag herself down the road. She ignored the pain. She ignored the blood. She ignored the pounding concussion and even the broken top of her left horn that she passed by. *If I black out… I’ll die… but I can’t die here. My body… will not feel this pain… It must not. I have to keep moving.*
Despite the throbbing in her ribs, Pony reached out for the key and took it between her trembling fingers. Once it was in her grasp, she reached down to her shock collar and unlocked it. It unclasped and Pony tossed it aside, letting her give a deep sigh of relief.

“Damn… I was too slow in the end.” The surprise of Rocket’s moaning voice made Pony flinch, which gave her another flash of pain. She looked to the side and saw he had crawled up beside her with his arm outstretched to where the key had been. Even when they were both injured, he hadn’t stopped racing her. “You’re… the winner.” And with those words, his collar went off. Electricity flooded into his body, making him sputter and flail violently. Pony watched in horror as a man was dying before her eyes. For a moment, all she could do was watch, but her heroic spirit pushed her into motion not long after that. Her injuries did not matter. All that did was saving the life in front of her.

She gripped her undamaged right horn and popped it off, holding the point over Rocket. She tried to aim for the collar, but his shaking was too violent and she couldn’t target it. Pony wouldn’t be deterred, however, and she planted her leg on his body and her free hand on his cheek. Electricity surged through her, but Pony still shoved her horn down on the collar. She drove it through the metal ring and broke straight through to the concrete, just missing Rocket’s neck. The shocking finally stopped and Pony let go of the horn.

“W-Why…?” Rocket questioned. “I… lost. I’m… garbage. I don’t deserve to…”

“It’s ‘cause… I’m a hero,” Pony panted. “The riding hero: Bronco. That’s me.” Finally, Pony’s body gave out and she collapsed over Rocket. Fresh and dried blood met on the pavement as she hung limply over her foe.

“…Sokudo,” she heard him say. “My name is… Atsuen Sokudo.”

“OK. In that case, Sokudo… you’re under arrest.”
“OK, it was not this cold when we left!” Fukidashi complained while pulling his jacket closer.

“Yeah. It got colder. That’s how nighttime works,” Kuroiro snarked. “If you’re so freakin’ cold, why don’t you climb into Bondo’s jacket?”

“…I know you meant that as a joke, but I’m actually gonna do that.” While Fukidashi tried squirming his way into Bondo’s coat, Kuroiro watched as Honenuki took the lead of their group. They were nearing the quarry and, of course, their enemy. He wanted to reach out and put his hand on his shoulder, but Honenuki was a little too far from his reach.

“I see him,” the skeletal-faced boy said at the edge of the pit. Once Kuroiro came to his side, he looked out and took in their fighting ring. Sitting among the piles of trash and abandoned cars, there was a man. A massive, hulking mountain of a man. He was very tan and had a mane of orange hair that messily went down to his waist. He wasn’t even dressed for the cold, wearing only a plain white tank top, green shorts, a black utility belt, and black boots. Once the man caught sight of them, he stood up and waved.

“Hey, down here!” he yelled in a surprisingly jovial and friendly way. “You’re the guys, right?”

“Yeah,” Kuroiro yelled back. The four boys began to carefully walk down the pit’s incline, keeping a watchful eye on their opponent in case he attacked them. To Kuroiro’s surprise, he waited patiently for them to reach the bottom and approach him.

“Nice to meet’cha face to face!” he said. “You guys are strong, yeah?”

“We are,” Honenuki said neutrally. “Who are you?”

“Me? I’m uuuuuuh… I don’t really go a by a ‘name’ anymore,” he explained, putting finger-quotes up when he drawled the word name. “Most people just call me Chimera. Who cares about that, though? Let’s just start pummeling each other!”

“All four of us? At the same time?” Fukidashi questioned.

“Yeah, yeah! Hit me with everything!” he requested. To Kuroiro, his high energy and request made him seem like a big child more than a villain. “Aw, this’s gonna be so friggin’ sweet!”

“Back up, guys,” Honenuki told the others. While Chimera was busy psyching himself up, they all retreated to different positions with Honenuki staying the closest. “OK, we’re ready.”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah— Oh, wait, hold on guys,” Chimera requested. He reached behind around himself and pulled a canteen from his belt that he began to chug from.

“…Uhhhh.” Honenuki wanted to speak, but Chimera put his finger up to ask for a moment. Eventually, the hulking villain finished his drink and tossed away the canteen.

“OK, ready,” he told them while grinning, showing his teeth were stained red.

“What the fuck were you drinking?” Kuroiro questioned.

“Animal blood.”

“What?!” Fukidashi yelled from his position at the outer ring of the quarry.
“Why?” Honenuki asked while holding in a retch. “What animal?”

“A bunch,” Chimera told him. “Anyway, let’s fight, yeah?”

“This guy’s a freak,” Kuroiro commented. “Let’s just get this done.”

“Right.” Honenuki began the fight by softening the ground between him and Chimera and then stomping it. The mud went forward in a wave that encompassed Chimera’s boots and Honenuki hardened it, trapping him. Chimera didn’t seem deterred or even worried, however. Instead, he looked excited. On his right side, Bondo appeared and sprayed a wall of glue at him, locking his arm in place.

“BOOOOOM!” On his left side, Fukidashi hit him with a powerful explosion that kicked up a cloud of dust. Honenuki assumed he was stunned and dashed forward to continue his attack. Before he could, an arm appeared from the cloud and grabbed him, slamming him into the ground. Thanks to his quick thinking, Honenuki turned the stone into mud and cushioned his fall, but he was still pinned.

“Juzo!” Kuroiro called out. As the dust cloud cleared, he realized Chimera’s arm had grown a thick coat of black hair and his hand was even larger than it had been.

“I’m OK!” Honenuki called back to Kuroiro. Once the dust finally settled, he saw that Chimera’s torso and both of his arms had transformed, making him look like a gorilla. His strength seemed to have increased as well since the cast of glue crackled into pieces as he flexed.

“That’s a pretty cool Quirk,” he drawled before flinging Honenuki into the air, “but I bet you can’t do nothin’ in the air!” Kuroiro took this chance and activated his Quirk, summoning the two portals on his hands.

“Ebony Lure!” He was able to grab Honenuki in his line of suction, and as he did, Chimera charged him.

“Hey, you! Start fighting me!” His hairy arm swung down at Kuroiro, who just barely slipped out of the way. He was forced to deactivate his Quirk and let go of Honenuki, but the softening hero used this to his advantage and flew into Chimera, kicking him in the back and flooring him. Now on top of his grounded opponent, he softened the ground into mud to try trapping him. Bondo was also approaching to assist in holding him down when Honenuki was thrown backwards off Chimera’s back.

“What the—” Kuroiro looked back at the villain and saw that, in addition to the gorilla-like transformation he had, his back now sported giant bat wings. “Shit. This guy’s Quirk is pretty damn flexible. I guess we know why he was drinking blood before.”

“Hehehe, yeah, it’s pretty cool,” Chimera laughed as he stood up. “If I eat or drink an animal’s DNA, I can gain a trait of theirs. I can only use two at a time though. Kind of a sucky limit, but now you know why they call me Chimera, yeah? Anyway, let’s get back into it!” As soon as he stopped speaking, Chimera dove forward at great speed with the aid of his new wings. He crashed into Honenuki and matched strength with him for a moment, but quickly overpower him and threw him away. While he was stopped for that moment, Kuroiro caught him in his suction and held him still while Bondo approached his right side.

“Glue Squall!” Chimera’s right side was encased in glue and he was stopped for the moment.

“Woah! Way better hold this time!” he complimented as his wings retracted. He raised his left arm
up and showed his hand transforming, becoming a bear’s paw with sharp claws. “How tough is it?!
I wanna know!” His bear claws swiped and stabbed into the glue pile-up and tore it away swiftly.
Bondo prepared to shoot more out, but Chimera punched him in the head and stopped the attack.
Once he was free, he swiped again and Bondo jumped backwards to dodge.

“Hey, ya big asshole!” Both Chimera and Kuroiro looked up at Fukidashi as he yelled.
“BAZZAAAM!” From his speech bubble head, a bright beam of light shot forward and engulfed
Chimera’s head, sending him tumbling backwards. “BAZAM! BAZAAM!”

“Holy crap! Lasers?!” Chimera yelped as he dodged around the attacks. “Damn, that’s cool!” He
undid both of his transformations and regained his bat wings while also forming his legs into a
horse’s. With this new combination, he rocketed into the sky and then dive-bombed at Fukidashi.

“BAZAAM!” He crashed into Fukidashi’s laser and pushed straight through, ignoring the damage.
Once he was close enough, he threw a punch that Fukidashi dodged. Chimera’s body changed
again, switching out his bat wings for gorilla’s strength, and he grabbed Fukidashi, throwing him into
the quarry. Honenuki softened the ground to cushion his fall, but the short students still took
considerable damage.

“Aw, what a RUSH!” Chimera screamed as he jumped back into the pit. “I FEEL SO ALIVE!”

“Pull of darkness!” Kuroiro grabbed him in his suction and Chimera didn’t fight against it, instead
rushing at Kuroiro.

“C’mere!” Once he reached Kuroiro, he shoved his hand into the stone to anchor himself and sent a
kick up. It seemed like it would hit dead-on, but thanks to Kuroiro’s dodging and Honenuki
softening the ground Chimera balanced himself on, the attack went wide.

“Premature Burial!” Honenuki leapt and stomped down on Chimera as he landed. The mud beneath
gave way from the force and both fell in. the mud splashed up, and then fell back down onto
Chimera’s back. Honenuki jumped out of the pit, and once the mud covered the villain’s body, he
hardened it again.

“Damn, that’s smart,” Chimera said, now just a head poking out of the ground. “You’re a good
opponent, kid.” He strained against the prison of earth and the stone that held him began to
crumble. “I like you.”

“BOOOOM!” Fukidashi sent an explosion into Chimera’s face, but it barely fazed him.

“Glue Squall!” In trying to keep him immobilized, Bondo sprayed him with a layer of glue, but he
didn’t slow down. The villain forced his way out of the ground and lurched at Honenuki. His legs
had returned to normal as his transformation had changed to give him a long black tail like a
monkey. His tail swiped at Honenuki and knocked him away, but Honenuki recovered quickly. He
softened the ground his foot pressed against to slow himself before running at Chimera. The villain
cocked his fist to attack, but Fukidashi set off an explosion that made him stagger. Honenuki took
this chance and jumped up, slamming his leg across Chimera’s face.

“Ebony Lure!” As Chimera tried to strike with his tail, Honenuki was pulled out of danger by
Kuroiro behind him.

“BAZAAM!” A laser beam from Fukidashi struck is head while Bondo tried to spray him with
more glue. He dodged that attack, but Honenuki ran at him again and kneed him in the stomach.
Chimera swiped at him, but once again, Kuroiro pulled him out of danger. Knowing that his
opponents had gained the upper hand, Chimera regrew his bat wings and took off into the sky.
“Running away?” Kuroiro called out. The U.A. students watched as he landed across the quarry in front of a few old, rusty cars and then turned back to them.

“No way! This is way too much fun!” With his animal strength, Chimera grabbed one of the cars and brought it up over his head. “Let’s see you dodge this!” He hurled the car across the quarry at Honenuki, who stood his ground and braced himself. The car flew into his awaiting arms and immediately began to liquefy upon being touched. Honenuki was pushed back and groaned in exertion, but after a few moments, the car fell apart into a puddle.

“What else you got?” Honenuki questioned. After getting over his initial shock, Chimera grinned widely and began to titter to himself.

“Man, you’re way too much fun, kid! You guys are really pushing me!” From his belt, Chimera grabbed something and held his hand up. None of them could see what it was as his meaty grip completely hid it. “All you U.A. guys are always such try-hards, am I right? It’s that Plus Ultra mentality, huh?” From the villain’s hand, they saw something pop out of the side. Whatever was in his hand had a needle. “I’ve got my own way of doing Plus Ultra! LET’S KICK THIS SHIT UP!” Chimera stabbed the needle into his arm and pressed on the other end like it was a shot of medicine.

“What the fuck is that?” Kuroiro asked worriedly. Bondo and Fukidashi were confused as well, but Honenuki seemed to know what was happening. Kuroiro could see he knew from the pale, frightened expression he wore.

“This is bad,” he stated unsteadily.

“What is it?” Fukidashi asked. Across the quarry, Chimera roared as his muscles grew even larger and his teeth morphed into sharp fangs. He seemed to be losing control of himself, acting more and more animalistic.

“It’s Trigger. His Quirk’s about to get a power boost.”

“Trigger?” Kuroiro repeated. “Shit.” He looked and saw Chimera had calmed down from his Trigger dosage. He lumbered towards them calmly, staring down Honenuki.

“Hey, kid!” he snarled, voice deeper and grittier than before. “You gonna bust out any more special moves or anything? Show me something cool!” As he walked, Chimera’s body shifted again. His legs became that of a horse again, along with his upper body becoming gorilla-like. His hands became bear claws as well, and he grew out the bat wings and monkey tail.

“Looks like the Trigger’s empowered his Quirk so he can use all the different transformations,” Kuroiro realized. “We should—”

“HRAAAAAAGH!” Chimera made his move and rocketed at the group, grabbing Kuroiro.

“Shihai!” Kuroiro was slammed into the side of the quarry and Chimera dragged him along the edge, pushing him into the stone. Honenuki sent a line of softened ground to catch up with Kuroiro, but Chimera threw him through the stone just before the mud reached. By the time he had some cushioning from Honenuki’s Quirk, Kuroiro was down for the count.

“Who’s next?!” Chimera yelled while throwing himself back to the group.

“BOOOOOOOOM!” Fukidashi hit him head on with a powerful explosion, but Chimera pushed through it and made a grab for him. Fukidashi was able to jump back and dodge, so Chimera’s tail whipped around and lashed Fukidashi in the neck, knocking him away. Honenuki attacked with a kick that Chimera blocked it with ease. Bondo sprayed a wall of glue at him, but a single beat from
his wings made it splatter away. He then kicked Bondo and sent him flying away, leaving just Honenuki.

“YOU BASTARD!” Honenuki attacked with a flurry of jabs that barely fazed his opponent. When Chimera raised his arm to strike, Honenuki dug his hands into the softened ground and pulled up to form a wall. This wouldn’t affect Chimera either as he clawed right through and sent Honenuki careening backwards. He tumbled violently once he landed, but still, Honenuki stood back up. He was ready for Chimera’s next attack, but the villain wasn’t coming towards him.

“Well, kid, you’re outclassed now,” he said. “Sorry to say, but as you are, you can’t beat me.”

“Shut up!” Honenuki yelled. Chimera ignored the response and reached into his belt again.

“If only there was some way you could get as strong as me, right here and now.” With a flick of his wrist, the villain threw something at Honenuki, who caught it on instinct. Once he looked, he realized it was another shot of Trigger. “…Take it. Fight me at your peak. I want to see your full potential.”

“Wha…” Honenuki looked down at the shot and then back at Chimera. For a few moments, that was all he did. He could barely think anymore. His body and mind was worn and fatigued from the battle. He couldn’t think of another way to win.

“Juzo.” Once he heard Kuroiro’s croaking voice, Honenuki snapped back to his senses. “We can still… beat this guy… We’ll fight together.”

“New terms!” Chimera yelled. “Either take the Trigger or I’ll come over there and break that guy’s neck.” The new threat made Honenuki go stiff. He gripped the vial in his hands and turned back to face the villain.

“Shihai… I’m sorry.”
With no options left for him, Honenuki took the injector given to him by Chimera and pierced his arm with it, letting the Trigger flood into his bloodstream. Kuroiro looked up from the ground wordlessly and stared at Honenuki’s back, still out of reach. “Very good.” Chimera applauded from across the quarry. “Oh, I should’ve mentioned something.” As he spoke, Honenuki began to shake. “That dosage is what I take, but I’m a pretty heavy user.” His knees buckled and he fell to the ground, dropping the vial and grasping his left arm. “If you’ve never taken it before, that big a dose miiiiiiight kill you.” Kuroiro watched helplessly as Honenuki began to convulse while screaming in agony. “Good luck with that.”

“JUZO!” Kuroiro’s desperate cry was barely audible over his boyfriend’s pained crying. He pushed himself up from the ground, but didn’t know why. He was too injured to fight and couldn’t help Honenuki anymore. All he could do was watch. Before he could speak up again, the ground beneath his hands began to give way. “Th-The ground! He’s lost control of his Quirk!” Just as Kuroiro sunk into the liquefied earth, he was pulled back out.

“We have to go!” Bondo yanked him from the mud by his jacket and held him under his arm as he ran away from Honenuki. Kuroiro took a moment to look up and see him, as well as Fukidashi who was over his shoulder. He then looked back to see Honenuki’s body change as he painfully writhed on the ground. The boy pounded on the ground and clawed into it while it rapidly switched between mud and stone.

“Put me down,” Kuroiro growled. “He needs me.”

“If we stop, we’ll get buried alive!” Bondo ran and climbed his way up the quarry’s edge, just barely outspeeding the rapidly softening ground. Once they reached the edge and made it to the street, Kuroiro saw the softening effect had finally stopped not far behind them. He also realized the screaming had ended. In the center of the pit was an immobile body that merely resembled Honenuki. His muscles had grown considerably larger and his veins were bulging out. The color of his skin had become a blood red while his hair had lost its color, becoming bone white.

“Hey, down there!” In the air above him was Chimera, who was looking down curiously. “You dead?! Speak up if you’re— wait, scratch that.” After another few moments of stillness from Honenuki, he flew further back in the quarry towards an abandoned car. The softening effect on the ground was turning back to normal, so he was able to land without sinking. “If you’re not dead, this is gonna hurt! You should snap out of it, kid!” With no effort, he lifted the car over his head and stomped over to the prone student. “Y’know, even if it didn’t work out, I’m proud of you. Instead of sticking to some principal and dying for it, you decided to gamble your life to save your friends and maybe even yourself. You get it, kid! It’s better to burn out in a blaze of glory than fade away!” Once he reached him, Chimera gave Honenuki another moment to move, but nothing came from it. “Oh well. DIIIIIEEEE!”

Just as he moved to slam the car down, it melted away in his hands. The liquefied metal fell out of his hands and splattered around him and Honenuki, who was looking up with bloodshot, pinpoint eyes. “Without even touching it?” Now empty-handed, Chimera watched ecstatically as Honenuki rose from the ground. “Now that’s a big change, but what else can you do? SHOW ME!”

Honenuki cocked his arm and instantly threw a punch into Chimera’s jaw, knocking him to the side but not taking away his smile. “Oh yeah! You’ve got it now!” Chimera steadied himself and swung his arm towards his opponent to clothesline him, but Honenuki dipped out of the way at the last second and hurled his leg into Chimera’s ribs. The villain beat his wings mightily and went
soaring backwards, putting a great distance between the two fighters. “What an improvement! This may be a closer match than I thought!”

Honenuki gave no response to the villain, nor did he pause his attacking. He reached into the softened ground and pulled up a thick slab of mud that he hardened to be of clay-like consistency. Then, he jabbed into the mud and sent a glob of it flying out towards Chimera. With this new power behind his Quirk, he hardened the mud as it flew, turning it into a stone spike that crashed into Chimera’s arm. From there, he repeatedly jabbed into the mud slab, sending stone spikes hurtling at Chimera.

“What awesome power! Kid, you’re amazing!” Chimera clawed at the stone spikes coming his way and then pushed off the ground, leaping across the quarry. Honenuki pulled another wall of mud up and formed a dome of stone over him which Chimera crashed through. Before he could attack, Honenuki hooked his leg through the liquefied stone and kicked a line of mud at Chimera, which he hardened into a flying crescent of rock. The earth attack crashed into Chimera’s head, but the villain was barely fazed and began clawing at Honenuki. The student dodged fluidly around them, almost like water flowing down the path of least resistance.

Chimera sped up his claw attacks and mixed in kicks and tail strikes, putting pressure on Honenuki. At last, when a tail slap seemed to finally hit his neck, Honenuki disappeared from sight. He had sunk into the ground below, and Chimera saw him rise up from behind him. Honenuki kneed him in the spine and pushed him forward, but Chimera recovered quickly and spun around. “YOU’RE MINE!” His powerful punch slammed straight into Honenuki’s chest and sent him careening out of the quarry towards a tree.

Surprisingly, Honenuki was able to recover in mid-air and tuck himself into a ball to mitigate the damage of his incoming crash. As he impacted the tree, it contorted and changed shape with his body, giving him a somewhat cushioned landing. Without missing a beat, Honenuki hopped out of the deformed tree and into the ground, making Chimera take to the sky once more. The villain looked over the area for any sign of his opponent, but instead of Honenuki, he saw multiple sinkholes appear all around the quarry.

“He’s in one of them,” Chimera guessed. As soon as a humanoid shape caught his eye, he dove down the sinkhole it came from and stomped at it. Once he made impact and the shape crumbled under his attack, he realized he had been tricked. “You sculpted a decoy underground?! Kid, you’re just full of surprises!” Chimera began to turn around and saw Honenuki diving out behind him. Their legs clashed into each other and Chimera followed it up with a punch. Honenuki moved his head into time to dodge and began to jab furiously at his chest, letting out a primal battle cry. “Yes, yes! YES! Let the beast out, kid! Keep fighting until one of us ain’t breathin’! WE’LL FIGHT TO THE DEATH, YOU AND ME!”

Chimera raised his fists up and slammed them down on Honenuki’s head, making his fluid movements stammer for a moment. Pressing his advantage, Chimera kneed him in the chest, then dived after him and struck him in the side with an elbow. As he tumbled in the air, Honenuki reached out to the ground and stuck his arm in the mud to slow himself. This made Chimera’s next punch miss and Honenuki used to opening to kick him across the face. Chimera was thrown away and Honenuki burned through his remaining momentum, leaving a brief break in the action.

“We’re both running out of steam, eh?” Chimera questioned as he stood up straight. “Too bad. I’m having so much fun, kid. Thanks a bunch, really, but I think I’ll end it here.” Chimera flapped his wings and jumped back, leaving Honenuki to chase him down like a rabid animal. “That’s right. You can’t stop either, huh? You may say later that it’s just the Trigger, but you can’t deny that there isn’t something inside of you that loves a good fight.” Once Chimera landed, he was stood in front
of the broken-down shack situated at the very edge of the quarry. Long-deserted and covered in graffiti, the small building was barely taller than the Trigger-enhanced villain. Chimera shoved his bear claws into the stone below it and flexed his animal muscles, pulling it out of the ground.

“Come and get some, kid!” With Honenuki sprinting towards him, Chimera swung himself around and then lobbed the building at the boy. As soon as it came in contact with him, it warped and melted around Honenuki, not even making him break his stride. A stream of colors from the distorted graffiti passed by his eyes, but his mind could barely make it out. As soon as the softened wood passed by, Chimera appeared in front of him, looming over like a predator that’s trapped its prey. “I’LL CRUSH YOU WITH MY OWN TWO FISTS!”

Both fighters pushed themselves forward and began an onslaught of powerful punches into the other. Dodging and blocking had been forgone by both in favor of striking the other as much as possible. Honenuki was letting out another strained battle cry while Chimera laughed like a maniac. For a full 10 seconds, both fired off punches at their maximum strength and speed that the other took in full. Neither seemed like they’d let up, but eventually, one began to falter.

“Outta steam, huh?” Chimera questioned as he paused his attacking. Honenuki had stopped his assault and was bent over, panting like a dog. “That’s to be expected. You’ve fought well beyond your limits. You deserve a warrior’s death. Consider this my thanks.” Chimera wanted to raise his arm up for the final attack, but for a reason he didn’t know, he could barely move it. No matter how much he strained to lift it up, his arm wouldn’t listen. “What the…” Control over his other arm was leaving as well, and the same feeling was going into his legs. Once this effect went through his whole body, Chimera fell to his back, fully immobile. “What… happened?” Looking up at Honenuki, he saw the boy put his fist up again in his Trigger-addled state, and Chimera cracked a grin. “That’s right. It’s a death match. Finish it, kid.”

“This way!” Kuroiro said to the other two boys. As soon as Honenuki and Chimera flew further into the quarry, they had started to run along the edge to keep watching. Once the two fighters were back in sight, they saw Chimera fall to the ground. “I-I think he did it!”

“Honenuki won?” Fukidashi asked. “Awesome! Hey, way to go!”

“I should go glue Chimera down while I can,” Bondo suggested. As they prepared to enter the pit again, they saw Honenuki putting his fist back up. “What’s he doing? The fight’s over, right?”

“He may on know that,” Kuroiro realized. “Juzo, you’ve already won! The fight’s over!” He knew instantly that his words wouldn’t reach Honenuki’s mind, so he activated his Quirk. “Ebony Lure!” The long-range suction grabbed hold of him before he could act and he was pulled back. “Bondo, go glue Chimera down. Fukidashi, go cover him. I’ll deal with Juzo.”

Neither Bondo nor Fukidashi argued back and they both went into the pit while Honenuki flew back into Kuroiro’s awaiting grasp. He wrapped his arms tightly around Honenuki’s stomach and planted his feet firmly. “Juzo, it’s over!” Honenuki began to thrash around in the hold and scream out, reaching out towards the fallen opponent in the distance. “You won already! You can stop! It’s done! He’s defeated!” He grabbed at Kuroiro’s arms and roughly tried to pull them apart. His gaze was still locked on Chimera. Finally, Kuroiro threw him to the ground, grabbed his shoulders, and screamed in his face. “JUZO, STOP!” This is what finally made Honenuki cease fighting back. “You’re done! You beat him! It’s over!” A set of tear streaks appeared on Kuroiro’s cheeks as he held Honenuki back. “Just go back to normal already.”

Honenuki rubbed his fingers in the dirt below him and stared back at Kuroiro. His mind, broken by the Trigger, was beginning to heal. The world reformed around his love. “Shi…hai.” The stress to
his body made him lay flat to the ground as he let out deep, slow breaths. “Is it over?”

“You didn’t hear me?” Kuroiro joked as he rubbed his wet eyes. “Yeah, it’s done. Take it easy now. You’ve done more than enough.” Looking back into the pit, Kuroiro saw Chimera was finally pinned under the glue, but seemed to be struggling again. “How did you beat him?”

“I softened him,” Honenuki answered matter-of-factly. Kuroiro was confused for a moment, but then looked back to the nearby tree that Honenuki had crashed into.

“Wait, so you… you got so strong that you could soften living things?”

“Yeah. It took some time to spread the effect through his body, so I had to keep hitting him. Looks like it doesn’t last long wither, but if I kept going, I may have turned him into a puddle.” Kuroiro was silent in shock, but then gave a laugh. Honenuki laughed as well, though his was came out as a wheeze.

“You just keep fucking surprising me,” Kuroiro commented while unbuttoning his shirt and activating his chest portal. “Now that that’s all done, I’ll patch you up.”

“You packed a First-Aid kit in your void?”

“Oh, way more than First-Aid. I’m practically a walking, talking ambulance at this point.” Kuroiro reached inside of his void, but a light appeared in the corner of his eye that made him pause. Looking down the street, he was shocked to see a giant blue flame rising into the sky from a small building. “Oh shit.”

“Don’t tell me that’s…”

“Yeah. Rin and Setsuna are there…”
Lily of the Valley

Once they were separated from their group, Setsuna wasted no time snuggling close to Rin. “If it gets any colder, I’m gonna go apeshit. Who fucking decided on Winter? Who said ‘yeah, that’s a great idea.’”

“…The planet?” Rin answered.

“I am just a humble gremlin, but I will suplex Earth for this fuckery.” Rin gave a laugh while Setsuna rubbed her head sleepily into his shoulder. He took a long look at her soft features, silhouetted by a streetlight, and exhaled nervously. Despite Setsuna’s casual behavior, the idea that they could be walking towards their deaths made Rin’s head hang low.

“Hey, uh… can I ask you something?”

“What’s up?”

“What… What’s kept us together?”

“Huh?” Setsuna lifted her head off Rin to look in his eyes. “What d’you mean?”

“Well… this all started because you were interested in my Quirk, but that’s, y’know, skin-deep. That novelty must’ve worn off by now, so…”

“You’re not giving yourself much credit,” Setsuna claimed while poking at Rin’s cheek. “That may have caught my eye at first, but you’re still the sweetest guy I’ve ever met. You…” Setsuna took a moment to collect her thoughts so she could continue, and then blushed slightly. “Y’know how my family’s a bit on the rich side?”

“Yeah?”

“My mom was always pretty strict with me; always trying to make me act all ladylike and shit. U.A. was real freeing ‘cause I got to be me. I know I can be kinda weird and pervy, but, y’know…”

“That’s just how you are,” Rin said, completing the thought. “You were testing your new boundaries, and you still are.”

“Right! What I’m trying to say is that you’re not critical of me. If I fuck up or overstep myself, you let me know and then we’re back to normal. You don’t judge me, and this helps me find myself. It feels like you’re… you balance me.” Punctuated with a cute smile, Setsuna’s statement caused a flutter in Rin’s chest. “What about me, huh? What’s got you sticking around?”

“Oh, uh… everything, really,” he shyly explained. “I can’t think of anyone like you. You’re funny, perky, smart, heroic—”

“Sexy?” she questioned, making Rin’s face flush. “I’ll take that as a yes.”

“You’re just… I dunno. I can’t really word it, but we go together well, don’t we?”

“I’d say so.” Setsuna gave his hand a tight squeeze and they continued to walk on. After only a few more moments, their destination came into view. On their right was a rickety wooden sign proclaiming the store it hung on as the “Lily of the Valley Flower Shop.”

“Are you ready?” Rin asked.
“I’m all good,” she answered. “I got that knife Kamakiri loaned me and I got this baby.” From her jacket pocket, Setsuna pulled out a gun-shaped device with a canister of red liquid attached.

“What Is it?”

“A shot of extra blood. Hatsume made it so I could recharge if I used too much in a fight.” She stuck it back in her jacket and motioned to the door, so Rin took the lead and opened it. Walking inside, he looked around and saw two figures waiting nonchalantly. In the shadows of the left corner was Dabi and on the other side of the store was Toga, leaning on the old dirty counter like a student resting on their school desk. Rin recognized both of them from the news, but Dabi was his main focus. The feeling seemed to be mutual as Dabi stepped out of the shadows once their eyes met.

“I was wondering when you’d show,” Dabi greeted with a leering grin. “You remember me, right?”

“I’d never forget a face like yours,” Rin responded, which Dabi laughed at.

“A face only a mother could love,” Dabi mused. “It’s kinda funny. We were both in the forest that night, but we didn’t meet up. I thought you may have passed out and burned up.” Rin glared ahead as Dabi taunted him, but it had no effect on the hardened criminal. “Whatever. We’ll make up for lost time.” A ring of flame appeared around Dabi’s wrist, but it seemed to be more for intimidation then to begin the fight. Rin flicked his eyes around the store, realizing both the ceiling and the two support columns were wooden. He also saw there was a hole in the wall across from him he hadn’t noticed. It seemed big enough for someone to walk through and it led to the building just behind the shop they were in. “We’re gonna fight in there,” Dabi told him while pointing to the hole. “It’s a little cramped in here and I wouldn’t want to hit my associate on accident.”

“Aw, you do care,” Toga cooed as she hopped over the counter. “Hi, I’m Toga! Himiko Toga!” Her eyes locked on Setsuna’s with a childish gleam, as if she had found a puppy on the street.

“Your name’s Setsuna Tokage, yeah? Can I call you Setsuna?”

“I don’t care what you do,” the lizard girl spat back. Toga wasn’t fazed by the sass and gave her lips a subtle lick.

“Come on,” Dabi told Rin. He couldn’t bring himself to look back at Setsuna, so he just walked forward. As he passed Toga, he activated his Quirk under his clothes just in case she tried stabbing him in the back. Once he passed by Dabi, he turned around and walked backwards into the hole, keeping his eyes on his opponent. Dabi followed him shortly after and kept his stride, forcing Rin further into the new building. Looking around at the tiled floor and wide-open space, he noticed it wasn’t as flammable as the previous building. “This place used to be a bank before the neighborhood went to shit,” Dabi said. “Even with all the money gone, people still kept breaking in to see if any was left over. Isn’t that telling? As soon as something loses its value, society abandons it. People will only come back if they can scrape out a little bit of what made it useful to them, but in the end, no one really cares.”

“I don’t care about your philosophy,” Rin told him. He threw his coat and shirt away and forced scales to grow over his skin.

“Philosophy? I guess that’s what it is. I’m really just talking out of my ass.” The look on Dabi’s face confirmed to Rin how little he thought of the coming fight. He didn’t see him as a true opponent. Dabi lazily raised his arm and formed a flame, so Rin took a fighting stance and waited for the first attack to come. “This went pretty fast last time. Let’s see how you do now.”

“I think you’ll be surprised.” The fire in Dabi’s hand came forward slowly, letting Rin dash to the side and avoid it before heading towards his opponent. Dabi idly changed his aim and the fire
chased Rin, but the dragon boy outsped it and reached the back wall where he jumped up. He planted his feet on the wall and then pushed off, diving towards Dabi. The fire user speedily moved his arm to blast Rin, but with his heat-resistant scales covering his body, Rin pushed through and punched Dabi across the face. Once he landed, Rin tried for a kick, but Dabi jumped away and regained his bearings.

“You pushed through it, huh?” Dabi rubbed his jaw tenderly and looked back at Rin with a harsher gaze. Slowly, his stitched-up mouth bent into a smirk. “You have gotten better. Maybe I will enjoy myself.”

“Hey, hey, can I tell you a secret?” Toga asked while bouncing on her heels. “I have a crush on someone~. Wanna guess who?”

“Not really.” Setsuna reached into her coat pocket and pulled out the knife given to her by Kamakiri. It was thick and curved with a riveted blade and round handle, which made Toga give it a once-over.

“Oooooh. You like knives too? We have so much in common!” From her skirt pocket, Toga produced a switchblade that she held fondly. “This one’s my favorite,” she said while giving the blade a lick. “Do you like it, Setsuna?” The lizard girl gave no answer and began the fight by running at Toga with her blade in a reverse grip. Toga stabbed hers forward and Setsuna dodged around it, swinging her own blade towards Toga’s back. The villain slipped from its path and then thrust her own blade forward, so Setsuna brought her knife up to block it.

With both knives locked together, Setsuna sucker punched Toga across the cheek, knocking the villainess off-balance. She tried to follow this up with a kick, but Toga’s arm lashed out and swiped her knife across Setsuna’s arm. Figuring it would be a good distraction, Toga popped her arm off where the knife had hit her and backed away, holding the stump in fake pain. “Ooooow, my arm!” she cried out.

Once Toga regained her balance and saw Setsuna’s stump of an arm, she grew an ecstatic smile. Setsuna was unnerved at this, but kept up her act. “Oh my gosh, there’s so much blood,” Toga panted, now sporting a blush. She reached down to the severed hand on the ground, but as soon as she touched it, it crumbled into dust. “Huh?”

With Toga distracted, Setsuna lunged forward and swung her leg up into the villainess’s stomach, throwing her from the ground. Toga gave a squeak of pain in mid-air, but was able to land in a safe crouch. As she rose from the ground, she noticed Setsuna’s regrown arm and pointed to it. “What…”

“It’s my Quirk. I can regrow limbs and heal any wounds you give me.” Setsuna stood tall and hoped that her description would demotivate Toga. “No matter how much you cut and stab, I’ll heal. You won’t beat me.” Toga was silent for a long while, staring blankly ahead. In this time, Setsuna began to feel a strange pressure. Toga’s mere presence was sending a chill through her whole body. She watched as her face began to flush red, but an even deeper shade this time.

“Oh wow,” Toga said, barely above a whisper. Her face gradually stretched into a toothy smile, showing Setsuna a set of violent fangs that her tongue dragged over. The lizard girl nearly took a step back from her opponent after seeing this. “You’ll heal any injury? Even lost limbs?” she squealed. The glimmer in her eyes was enough to make Setsuna’s legs grow weak and nearly buckle. “That’s so cool. You’re like… an endless friend!”

Just as she finished speaking, Toga rushed towards Setsuna and began wildly slashing and stabbing.
Every strike was enough to draw blood, but Setsuna used her Quirk to rapidly heal each time so she could focus on counterattacking. She swung her own knife at Toga, but the blonde girl dodged each strike. The few punches Setsuna landed weren’t enough to deter Toga and she pressed forward, slicing the knife out of her hand. Eventually, Setsuna had been backed against a wall and Toga held the switchblade to her throat. Leaning closer, Toga’s free hand gently cupped Setsuna’s face, almost like they would share a kiss.

“Setsuna… heeheehee… when this is done, I wanna take you home with me.” Toga’s hot breath came out and stuck to Setsuna’s skin like an exotic fog. Her wild eyes, brimming with excitement, penetrated Setsuna’s own and went straight down to her soul. “I want you to be my pet, OK? I’ll take you home and you can be my pet, OK?” Setsuna wanted to fight back and force Toga away, but the fear flooding her body stole her strength. “I know. I’ll buy you a nice cage and a collar too. I’ll feed you and play with you and take care of you, OK? OK?” Toga’s tongue slinking out of her mouth and dragging across her cheek was the final straw that broke the curse of fear over Setsuna’s body. She kneeled Toga’s stomach and pushed her away. She then ran to grab her knife from the ground, but her opponent dove and tackled her. “Hold on,” Toga begged. Once they stopped rolling, Setsuna was flat on her back with her wrists held above her head by her opponent. “Please say yes. Please say you’ll be my pet, Setsuna.”

“Let go!” Setsuna yelled before thrusting her head into Toga’s face. The head blow was enough for Toga to loosen their grip, so Setsuna slipped out of the hold. She reached out for her fallen weapon, but her jacket was found by Toga’s hands and she was stopped again. When she looked back, the pure ecstasy on Toga’s face was enough to make Setsuna panic and slip out of her jacket in a desperate attempt to escape. Finally, she was in range of her own knife and made a grab for it.

“Hold on!” She ignored the warning and reached out for it, but before she could grab it, Toga’s switchblade came flying through her hand and into the floor, staking her there. Setsuna let out a yelp of pain, but the noise faltered when Toga’s weight pressed her to the floor. “Don’t fight back,” Toga moaned in her ear. “Just let me play with you.” He petite, slender hands worked their way around Setsuna’s throat and rubbed it sensually before giving a tight squeeze. “Don’t you want to be close friends?”
As more blasts of fire came, Rin dipped and ducked around each one, letting his scales protect him from the flickers that nipped his sides. Dabi’s formerly-lazy style of fighting had sped up considerably, but he still wasn’t using his full firepower. Rin could see on his face that he still only saw this as entertainment. “I can’t power though a head-on blast. It’s too risky. If I can just get close and hit him a few more times, I can win. He may be powerful, but his body seems pretty frail.”

“You move pretty fast for a dead man.” Dabi’s taught was followed by a wave of fire being summoned from both arms that curved out around the floor. They circled Rin and met behind him, creating an inescapable wall of flame. With a sneer, Dabi formed more fire from his body and began to pull the fire walls closer, enclosing on Rin. The heat coming from all sides felt like they would cook Rin from the inside out, but he ignored these thoughts and pushed his Quirk further. As a burst of fire came forward from Dabi’s body, Rin’s wings appeared and he leapt towards the ceiling. Once he reached it, he pushed off towards Dabi and flew past him.

Once Rin landed, Dabi finally noticed his stunt and turned to blast him. However, Rin pounced first and struck Dabi in the stomach with his scaly fist. For protection, Dabi created more blue flames from his body in hopes of discouraging any more attacks. Rin pushed through this and kicked Dabi’s chest, making him fly back. After a rough crash on his back, Dabi pushed himself back up and sent a wave of fire that temporarily engulfed Rin’s body. The dragon boy took off towards the ceiling and escaped the attack, but even with his scales, he could feel how badly he was damaged. The tie holding his braid had also burned away, leaving his singed hair flowing freely. On the floor, Dabi wheezed and coughed as he stood back up. His unreadable expression from before had also changed, becoming a glower focused on Rin.

“OK… Now I’m pissed.”

“It’s blood, isn’t it? That’s you limit?” Toga stalked closer to Setsuna and sliced with her switchblade once again. Setsuna tried to dodge, but due to the blood loss from the prolonged battle, her movements had been dulled and the knife raked her arm. “You lose a lot each time even though you heal. If I just keep cutting, you won’t have enough blood to fight back. You’ll be too weak to keep going.”

*She’s right,* Setsuna realized as her arm healed itself. *I need to get the extra blood shot from my jacket, but it’s so far away. If I turn my back on this girl, she’ll kill me!* Setsuna backed away slightly while trying to find a way past Toga. The giggling villainess gave her a playful wink before disappearing from sight, only to reappear at her right side. She grabbed Setsuna’s arm and forced her to the ground, slamming her face into the floor. Her knife went into Setsuna’s left arm, rendering it immobile while the right was firmly focused on Rin.

“Can you get out of this? I think you’ve lost too much blood.” Toga’s cutesy voice was punctuated by a twist of her knife, making Setsuna cry out in pain. She felt hot blood run down her back, which was followed by the sensation of Toga having a taste of it. “Don’t worry, Setsuna. I won’t let you bleed out. You’ll be safe with me.” With so much blood lost, Toga’s strength was too great for Setsuna to fight against. Her struggles didn’t faze Toga as she moved in closer. “You’ll be happier with me, my endless friend. I’ll treat you so well.”

“Go to hell,” Setsuna growled back. Shifting her weight slightly, Toga reached forward and cupped her hand over Setsuna’s mouth, muffling any further protests.
“Don’t be so mean,” she cooed in mock offense. “I’ll have to get you a muzzle too, but maybe I’ll just cut out your tongue.” Setsuna frantically thrashed around under Toga and tried to scream, but couldn’t muster the strength to break free. Her thoughts were becoming foggy as well and her vision grew hazy.

I can’t black out now. I’ll die; or worse, this freak may actually capture me. I have to... As much as she wanted to deny it, Setsuna knew her last hope was for Rin to save her. Her strength was gone and her opponent was too much to handle. It felt shameful, but this was the reality she had to face. However, these hopes were dashed when a scream came from the next building. Turning her head, Setsuna saw through the hole in the wall and watched Dabi blasting Rin with fire.

“Look at that. You’re not as tough as I thought.” As Dabi mocked him, Rin clutched at his burnt left arm and hissed. The fire user’s last attack had damaged it and his leg thoroughly, even with his scales protecting him. The power in his Quirk was beginning to fade as well and his wings forcibly retracted. “Want me to even you out and get the right side?”

“Shut up!” Rin barked shakily. His left leg collapsed from the stress and pain, putting him on one knee. Dabi laughed at this and began to amble closer with a sinister glint in his eyes.

“You actually got some good hits in. I’m surprised. I thought you would go down quickly like last time, but you lasted a while.” Dabi approached Rin and bent down to look into the dragon boy’s eyes. “A fight isn’t what I wanted, though. All I wanted was to kill you quick and easy.” Rin right arm swung forward towards Dabi’s face, but the villain moved his head and avoided the attack. He then grabbed Rin’s wrist and let a strong heat come out of his hand. “You may have given me more than I bargained for, but we’re done here.” As Dabi lifted his other arm, Rin looked past him and saw into the flower shop. There on the floor was Setsuna, watching helplessly as Toga held her down.

I can’t stop here. I have to save her. I have to help Setsuna. Rin roused his body into action, channeling every ounce of strength he could into his legs for one last push.

“Die.” Before he could act, Dabi placed his hand on Rin’s head and swathed the dragon boy’s body in flames. The fire seared his body through his scales and he let out a bloodcurdling scream while Dabi laughed at the torturous action. Eventually, Dabi let go of him and Rin dropped forward to the floor. Dabi then created another fireball and threw it to the floor, leaving a plume of flame around Rin’s body. “Burn away to ash.”

“Good timing,” Toga said to her comrade as the fire user walked back into the flower shop. In the gap between his legs, Setsuna could see the silhouette of Rin’s body among the bright fire and it made her body shake in fear. Even as he lay dying, she couldn’t save him.

“You’re not done yet?” Dabi asked, now back to his tired way of speaking.

“I’m taking this one home with me,” Toga cheerily announced. She snaked her arm around Setsuna’s neck and pulled her up while holding her wrists together. Setsuna couldn’t fight back as she stared at the burning body.

“Whatever.” Dabi left her field of vision as Toga stood up, yanking her onto her feet.

Let me go. She wanted to speak, but nothing came out. Put me down. She wanted to fight back, but her body wouldn’t move. I can’t leave him. Eventually, the despair was too great and Setsuna began to cry. Tears blurred her vision as she stared ahead. At last, she forced her body to act and
give one final, desperate shout.

This feeling is... strange. As he lay among the blaze, with his scales returning into normal skin, Rin could feel his heartbeat begin to slow. I can’t feel the fire anymore. He stopped trying to move his body and his senses dulled. It’s almost comfortable now. What is this feeling? All he wanted to do was rest. Is this... what death feels like? Am I... dying? Rin would’ve blacked out right then if not for a sound that invaded his fading mind. A terrifying sound. It was the sound of Setsuna screaming his name in despair.

“RIIIIIIIIIIN!” As soon as he heard her, his eyes shot open and his heart began to pound.

Not yet. Rin’s fist slammed into the ground as he pushed his Quirk into use. His hand grew draconic scales as usual, but his fingers were also changing into claws. Not now. His body shook and convulsed as he forced the transformation to occur. Too many people are counting on me. Once the sensation reached his back, his wings sprouted again. Rin clenched his teeth tightly, feeling them sharpen into fangs, and he pushed off the ground. I won’t die. I refuse to die. Rin’s shoes were torn to pieces as claws broke their way out. He could feel his body stress and strain, especially in his chest, but he drove his Quirk to go further. Down the center of his back was a line of sharp spines pointing out. On his lower back, a thick bump appeared and extended into a tail that slammed against the floor. No matter what happens, I will win. Finally, his face began to morph into something new. A set of horns grew from his head while his mouth jutted out, putting his new fangs on display. Now back on his feet, Rin pivoted on his new back claws and ran into the opening to the flower shop, breaking through more of the wall with his wingspan. Dabi and Toga heard the crash and spun around, eyes going wide once they saw the transformation. Setsuna was also staring in shock, but instead of fear in her surprise, there was joy. Rin swung his left arm and slammed Dabi and Toga away from Setsuna, throwing them through the old counter. He then clawed into the floor to stop himself, standing over Setsuna protectively.

“...Rin?” In his new form, Setsuna only reached his chest in height. Looking up at him, she almost thought it was a dream. Once she reached out and felt him, she knew it was a reality and let out a small laugh while rubbing her eyes. “You kept me waiting.”
“Owie, my head,” Toga whined as she climbed out from the broken wood. She gave Rin’s new body a quick look-over before checking on Dabi. Her companion coughed up a glob of blood onto the floor, but he was still beginning to stand up. “I thought you finished him.”

“I thought so too,” Dabi retorted while creating a blaze in his palm. “I’ll fix that.” Across from them, Rin crouched down and snarled as he faced the two villains. Just as Dabi pulled his arm back to attack, Rin pounced and slashed at him. Dabi narrowly dodged, so Rin snapped his jaws at him and ripped off part of Dabi’s coat. The villain was able to send a fireball into Rin’s body, but the newly-transformed student brushed it off. He gave his tail a strong swing that hit Toga before giving chase to Dabi across the store.

“OW! Hey, I’m not your opponent!” Toga complained while clutching her ribs.

“That’s right. He’s not.” As the villainess climbed to her feet, she saw Setsuna standing across from her with her extra vial of blood injected into her arm. After emptying the container, Setsuna tossed the device away and bared her teeth at Toga. “I am, now get up. We’re finishing this, bitch.” Despite the damage Rin’s tail had given her, Toga was more than willing to comply and grabbed her blade.

“How cute. You’ve got guts. I can’t wait to spill them!” Toga thrust her knife forward, but the damage to her body slowed her enough for Setsuna to dodge around the attack. The lizard girl threw a punch into Toga’s stomach and pushed her back into cracked wall.

“Call me your pet again. I dare you.” Toga responded to this by slashing at Setsuna’s stomach, which forced her to jump away. Toga pushed off the wall and stabbed at her again, so Setsuna dashed around her, effectively swapping their positions. “Rin, get her!”

“Huh?!” Toga swung her head around and saw Rin’s dragon claw looming over her head. Dabi was preparing a fire blast on his other side, but a tail swipe made him pause, so Rin was free to swipe at Toga and send her flying back into the wall.

“Just die already!” Dabi shouted. He pulled his arm back for a great blast of fire, but it was interrupted once more when Setsuna slammed his face with a high kick. Dabi tumbled to the floor and was knocked away with a strike from Rin’s claw, ending up next to his injured comrade.

“Give up now,” Setsuna commanded. Dabi sneered at her and pulled himself off the ground.

“Hey, are you dead-set on taking this girl with us?”

“Not anymore,” Toga answered with pout. “Fighting back isn’t cute.”

“Then leave. I’ll be right behind you. We’re bailing from this shit.”

“What about our mission?”

“Fuck this mission.”

“Yeah, you’re not going anywhere,” Setsuna told them. “Rin, get ready for another go.”

“What’re you gonna do?” Toga asked as she prepared for her escape.
I’m gonna give them a consolation prize for fighting so well.” With an insane grin spread over his face, Dabi summoned a bright blue flame around his body. Both Setsuna and Rin were surprised by this extreme heat and instinctively put their arms up defensively. “A funeral pyre.” Once Toga escaped from the store, Dabi swung his arms forward and shot a giant ball of fire towards the pair.

In that moment of staring into the deadly flame, Setsuna saw her life flash before her eyes. The visage of Rin’s smiling face was the last thing she saw before the real Rin dove into the attack’s path, shielding her with his body. She screamed out his name, but it was drowned out by the bestial roar Rin let out. The fireball then exploded outward, throwing both students backwards and setting the shop on fire.

Ignoring the head trauma the crash gave her, Setsuna picked herself up and crouched under the smoke, using her hands to find Rin. He was lying immobile on the floor and his transformation was beginning to come undone. He can’t survive long in this heat without his scales. Neither can I for that matter. She grabbed Rin and hoisted him onto her back while trying to find a path through the fire to the door. Before she could find one, she realized the support beam closest to her was nearly burned through. Setsuna pushed off and hurled herself across the store just as the wooden beam crumbled, bringing half of the store down with it. Luckily, she and Rin landed away from the pileup of burning wood, but the other support beam was still burning like the other one had.

I need to get out of here before this rest of this place comes down on us! Without bothering to find a path through the fire, Setsuna made a run for the door. Fire scorched her legs and the smoke was practically blinding her. She could barely breathe anymore and the strength from her shot of spare blood was running low. However, just as the last support beam broke and burned apart, Setsuna found the door and leapt through. Burning wood collapsed behind her as she landed face-first on the pavement outside.

“OK, that was way too fucking close,” she gasped. The heat was still unbearable at that distance, so she crawled away from the burning building and into the street. Once she reached the middle, the heat wasn’t as bad and she let Rin off her back. “There you go, big guy,” she said while lying him down on the pavement. “Geez, you really went all out there. Good thing I didn’t have to carry you out as that big thing.” She reached out and gave Rin a pat on his chest as a quick way of saying thank you, and once her hand came to rest, Setsuna came to a realization.

Rin wasn’t breathing.

For a moment, the information barely registered in her mind. She knew what was happening, but had no idea what that meant for a long while. Once her head turned to the fallen boy, it started to sink in. “…Rin?” She adjusted herself to crouch over his body and put two fingers to his neck. Then, she checked his wrist as well. Both times, there was no pulse. Lastly, she put her ear to his chest and listened for a heartbeat, but couldn’t find one.

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“Hey… Hey, Rin?” Her voice was beginning to crack apart. Setsuna scooted closer and lifted Rin’s head with her hand. Looking down, she saw no movement in his features. “Hey… C’mon, Rin. Wake up.” Her fingers entwined with his loose black locks and she leaned in close. “You’re not… J-Just wake up.”

Feeling his head bob to the side and rest on her forearm is what finally made it hit Setsuna in full. Her face scrunched tightly and she bit down on her lower lip. “Come on. We won. You saved me.” Her free hand jostled his body slightly, hoping that she could rouse him. “You can wake up now, Rin. Please…” The hand on his head squeezed his hair tightly as tears began to drop onto his
cold chest. “W-W-We all said... we’d go home t-together. Rin, y-you can’t d-do this... please, wake up.” Her body began to shake as her desperate whispers devolved into sobs. She drooped forward onto Rin’s body and rocked it with her pained cries. “Wake up... Wake up... Please, just wake up.” Her arms gripped tightly at his body and she cradled him, feeling him grow colder by the moment. With her face pressed against his chest, Setsuna let out cries of anguish and grief. There, in the middle of the street, on a cold winter night, with a burning building giving light not too far away, Setsuna Tokage held Hiryu Rin’s lifeless body and sobbed for him.

“Setsuna! Hey!” Her grief was too great for her to realize someone was calling her name. A series of footsteps came closer, but she paid it no mind. Behind the lizard girl, four of her classmates appeared – Kuroiro, Honenuki, Bondo, and Fukidashi.

“What happened?” Fukidashi asked, afraid of the answer. Honenuki, who was being carried on Bondo’s back, looked over his classmate’s head to see the scene playing out. Kuroiro stepped around to another angle and gasped at Rin’s body.

Setsuna finally lifted her head from the body in her arms and looked up at Kuroiro. It took a moment for her to find words again. “He’s dead,” she said quietly, feeling another wave of sobs coming. “He’s dead! Rin is dead!” As Setsuna let out another heartbroken cry, the boys looked down at their fallen comrade in shock. Before any of them could act on their newfound grief, Kuroiro ripped his shirt open and activated his Quirk.

“NOT YET!” he shouted while reaching into his chest portal. “If there’s any chance this’ll work, we’re gonna take it! I’m not giving up and neither will you!” From his void, Kuroiro produced a small machine and set it on the ground. As he pulled Rin from her grasp, Setsuna looked and realized it was a defibrillator. “I don’t know what happened in there, but if that roar was Rin, then he hasn’t been dead for long! He’s most likely in a state of fibrillation! Fukidashi, come set this up while I start CPR! Setsuna, tell me what happened in there!”

“He pushed his Quirk to turn full d-dragon,” she explained, mixing sobs and sniffles in between her words, “and then he g-hit in the chest with a big fireball.”

“The stress of his transformation must’ve been too great, and combined with the shock to his chest from the fireball, his heart stopped.” Kuroiro tilted Rin’s head back and delivered two rescue breaths as Fukidashi finished applying the defibrillator pads to Rin’s body.

“It’s set,” Fukidashi announced. Kuroiro then ended his CPR and backed away with Fukidashi. Setsuna scooted away as well while muttering under her breath.

“Please wake up, please, please wake up.” Finally, Kuroiro took the two paddles from the defibrillator and held them over Rin’s body.

“CLEAR!” He pressed the paddles down onto the pads stuck to Rin’s body and an electric shock was delivered, making Rin’s chest rise up. Kuroiro hesitantly pulled the paddles away and waited to see if another shock would be needed. To the relief of everyone, a rhythmic beeping came from the machine. “We did it,” Kuroiro announced while heavily exhaling.

“He’s back...” Setsuna watched closely as Rin’s chest raised and lowered with his new breaths. Hesitantly, she reached out to his chest and rested her hand on top, feeling a heartbeat. “He’s really back. Kuroiro... thank you.”

“I’m a rescue hero,” Kuroiro stated sleepily. “It’s my job.” As Kuroiro packed up his machine, Setsuna kept her hand on Rin’s chest, feeling the warmth return to his body, and she smiled down at him.
“Welcome back.”

It had been 10 minutes since Monoma entered the elevator and his Quirk’s time limit had just run out. He could feel the power drain from his body, leaving him with nothing but an empty, Quirkless body. In that moment, knowing that his best chance at saving Kendo had run its course, Monoma did something he hadn’t done in many years – he cursed his body and his Quirk. This train of thought wouldn’t last, as a rumbling in the elevator roused him from his thoughts. He was finally ascending to the fourth floor where Kendo, Kashiko, and his opponent waited. *It’s time.*
Don’t lose your cool now. There’s no turning back. Once the elevator came to a stop, the doors opened and Monoma stepped into the hallway. Keep calm. Just like you’ve practiced. After looking around, he saw one door in the hallway was open and a light was coming from it. What would All Might do in this situation? …He’d smile as he always did; an assurance that it was nothing he couldn’t handle. Monoma tried to shift his face into a happy grin, but couldn’t muster one. Who am I kidding? I can’t do something like that. I’m not like him. The copycat couldn’t force himself to take the next steps for a long while, but then, another thought came to mind. I can’t smile like him… so I’ll smile like me. A cocky smirk that tells others that I’m absolutely sure of myself. I need go show Kendo that this is no big deal for me. The best way to do that? Act like myself.

With a natural flip of his hair, Monoma felt his face contour into its most natural shape – a cocksure grin and a pensive, judgmental stare. From there, his first steps took came out with a high level of swagger and bravado, putting Monoma fully into his element. He strode towards the open door and prepared for the most important fight of his life. Show time. He appeared in the doorway and turned to face whatever was waiting for him.

The large room he entered was fairly dark with the only light being given off by the panel of monitors on the left side. None of them were showing his friends, so Monoma ignored them and focused on the two sitting on the couch. Kashiko, still mostly hidden by her black cloak, was sitting in wait for him with Kendo by her side. Kendo looked up as well, but couldn’t say anything as she was still tied and gagged. “Welcome,” Kashiko greeted. “Please, come in.”

“Thanks for having me,” Monoma responded in a nonchalant tone. As he walked inside, he realized there wasn’t anything between him and Kendo. If he were to run, he could reach her in only a second or so.

“That’s far enough.” On Monoma’s right, a voice told him to stop. He looked and saw Seijo Senbo leaning up against the bar counter, giving Monoma a thorough once-over. “You can just stay right there.”


“It’s fine. I’m here now,” Monoma said. “You’ve got quite the set-up here.” As he spoke, Monoma could feel a strange pressure coming from the right side of the room. He could practically sense the tight gaze Seijo had on him. “If we’re through with the formalities, I’d like to start.”

“Eager, are we?” Kashiko laughed. Monoma saw Kendo’s eyes hit the floor and her head droop down.

“What can I say? I’m only here to save Kendo. The sooner I can do that, the better.”

“How noble.” Kashiko’s arm slithered its way across Kendo’s shoulders and she held her hostage close. “You seem assured of your victory. I hope you can give us a good show.” As she spoke, Seijo lumbered closer to Monoma. Walking around the copycat, the criminal moved to stand between him and the couch.

“OK, here’s the deal,” he began. “If you want your friend back, you have to get through me. That’s all. Simple, yeah?” Monoma balled his fist up in anticipation while Seijo snickered to himself. “You and I aren’t too different, y’know? I like you. I think I’ll give you a free one.”
“Oh?”

“Yeah,” he confirmed while pointing to his cheek. “Gimme a good, solid hit right here. You get the first hit, so make it count.”

“Oh, I will,” Monoma spat back while cocking his right fist. *He doesn’t seem to have any mutations, so his Quirk must be a Transformation or Emitter-type. As soon as it’s copied, I need to put it into use.* With no hesitation, Monoma’s punch flew forward and struck Seijo across his cheek. His head whipped to the side and he seemed stunned, so Monoma threw another punch to press his advantage. This time, however, Seijo’s hand flew up and grabbed Monoma’s fist, holding it in place.

“Not too bad,” Seijo mused while standing straight again. “U.A.’s at least taught you how to punch, even if it was weak.” While the villain had an iron grip on his fist, Monoma came to a realization.

*His Quirk… it’s not there. There’s nothing to copy!*

“Is it starting to sink in?” Seijo asked as his lips curled into a mocking smile. “Sorry, but you won’t find any power to copy. I’m 100% Quirkless.” Monoma yanked his fist from Seijo’s hand and took a step back as the realization sank in – he had no Quirks to fight with. “What’s wrong? No comeback? You can beat me with no Quirk, can’t you? I thought you were here to save your classmate, huh?” Monoma threw another punch at Seijo, but it was easily pushed away by the villain. “See, this is why I said we’re so similar. If you have no Quirks to fight with, then we’re working with the same baggage.” Another punch, but Seijo shifted around and let it fly by. “In a world of freaks, Quirkless people can’t really match up, can they?” Monoma tried to elbow his stomach, but Seijo blocked it and pushed him back. “We both know this. You can feel it, can’t you?”

“I’m nothing like you,” Monoma growled. He threw one more punch which Seijo caught, his grip even tighter than before.

“I know. I’m stuck like this, but you aren’t. You can have a Quirk almost anytime.” His voice was shifting into a hateful growl as his nails dug into Monoma’s skin. “If you’re nearby someone powerful, then you’re powerful. You can escape weakness.” As Monoma tried pulling his hand away, Seijo began to twist his arm down, nearly forcing him to the ground. It felt like his arm would pop out of its socket with any more twisting. “Someone like you who wants the same pity people give me, but can turn around and be too powerful for his own good…” Seijo raised his other arm up and formed a fist. “IT DISGUSTS ME!” His fist collided with Monoma’s head, throwing him to the ground.

“MNNMM!” Monoma heard Kendo try screaming his name in worry, but other than that, he had lost all sense of where he was. His ears rung and his vision was blurry. As his hands patted on the floor, he pushed himself up and his mind began to collect itself. Before he could stand on his own, Seijo reached down and grabbed his jacket, yanking him to up eye level.

“What we have here is like a dream opportunity to me.” Seijo was nearly touching his face as he stared down at Monoma, his smile leaving his teeth bared like a hungry animal. The copycat grabbed onto his attacker’s arms and tried pulling himself away, but couldn’t get any leverage. “Cause the thing I love most in this world is finding someone with a strong Quirk like yours… and beating them to death.” Seijo pulled his head back and rammed it into Monoma’s, knocking him back into the wall. He then let go and let Monoma drop to the floor while the copycat held his head.

“I won’t lose,” Monoma declared. “Not to someone like you.” Past Seijo, he could see Kendo had turned her head away and clenched her eyes shut.
“What’s wrong?” Kashiko asked her. “You won’t even watch as he fights for you? How cold.” Monoma watched as she turned Kendo’s head back to face him and then forced her eyelids open, holding them in place. “You must believe in your friend, Itsuka. You have confidence in him, don’t you?” Once, Kendo’s eyes met Monoma’s, he could practically hear her telling him to run away.

“Get up,” he heard Seijo say. “Fight me.”

“…Fine. I’ll fight you,” Monoma responded as he stood back up, “and I’ll win.”

“You sure about that?”

“Yeah.” Monoma pulled his arm back and hurled it forward, aiming for Seijo’s throat. “A hero always wins!” Unfortunately, it was stopped short when Seijo snatched his wrist with ease.

“…Right.” Seijo’s assault began with a knee to Monoma’s stomach. Then, he yanked Monoma’s wrist to the side and sent him stumbling towards the bar. Seijo followed this up with a high kick to his jaw and then dashed to Monoma’s side. He grabbed his head and smashed it down on the bar counter, cracking the wood. “How’s that working out for you? Getting you second wind yet?”

Monoma spat up a bit of blood and kicked back at Seijo’s leg. Despite hitting his shin, all he could get from Seijo was a grunt of pain. His head was then lifted and slammed into the bar again. While blood passed over his right eye, he could see from his left that Kendo was still being forced to watch.

“Is this where your ‘heroic spirit’ pushes you past your limits and I lose? Got any hidden potential to call upon? Huh?!” Though he couldn’t see his face, Monoma could tell Seijo was loving every second of this. The villain pushed him onto the bar and dragged him down the counter, sliding him off the end and face-first into the wall. “Hah! Always wanted to try that!” As he tried to stand back up, Seijo gripped his shirt collar and hoisted him onto his feet. Monoma finally found his bearings and threw a punch into Seijo’s cheek, but the villain wasn’t fazed. Instead, he laughed and threw Monoma across the room, where he crashed in the center.

He let go! I’ve got to take this chance. Monoma desperately tried to climb off the ground and he looked over at Kendo, who had begun to tear up. The sight of her crying only made him fight harder to stand.

“What next, little man? Got any new powers to unlock? Huh?” Monoma ignored the taunts and put his foot on the floor. As he pivoted to face towards Kendo, he saw Seijo preparing to cruelly stomp down on him.

Now! Monoma sprang off the ground and dove forward, reaching out to Kendo. I just need to touch her once! Just once and I can fight! Kendo tried to lean forward, but Kashiko’s grip kept her in place. I will save you, Kendo! With barely any space between them, Monoma stretched out to finally touch Kendo and gain her Quirk, but at the last moment, he felt a hand grip his ankle and yank in the opposite direction. His face became one of terror and panic, made even worse since Kendo could see it clearly.

“Oh, so close,” Kashiko mused to herself. Monoma was then flung backwards and crashed into the wall, where he let out a choked cry of pain. He was further pressed into it when Seijo rammed his knee into his stomach. Monoma gasped for air and leaned forward, but was propped back up by Seijo grabbing his throat. His face had morphed into a scowl that sent a ripple of terror through Monoma’s body.

“What the hell was that?” he snarled. “I want to do this with no Quirks.” Seijo shoved Monoma’s head against the wall again before throwing him to the floor. “I’m not angry, little man. I’m not. In
fact, I’ll give you a reward. I’ll teach you something.” The urge to escape flooded Monoma’s body, but he had no time to act on it. Seijo’s left hand pressed down on his left shoulder while the other lifted his wrist off the ground. “See, I used to do a lot of street fighting, and when your body keeps falling apart, you learn a few things.”

As he spoke, Seijo pulled Monoma’s wrist up while holding his shoulder down. The copycat thrashed on the ground to free himself, but didn’t have the strength to contend. To make it worse, his head was facing Kendo and he could see her struggling to free herself. “For example, if you moved the arm in this way…” With a cruel yank, Seijo pulled Monoma’s arm up and popped it from the shoulder socket. “It just pops out!” Despite doing what he could to hold it in, Monoma let out a scream of agony.

“AAAAAAAAAGH!”

“MMMMMPH!” Kendo struggled forward, but the villainess holding her kept her in place.

“Then, if I move it just like this…” Monoma’s scream was interrupted by the sensation of his arm being pushed roughly back into its socket. His vision went white in shock and he couldn’t breathe. For a moment, he thought that had somehow killed him. “It goes back in! It’s like nothing happened! Now, let me show you how this works with your legs!”

“STOP!” As his senses returned, Monoma heard Kendo’s scream. He saw that she had struggled enough to remove her gag. Kashiko had also pulled away to savor watching Kendo plead. “Stop. He’s had enough,” she sobbed. “Please stop.”

“You’re not a part of this, girl,” Seijo barked at her. “Shut up and sit tight. I’ve barely begun!”

“I’ll do anything! Just stop hurting him!” As she begged for his safety, Monoma’s body began to move and he looked up at her.

“Hang on,” he said shakily. “I can still fight… let me keep going. I promise… I’ll save you, Kendo.” Once their eyes met, Monoma pushed off the ground to stand up. “I’m sorry for breaking my promise… Remember? From after the final exams? I promised that I’d never make you cry again.” In the corner of his eye, he could see Kashiko watching closely as if this was some sort of TV show. Seijo hadn’t stopped him yet, so Monoma figured he was also watching with the same taunting expression. “I know I broke that promise… but I will keep this one.” Now on his feet, Monoma knew Seijo was right behind him, just waiting for the right moment to strike him again. He didn’t care. “Please… don’t give up on me just yet.”

“If I may say something,” Kashiko began before Kendo could respond, “I have an idea. Itsuka, you said that you’d do anything for him to stop, didn’t you?” Her hand wormed its way over to Kendo’s chin and lifted it, forcing their eyes to meet. “I’d like to propose a deal. You remember how my Quirk works, yes?” The mention of Kashiko’s Quirk made Kendo shudder and break into a cold sweat. Monoma could see how narrow her eyes became and how she clenched her teeth. “If you agree to help me use my Quirk, I promise that neither I, nor Seijo, or any of my compatriots will harm him further. It’s as simple as that.”

“Wait, hold up!” Seijo pushed his way past Monoma and threw the copycat to the ground in his rage. “Boss, you told me this kid was mine! You promised I could kill him!”

“This is true, but you must remember, Seijo, that my wishes come first. Will you really deny me what I want?” The villainess’s scrutinizing glare seemed to bore straight through Seijo. His jaw hung open as he had no retort. “After I’ve done so much for you, and on this – the most important night of our lives – you would deny me?” Her voice was filled with an obviously false distress, but
the sincerity didn’t matter. Seijo was already putty in her hands. “After all we’ve been through, you’d be so cruel to me.”

“I… I’m sorry, boss,” he finally replied while bowing low. “Please forgive me.”

“You’re forgiven,” Kashiko stated while turning her attention back to Kendo. “Now, Itsuka, what do you say?” Kendo still didn’t respond.

“Don’t do anything rash, Kendo,” Monoma told her.

“He’s right. Take your time,” Kashiko added. “Though I will give you an ultimatum. Seijo?”

“Yes, boss?” In the shadow of her cloak, Monoma could see her teeth displayed in an excited grin.

“Give Itsuka an ultimatum.” Her command made Seijo’s eyes go wide in surprise and he formed the same villainous smile as hers.

“Yes, boss.” Seijo turned to Monoma and stomped onto his stomach, making him cough for air and lay fully on the floor. He then knelt down over the copycat’s body. Once Monoma stopped coughing, he opened his eyes and saw Seijo’s hands hovering over him. The anticipation and eagerness was written clearly over his face.

“Did you know, Itsuka,” he heard Kashiko say, “that death by strangulation can take up to three minutes, but passing out from it may only take 10 seconds. Keep these facts in mind as you make your decision.”

“W-Wait!” Kendo begged. Kashiko ignored her and leaned forward for a better view.

“Seijo, you may begin.”

“Thank you, boss,” he growled. Monoma struggled one final time, but it was too late. With a murderous laughter like a hyena’s, Seijo clutched Monoma’s neck between his hands and squeezed as tightly as he could. Monoma felt light-headed almost instantly as his legs instinctively kicked wildly. He grabbed onto Seijo’s arms to try and gain any sort of relief, but nothing came of it. He choked and sputtered and gasped for air, only to receive none. Seijo’s laughter grew more hysterical and he squeezed even tighter.

“STOP! STOP IT!” Kendo screamed.

“Do you agree to my terms?” Kashiko asked her, finally raising her voice in excitement.

“YES! NOW TELL HIM TO STOP!”

“That’s enough, Seijo. Let the poor boy breathe,” Kashiko commanded with an indifferent wave. Seijo scowled at the order, but complied anyway and removed his hands. Monoma then took a huge breath and coughed desperately for air. “Now, if you don’t mind, I’d like some privacy with Itsuka. We shouldn’t be more than a minute, but please take Monoma outside.”

“Fine.”

“And remember my promise. You’re not to harm the boy.” As Monoma frantically sucked in air, he felt Seijo grab his jacket collar and drag him across the floor.

“Wait,” he coughed. “Kendo, what’d you agree to?” No answer came from her as she stared down at the floor. “Kendo!” Despite his calls, she didn’t look up. “KENDO!” Finally, with tear streaks
on her cheeks, she matched his gaze and began to speak.

“I lo—” The sound of the door slamming in his face drowned out whatever Kendo had said. Monoma stared at the door in shock while Seijo let go of him.

“OK, let’s let them have their privacy,” the villain said casually, as if he hadn’t been brutalizing Monoma seconds earlier. “Girl stuff, y’know?” All Monoma could do was stare blankly ahead at the door. “Honestly, you should be glad you got to leave the room. It’s a quick process, but it’s still freaky to watch.” As his breathing became fast and irregular, Monoma jumped from the ground and spun around. He threw punch after punch at Seijo to no avail while blubbering half-hearted threats.

“I—I’ll kill you, you son of a bitch!” he cried out.

“Oh, don’t get weepy on me. At least pretend you’re a man.” After one more weak punch, Monoma fully broke down and sobbed into his sleeve. Seijo watched indifferently and tapped his foot on the floor, waiting for the signal that his boss was finished. Before Monoma could collect himself, there was a knock from inside the room. “OK, she’s done. Get in there.”

“Wh-What?” Seijo ignored the question and reached around Monoma to open the door before shoving him inside. With all of his strength and willpower drained, Monoma couldn’t retaliate and backed into the room. With Seijo blocking the doorway, he had no choice but to turn around.

“Welcome back, Monoma.” The voice that greeted him froze Monoma in his tracks. It was deep and sultry, but with a lilt he would recognize anywhere. With a shiver in his body, he turned to face the other person in the room.

“Wh…What the hell?” Standing before him was a tall woman in a familiar black cloak. The hood was brought down and her waist-long ponytail was on full display, so he knew this woman was Kashiko. “What… are you?” However, she had changed. Her smoky black eyes had turned a teal color, her lips had thinned slightly, and her hair had turned from a silky black to a fluffy red. “What are you?! WHERE’S KENDO?!” The woman could only laugh at his question.

“Itsuka… is inside of me. We have become one.”

**Kashiko Dokasuru. Quirk: Absorption. She can absorb people into her body, taking on some of their features and giving her access to their Quirks.**
“That’s… you can’t have…” Despair had taken full control of Monoma. All he could do was watch as Kashiko took in her transformed body.

“Oh, this feeling… it’s so wonderful,” she sighed. “Can you feel me, Kendo? I can feel you. Your emotions are just enchanting~.” The villainess seemed to be in her own little world, but slowly, her eyes began to focus on Monoma. “She really doesn’t want me to do this.” In an instant, Kashiko’s hand grew to an enormous size and she rushed at Monoma, pushing him against the wall. The student gave a yelp of pain and shock, but that was all his weary mind could do to react.

“What’re you doing?” he grunted. “You promised Kendo… She gave herself up only if you wouldn’t attack me anymore—”

“Oh, but I’m not. This is Kendo’s Quirk, isn’t it?” Kashiko’s expression seemed to grow more wicked by the second and she started to giggle maniacally. Seijo came to her side and watched happily as Monoma suffered under her powerful hold. “I can feel her anger, her hatred, her despair—oh, how amazing!” Kashiko pressed Monoma further into the damage wall while her other fist raised, growing large as well. “I must savor this feeling. Killing you will be the greatest sorrow I’ve ever experienced. This girl loves you, Neito Monoma, and you’ve failed her! If only you fought back! Perhaps if you hit me enough, you could’ve freed her, but even something that simple was out of reach for you! Now, she’ll have to feel your blood running down our hands!” Monoma clenched his teeth and stared daggers at Kashiko, as he couldn’t summon the strength to save himself. In his final moments, all he could do was watch powerlessly. “GOODBYE, NEITO MONOMA!” He shut his eyes and waited for the end to come.

But it didn’t. A strange, whip-like sound had entered his ears and somehow, Kashiko’s giant fist had stopped. When he finally found enough courage to look, he saw the two villains held in place by thick, thorny vines. “…What?”

“What the hell?! Seijo yelled. “Who’s there?!”

Monoma followed the trail of vines with his eyes and saw they led into the hallway. Two sets of footsteps were approaching – one booming and harsh, one graceful and light. “Guys….” From the doorway came Tetsutetsu and Ibara.

“Sorry we’re late, buddy.”

“Though it seems we’ve arrived in the nick of time.” Ibara’s vines lashed again and pulled Kashiko and Seijo away from Monoma, placing them in the center of the room. “Now, where is Kendo?”

“She’s right there,” Tetsutetsu said while pointing to Kashiko. “…Wait, what the fuck? Is… Is that her sister? Does Kendo have a sister? Is that boss lady Kendo’s sister?!?”

“Guys, listen,” Monoma said as he slid onto the floor. “It’s her Quirk. She’s absorbed Kendo into her body.”

“Say what?!?”

“What can we do to save her?” Ibara questioned.

“Based on what she’s said, I think causing damage may loosen her control. You can probably count on Kendo trying to break free from inside as well.”
“Is that even possible?” Tetsutetsu asked.

“If it is, she’s doing it. Now hit her.”

“Don’t be so hasty,” Kashiko warned. “If you hit me, you’ll be hitting Kendo as well. Can you live with hurting your friend?”

“I think you’re bluffing,” Tetsutetsu answered as his fists turned to steel. Ibara’s vines straightened Kashiko’s posture and moved her cloak aside for a clear shot to her body. Underneath her cloak was a tight black body suit with a large portion missing around her stomach. “Even if she did feel it, I doubt she’d mind if it meant she got outta you. Hold her steady, Ibara.”

“Of course, my love.” The iron boy stomped forward, pulled his fist back, and delivered a devastating punch into Kashiko’s stomach. The villainess crumpled forward and groaned in pain while Seijo growled in anger nearby.

“Now, let her go!” Tetsutetsu shouted.

“Such power,” Kashiko muttered to herself. “Both of you are…” As her body went limp, Kashiko was lowered to the floor by Ibara. She had her back to the students, so Tetsutetsu stepped over her and watched closely. Only a moment later, a sickening noise came from her body and Tetsutetsu recoiled in surprise.

“Oh, gross! EW!” he yelled.

OK, now I’m glad she’s not facing my way, Monoma thought as he turned his head, and saw Ibara doing the same. Just that noise is making me nauseous… Oh, it’s probably the concussion too.

“Can you see Kendo?” Ibara asked while her face turned green.

“God, it’s like some sort of… nightmare pregnancy!”

“We don’t need the play-by-play, man. You’re making me sick,” Monoma complained.

“Ugh, it’s so fucking— oh hey, it’s Kendo!” Once he heard that, Monoma turned his head back to look. Kashiko had turned back to her normal self and a head of ginger hair was poking out from behind her. “Hey, you OK? Did my punch hurt you?”

“I’ll be fine, and no, I didn’t feel your attack.” The familiar voice hitting his ears made a smile work its way onto Monoma’s face. Soon after, Tetsutetsu scooped the still-bound Kendo up in his arms and brought over to his comrades while Ibara moved the captured villains onto the couch.

“I got her!” Tetsutetsu happily announced. Kendo looked emotionally exhausted, but was still able to give a smile as he set her down on the floor.

“Oh, I’m so happy you’re safe!” Ibara cried while hugging her friend close. Kendo gave her a quick nuzzle back before Ibara began to untie her. “It’s alright. I’ve got you.”

“Thanks,” Kendo sighed. As Ibara worked on freeing her, Tetsutetsu crouched down next to Monoma.

“How’re you doing, buddy?”

“Been better.”

“Can you stand?”
“If you prop me up, then yeah.” Tetsutetsu took his friend’s arm and back to hoist him off the ground, where he leaned back on the wall.

“Where’re you hurt?”

“Well, I’ve definitely got a concussion, my arm was dislocated and relocated in the span of about 5 seconds, so I should get that looked at… irreversible damage to my feelings.”

“Sorry we couldn’t make it sooner.”

“Don’t be sorry,” Monoma told him. “I should be the one apologizing.” Upon saying that, a strong guilt stuck into Monoma’s mind. Tetsutetsu seemed to notice this, but before he could ask, his name was called.

“Tetsu, can you help with this?” Ibara had finished untying Kendo, but her hands were still covered by the bulky cuffs. Tetsutetsu crouched down and gave them a quick look-over before hardening his teeth and biting down on them.

“OW!” He pulled back and rubbed his jaw tenderly after only one attempt. “Well, I can’t eat through ‘em… Hey, why don’t we find Honenuki? He could soften them!”

“That’s a great idea! Kendo, do you mind staying this way just a bit longer?”

“That’s fine,” Kendo said as Ibara and Tetsutetsu stood her up.

“Coming, buddy?” Tetsutetsu asked. Monoma didn’t respond or move to join them.

“Kendo…” He had his eyes fixed to the ground and couldn’t raise his head. When he tried to speak again, he started to cry, but pressed on. “Kendo, I… I’m so sorry. I came to save you, but… I couldn’t. You had to save me like always. I failed you…”

“Monoma… I should be the one apologizing,” Kendo responded. “This wouldn’t have happened if I was stronger, so I’m sorry. It’s my fault you were put in a no-win scenario.”

“That’s the thing,” Monoma continued. “There shouldn’t be a no-win scenario for a hero.” The two looked each other deep in the eyes for a long while, not saying a word to each other.

“We should get going,” Tetsutetsu suggested. “Check up on the others, y’know? Ibara, you should stay behind with the villains—” Just as he finished speaking, something flew into the center of the four students. Monoma didn’t realize what it was until it exploded in a bright flash, knocking him to the ground.

A flashbang! His head was throbbing in pain, his ears rung, his eyes stung, but in his panic, Monoma found the strength to sit up and fumble forward with his hands outstretched. As soon as he found Kendo’s familiar shape, he pulled her close and held her in a tight grip. It was all he could think to do – cling to her and refuse to let go. It took a while for his senses to return, with the first thing he heard being Tetsutetsu’s garbled yelling. He can protect us. Ibara can protect us. They’re strong enough to protect us. Before he could decipher what was being said, Tetsutetsu stopped yelling. Monoma held Kendo even closer. This is… all I can do for her.

“What… What happened?” Kendo asked him. Monoma finally unclenched his eyes and realized he could see again. Kendo was looking at him with the same pained, confused expression he knew he had.

“That was quick thinking, little man.” On his right side, Monoma heard Seiho speaking and harshly
The villain was standing in front of the door, so Monoma picked himself and Kendo up and stood in front of her. “Flashbangs are no joke, but you powered through and protected your girl. Nice one. Too bad you were protecting the wrong people.” Seijo pointed past Monoma and urged him to look. Hesitantly, he turned and saw Kendo had already done so, standing with her back to him. Once he shifted his head enough, Monoma saw Kashiko alone, huddled under her cloak.

“…Tetsutetsu? …Ibara?” No one answered. Kendo had begun to hyperventilate. Seijo laughed. In all of this, Monoma was surprised he hadn’t lost his mind yet.

“What a feeling~.” Kashiko was still hidden by her cloak as she stood up, so the first change Monoma noticed was her voice – it had become youthful and somewhat scratchy. “So different, yet so alike.” A hand grabbed her cloak and flung it away, showing that her ponytail was gone; replaced by a long set of thorny vines. “Like a delicious cocktail of emotions.” Once she whipped around and presented her new self to Kendo and Monoma, they both saw her eye lashes had become wild and her teeth had sharpened. “This feeling is… intoxicating~.”

“No…” Monoma could see that Kendo’s confined hands had begun to shake, just as his own were.

“Boss, if you don’t mind, I wanna kill the copycat now,” Seijo requested.

“Do as you wish,” Kashiko told him, still taking in her new form. “Oh, they’re both so passionate! Itsuka… you’ll bring me such sorrow when I kill you! I must savor this!”

What now?! Monoma asked himself. Kendo’s still cuffed, so I have to protect her! I can’t fight both at once! Who knows if more reinforcements will come?! The door’s blocked! Ibara’s Quirk can easily catch us! We’re… We’re dead!

“You bitch.” Monoma’s internal rambling was halted when he heard Kendo speaking. Her tone wasn’t fearful like he had expected, but something else. “How dare you.” Kendo was seething in rage. Her hands weren’t shaking in fear, but in pure anger. “Let them go. Now.” Her eyes stared ahead at Kashiko, sharp enough to kill.

“Itsuka, darling, just calm down,” Kashiko told her. “You’ll see them again soon. After you and Monoma are dead, I’ll take my time in taking out any more of your classmates who’ve survived. Then, once these two in my body are the only ones left, I’ll send them straight to you.” Her venomous speech only made Kendo’s face tighten in fury. With her brow furrowed and teeth clamped together, Kendo ground her foot into the floor and lurched forward, bringing her cuffs up in the air.

“HRRRRRAAAAAAAAALAAAAGH!” With a titanic roar of effort, Kendo’s hands tore out of the cuffs, ripping them into metal shreds as her fists grew. Monoma could only watch in awe of the incredible strength that made the two villains drop their jaw in surprise. “I’ll say it again,” Kendo continued while catching her breath. “Let. Them. Go.” Once she was over the shock of seeing Kendo break free, Kashiko grinned eagerly.

“Come and get them.”

“Monoma.” When Kendo said his name, Monoma felt a strange relief. It was just his name, but the strong way she said it that made him stand a little straighter. “I need to focus completely on her.” Taking her eyes off Kashiko momentarily, she looked at him. Her eyes had calmed and switched back to the composed and serious ones he knew. “I need to you to watch my back and protect me.”

“Are you sure you can trust me with that?” he asked while glancing back at Seijo.
“Monoma… there isn’t anyone else I’d rather fight with.” As Kendo gave him a quick smile, the copycat’s heart skipped a beat. He moved himself to stand back-to-back with her again and faced down Seijo while hardening his hands into metal.

“In that case… I’ll give it my all. I’ll win.”

“I know you will. Just try and keep away from me and Kashiko,” Kendo told him while cracking her knuckles. “This is about to get messy.”
Once she heard Monoma and Seijo leave the room, Kendo grew out her hands again. Kashiko still had the same playful grin, showing off her now-sharpened teeth. Her vines snaked out and turned to metal with the rest of her body. “Itsuka, you shouldn’t have let him leave. If we’ll be fighting 1-on-1, you’re sorely outclassed.” As soon as she stopped speaking, Kendo rushed ahead with her hand pulled back. Kashiko didn’t realize what was happening until a giant hand collided with her, slapping her across the room and into the monitor set-up. Her metal body protected her from the crash, but the slap had left her stunned.

“Don’t call me Itsuka,” Kendo ordered. “I’m on the job right now, so you’ll call me Battle Fist.”

“How adorable,” Kashiko sneered while crawling from the mechanical wreckage. “Sorry, Itsuka, but you won’t catch me off guard again!” Her metal vines shot forward and made a grab at Kendo, picking it up and swinging it at Kashiko. The villainess moved her vines to protect herself, making a shield that broke the couch into pieces, but this left her right side unprotected and Kendo made her move. She ran past the vines and swung her giant hand out again to strike. However, Kashiko moved to counter and swung her iron fist into Kendo’s stomach, forcing her to a stop. “Nice try, Itsuka!” Her vines whipped onto Kendo and took hold of her hands and legs. Kendo was then dragged towards the wall across from Kashiko, who sent another vine to wrap around her neck.

This is a bad combination. These vines are like barbed wire. Kendo gritted her teeth as the iron thorns dug into her skin and drew blood. The one around her neck was slowly tightening as well, making breathing an agony of itself.

“Now, should I snap your neck now or take my time scraping every drop of blood from you? Any ideas, Itsuka?”

“That’s Battle Fist to you!” In a flash, Kendo’s hands shrunk to escape their bindings and then regrew. She slammed them back into the wall, destroying it and creating a cloud of debris. The vines around her limbs loosened, but the one around her neck tightened swiftly. With a rush of adrenaline, Kendo grabbed the remaining binding with her bare hands. She ripped the vine in half, ignoring the painful puncture wounds, and ran from the hole in the wall as more vines came after her. She ran through the door and saw Kashiko pouncing at her with her metal fist pulled back.

Kendo grabbed the fist and guided it away before delivering her own powerful blow into Kashiko’s torso. The villainess was thrown back by the attack and crashed to the floor, but her vines still moved to entrap Kendo again. This time, Kendo jumped back and flipped behind the bar. The vines followed her path at first, but because Kashiko couldn’t see her, Kendo could escape for the moment and retreat to the very end of the bar. Her hands swung up and dislodged the counter top from the rest of the bar, letting her grab it and tear it fully away. With the long wooden counter in her hands, she swung it out at Kashiko, who was able to protect herself with her iron vines. The counter was torn in half, but Kendo threw the remaining half forward and it collided with Kashiko, sending her careening into the wall.

“What’s my name?” Kendo asked as she stomped forward.

“That doesn’t matter,” Kashiko answered while standing back up. “You’ll be dead soon.”
“What the hell was that?” Seijo asked.

“If I had to guess, it’s the second biggest asskicking being given tonight.” Monoma stepped closer to his opponent and enlarged his metal right hand. “Get ready for the first!”

“Don’t get cocky, you little shit!” Monoma’s giant attack skimmed Seijo on his shoulder and the villain countered with a punch to Monoma’s head. The copycat turned his skin to iron in response, but the existing damage still sent a flash of pain through his whole body. Seijo tried to press this advantage with an uppercut, but Monoma moved his head to the side and avoided the attack. He then smashed his powerful fist into Seijo’s body, sending him tumbling backwards. “How…” he growled while standing back up. “You should be half-dead! How are you still up?!”

“Because you’re not down yet,” Monoma responded with a grin. “I’ve seen right through you, Seijo. You fear me.”

“In your dreams, runt.”

“It’s like this,” Monoma began. As he stalked closer, Seijo subtly backed away. “You were afraid of me from the start. You knew I’d win if I came up with all my classmates’ Quirks, so you forced me to wait until they were all gone. You can’t win unless you rig the game. The only reason you’re fighting me now is because you kicked the crap out of me when I was helpless. Still, you won’t win.”

“You’re really getting on my last nerve,” Seijo told him. “I think I’ll snap your neck, but only after I break after bone in your body.”

“Just try it.”
“Then you can die waiting, Itsukaaaaaaa!” Her metal vines rushed ahead while Kashiko turned away and ran down the hall. Kendo responded to the attack by tearing a nearby door off its hinges and swatting the vines to the floor. Looking back to her opponent, she saw Kashiko had made it down the hall and entered another room, yet was still peeking out to watch her.

“Scared, huh?!” Kendo picked up the door and slammed the edge onto the vines, locking them into the wooden floor. “You’re running out of steam! Can’t take another hit, so you’re cowering!” Kendo stomped down that hall and rolled her shoulder eagerly as she watched Kashiko retreat again, leaving the trapped vines behind to grow more of them. “Don’t bother running! As long as you’re holding my friends in that damn body of yours, I’ll chase you to the ends of the earth!”

“You hear that?” Monoma asked. “Sounds like your boss isn’t doing so hot.”

“Shut it, you little bastard!” Seijo attacked again, but Monoma slipped out of the way and hammered his opponent with his giant metal fist. Seijo stumbled backwards into the wall, but pushed himself back up and spat out some blood.

“I’ll give you one last chance to give up,” Monoma said. Seijo furrowed his brow and sneered at the offer.

“Like I’d surrender to a weak little shit like you! You think you’re strong with someone’s borrowed power?! You could never be a hero with that shitty Quirk! You could never stand on your own like a real hero!” Seijo’s rant made Monoma pause his attacks and turned his hand back to normal. The copycat rubbed a line of dried blood from his forehead and stared back at Seijo.

“The powers I use may belong to others, but…” Monoma stared down at his fist for a long while, and eventually, metal started to reappear across it. “I have my own strength. Maybe I haven’t always loved this Quirk, but I’ve realized the true strength behind it.” His iron hand expanded as he spoke and he pulled it back for the final strike. “I have the power to adjust to any situation and work around any obstacle. I have the power to save anyone from any danger with the right Quirk at my disposal.” Seijo raised his own fist and gave a furious battle cry as he barreled down on Monoma. “You think I can’t be a hero because I can’t stand on my own?! Maybe I can’t, but that’s because…” Seijo’s attack could only compete with Monoma’s briefly, as the enormous weight behind the copycat’s was too great. With a mighty shout, the young hero pushed his foe to the ground and ended their clash for good. “I’M NEVER ALONE!”

“Get back here, Kashikoooon!” Kendo sprinted through hallway after her opponent, aiming for the very last door. Once she reached it and made the turn, she found herself at the bottom of an iron staircase. After looking between the steps and seeing on one in the space beneath the stairs, Kendo concluded that her opponent was on the roof.

After taking the first step, making a loud knock I the process, metal vines appeared from the doorway at the top. So, she’s finding me by the sound of my steps, huh? Kendo rushed up a few more steps, making it nearly halfway before the vines reached her. Only a moment before they could grab her, Kendo dove to the left and grabbed the railing, flipping herself under the stairs. She used the moment to make it to the right side, then enlarged her hand to reach the right railing. With all of the wounds to her hands, she couldn’t keep it enlarged for more than a few seconds, but it was enough for her to pull herself up. Silently, she climbed back onto the steps, making sure not to brush the
vines, and finally made it back up to continue to the roof.

The vines that had gone past her started whipping around, destroying the bottom of the staircase. Kendo ignored this and went upstairs quietly, only going quicker once she started to see the roof. On the last few steps, she leapt up through the doorway and ducked away from the vines.

“You’ve done well to make it this far!” Kashiko’s mocking laughter invaded Kendo’s ears and made a vein on her forehead bulge. The villainess was far across the roof, standing very haughtily for someone who had retreated. The vines moved out from the stairwell and tried to encircle Kendo, but she grew out her hands and clapped them together, sending a wave of wind that pushed the plant hair away.

“Done running?” Kendo asked as her hands were forced to shrink. “You’ve got nowhere left to go.”

“I’ll make you eat those words, Itsuka.” The tips of Kashiko’s many vines all pointed at Kendo like daggers ready to pierce her. “I’ll skip the torture and just skewer you with your friends’ Quirks. Consider it my final mercy for putting up such a great fight.” The villainess expected Kendo to be intimidated by her threats, but the young hero laughed instead.

“I guess my plan worked,” Kendo said with a smirk. “You’ve run out of steam just trying to keep up.”

“What do you mean?”

“You may feel have my friend’s Quirks, but you don’t have their experience or their knowledge. You don’t know how to moderate your power. By now, using Ibara’s Quirk so much has made you dehydrated and weak, and I can see that Tetsutetsu’s Quirk is starting to undo itself.” True to her word, the vines pointed at her were only limply handing in the air and their iron transformation was faltering.

“That doesn’t matter!” Kashiko claimed. “Your hands are too damaged to continue! I’ve already won! Now that you’re in my reach, you’re practically dead already!”

“I’LL DECIDE WHEN I’M DEAD! NOT YOU!” Kendo screamed. Her hands transformed and she dug them into the roof behind her, taking hold of the staircase’s top step. “NOW SAY MY FUCKING NAME!” With a shout of effort, she pulled the iron staircase up over her head and hurled it across at Kashiko.

“What?!” Thinking quickly, Kashiko moved her vines to cushion the stairs. She put all of her strength into protecting herself that Kendo was free to approach. The young hero sprinted across the roof. Teeth clenched and eyes focused, she reached her opponent just as Kashiko tossed the staircase away. The pain in her hands was too great for a transformation just yet, so she pulled her arm back and readied herself for the final blow. In that instance, Kashiko moved as well and cocked her fist, pushing her body to turn her hand to metal.

“ITSUKAAAAAAAAAA!”

“KASHIKOOOOOOO!” Both attacks were sent forward at the same time. The villain’s punch was aimed down at Kendo’s forehead while the hero tried for an uppercut. Time seemed to slow in that moment for the two fighters, but it was clear which one would land fist. Kashiko’s longer reach gave her distance over Kendo and would make contact first.

However, in that final exchange, Kendo’s Quirk activated and her hands instantly grew to its max size, making it rocket up into Kashiko’s jaw. The force was so great that she was blown up into the
air by it. Despite the pain in her hands, Kendo kept her transformation steady and clasped her hands together while holding them over her head. She saw Kashiko’s body twist and fumble in midair and heard her dazed moans of pain. Once the villainess plummeted back down to the roof, Kendo stepped forward and began to bring her hands down. “Meteo-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o…” Just as Kashiko hit the roof, Kendo’s haymaker crashed onto her body and broke through to the floor below, sending her crashing into the apartment beneath them. “SLEDGEHAMMEEEEEEEEEEEER!”

The roof below Kendo crumbled and she fell down into the apartment below as well. Her transformation lasted long enough to brace her fall, but came undone once she had come to rest. After the sound of crumbling stopped, she realized that a familiar sickening sound was coming from not far away. In the moon’s light, Kendo found her bearings and looked through the rubble. She noticed the wreckage of a monitor system not far away, which made her realize this was the room they had been in before. Once the sound stopped, Kendo found three bodies in the rubble. Tetsutetsu and Ibara were lying unconscious next to Kashiko, who was making pained grunts and gurgles.

“No… stay inside… You must…” Kendo looked over the defeated women with contempt and disgust.

“It’s over,” she declared. “You’ve lost, Kashiko Dokasuru.” Kendo grabbed the collar of her bodysuit and pulled Kashiko up to her knees. Once her eyes opened, the villainess was staring up at Kendo’s scowling face. Her eyes went wide in fear and her knees buckled, but Kendo kept her grip and moved in closer. “Now… what’s my name?”

“B…Battle Fist?” she whispered fearfully. Kendo pulled her fist back and threw one last punch, but stopped short just before it connected. Even without being hit, Kashiko still gave one last whimper and fainted. Kendo threw the limp body away and clenched her bloody fists tightly before taking a deep, calming breath.

“That’s right. Don’t forget it.” The winter air invading from the roof froze Kendo’s breath, but her body didn’t feel it. She stood tall among the rubble, and even though no one would see her, she raised her fist high up in victory. Looking up at the moon, standing in the same dark room she had been confined to all night, worn and bloodied and beaten, Kendo no longer felt like a victim. Instead, she felt like what she truly was – a hero.

“I figured that big boom was you.” From the doorway, Kendo heard Monoma’s voice. She put her hand down and breathed deeply before turning around.

“Mono—” Once she did turn around, she found that Monoma wasn’t alone. Standing in the doorway with him, looking over the damage she had caused, was Detective Tsukauchi and Vlad King.

“Look who I found,” Monoma said. “Or, found us, I guess.” Kendo said nothing as her teacher walked up to her, still taking in the state of the room.

“Kendo… what happened here?”

“…It’s a long story.”

Chapter End Notes
Stay tuned for the final chapter tomorrow (probably)
Dear Friends

Chapter Notes

First things first: where do we go from here? We've reached the final chapter, so it's all done, right?
Maybe not so. For anyone who needs some more right away, my pieces for 1B ship week are ready and waiting to be read. I've added them to this series folder as well since I wrote them to be a sort of epilogue (Mainly the last chapter of it.) Not only that, I've added a brand new story to the series. The Heart of a Hero - A New Era. It's a future kids story following the pairings' kids going to U.A. and the first chapter is up already. There's also the USJ side story, which I will finish up, and I can also do stories the same style but with different arcs. The training camp, the hideout raid, maybe even Two Heroes.
As for right now, with this story finished, I've got to get back to my own book - a fantasy action story called Vanguards. Writing this story has improved my writing skills immensely and it's time to put them into practice on my own story. So, for a while, that's where I'll focus, and I'll use New Era or USJ for if I ever need a change of pace.
And who knows after that? I've already ignored canon enough, so maybe I'll write a sequel to this story and keep going with these kids. Maybe I'll have them assist some pros in a mission. Maybe I'll have an inter-school training session and throw in Ketsubutsu, Isamu, Shiketsu, or even Gaikoku. Maybe I'll throw some more dark shit your way to really test these kiddos. Heck, I can do a collection of fluff and ships, a chatfic - whatever I want! And that's just within this series! Maybe I'll do that long running fantasy AU i've been thinking about some day. Not only that, I'm a mod on 1b-headcanons on Tumblr, so you can stop by for prompts and HCs. I've also got my own Tumblr, 13ghostlytitties, where I'm always reblogging that good 1-B content, so stop by and say hi! You can also follow me there to know about any new chapters of those other stories. Long story short: If there are ever minor characters getting mistreated, disrespected, or even forgotten, you can count on me to swoop in and give them the story they deserve. So don't see this as a goodbye, my lovely readers. For now, call it a vacation, and I'll see you when I see you.
So, with all that said, enjoy the final chapter of The Heart of a Hero. All roads must come to an end and I'm glad we've had a good one!

As it turned out, Iida had kept his promise and hadn’t told Vlad or any other teacher of what had happened. Vlad had heard of their predicament from Tsukauchi, who learned about it from a call to the police. A concerned subway rider had sent a picture to the police of the 1-B class thinking they were some sort of teen gang up to no good. Tsukauchi was put in charge of finding out what was going on once they were identified as U.A. students. He and Vlad arrived, along with other pros, police, firefighters, and ambulances around the time of Kendo and Monoma’s final battles. After they were found, the students were rushed to the nearest hospital – the same one they were brought after the training camp attack.

Once the police had finished questioning him on what happened, Monoma walked through the hospital lobby on his own. Recovery Girl had treated his wounds thoroughly to where there were only bandages around his temples. All things considered, I got off easy compared to the others, he thought. Looking up at a nearby clock, he saw it was getting late and guessed everyone would be
asleep. Monoma walked softly as he approached Rin’s room. *I'll just take a quick look and then check on everyone else.* He slid the door open quietly and peeked his head inside.

“OK, uh, you get a million dollars, but all of your teeth become sentient and can talk to you.”

“Setsuna, no offense, but what the fuck even are these hypotheticals?”

“Funny, that’s what.” Monoma was surprised to see the rest of the class packed into the large hospital room. Rin was laying in the bed, heavily bandaged, but looked to be awake. Setsuna was sitting on his right with her hand placed over his, and nearby her was Pony, who was sat in a wheelchair. This made Monoma worry for a moment, but seeing her tapping her hoof made him sigh in relief. She was also missing her horns, but he had known about that before. On a couch nearby was Reiko, Kinoko, Shoda, and Awase. Kamakiri and Kuroiro leaned on a wall nearby with Honenuki sitting close by. His skin had a pink tint and his hair was still lighter than usual, but his Trigger mutations were disappearing. On the other side of the room were Tetsutetsu, Ibara, and Yui on another couch, and on chairs placed around the room were Tsuburaba, Kaibara, Fukidashi, Shishida, and Bondo.

“All of your hypotheticals are nonsense,” Reiko told her. “You’re just saying stupid shit.”

“Stupid shit is funny,” Setsuna shot back.

“Oh, would you rather sit in a chair or talk to a bear?” Reiko said in a bad imitation of Setsuna’s voice.

“Yeah, that’s funny!” Setsuna laughed. “They’re funny.”

“I like ‘em,” Pony chimed in. Before the conversation continued, Monoma opened the door more and stepped inside.

“Hey, buddy!” Tetsutetsu yelled from his seat. “Been waiting for ya!”

“How’s Kendo?” Pony asked.

“Haven’t seen her. I’ve been with the police the whole time. How’s your hip?”

“A little achy, but Recovery Girl says I’ll be right as rain within the week.”

“That’s good to hear.” Monoma went to Pony’s side and ruffled her hair before looking over to Rin. “What about you? I hear you had a little scare.”

“You should see the other guy. He’s got a few ugly scars,” Rin said. “I mean, he had them before, but it’s the thought that counts.”

“Heeheeheehee, yeah,” Setsuna giggled. “You fucked him up good.”

“Once you’re all better, you better show us that upgrade,” Tsuburaba coaxed. “I wanna see you go full dragon.”

“It’s a little too taxing for now,” Rin told him. “I’ll get the hang of it eventually, though.”

“He’s not the only one with lots of hidden potential,” Kuroiro declared. “It wasn’t fun to see in the moment, but Juzo’s gonna get really fucking strong in the future.”

“I don’t know about all that,” Honenuki said while rubbing his neck.
“Oh! Oh! Shoda too!” Kinoko said while waving her arms up. “Awase, tell ‘em!”

“The man went fucking Super Saiyan and shot a fucking beam! Like, I know we’ve made this comparison before, but I think he’s actually a DBZ character! He did a fucking Kamehameha!”

“M-More like a Big Bang Attack,” Shoda muttered while smiling to himself.

“Hey, I shot a beam too!” Fukidashi claimed. “I was all ‘BAZ—’”

“Wait, stop,” Bondo said.

“Oh yeah. Hospital. Right.”

“In any case, we’ve had an eventful night,” Monoma said. “We should get some sleep.”

“Not until we see Kendo,” Yui stated with the others nodding in agreement.

“In that case, I’ll see if she’s almost done.” Monoma excused himself from the room and prepared to go see if Kendo was finished with the police. Instead, once he turned around, he saw her standing down the hall. He opened his mouth to speak, but stopped when she put her hand up. She then gestured behind her to the doorway down the hall and he followed her there. “What’s up?” he asked. Kendo didn’t respond. She opened the door and walked into the stairwell. “I remember this place.” Monoma briefly thought back to their first kiss, but turned his attention back to the present as the door closed. Kendo leaned forward on the railing with her back to Monoma.

“Tell me how they are,” Kendo requested. Her voice was hoarse and quiet. Monoma took a while to answer, trying to think of the best way to tell her.

“Well, no one’s dead or dying, first of all. Aside from some scars, there’s nothing that won’t heal.”

“How’s Rin?”

“Stuck in bed, but seems to be in high spirits. He should be up and walking around in a few days thanks to Recovery Girl.”

“Pony?”

“A few broken ribs and a dislocated hip, but she’ll be on her hooves in a couple of days. She’s a sturdy one. One of her horns broke and the other’s chipped, but she says she can grow a new pair in about two weeks.”

“Honenuki?”

“The Trigger’s mostly out of his system and his injuries aren’t too bad. The police and school aren’t holding it against him because of the situation. Those three are the worst of it.”

“Yui?”

“She’s fine. There’ll be a scar on her shoulder, but that’s all… Kendo, everyone’s gonna be just fine.”

“…How are you?”

“You can’t keep blaming yourself.”

“Why not?” she wondered while looking down at her bandaged hands. “It’s my fault.”
“It isn’t your fault—”

“It is,” she interrupted, briefly raising her voice. “It’s my fault. If I was stronger, I wouldn’t have been kidnapped.”

“It’s not about strength,” Monoma interrupted. “Kendo, you were put in a no-win scenario. You can’t beat yourself up over something like this.”

“That’s the thing. There shouldn’t be a no-win scenario for a hero.” Hearing his own words turned back on him made Monoma hesitate in continuing. “…I’m no hero.” From her pocket, Kendo produced her provisional license and held it up. Monoma walked closer as she looked it over. After a heavy sigh, she brought her other hand up and took the card between them. Monoma immediately knew what she was thinking and snatched the card away before anything could be done.

“What’re you doing?” he questioned sternly.

“It’s not like I’ll need it anymore,” Kendo glumly responded. “I’m no hero.”

“So, you’re giving up?” As his voice raised, Kendo shied away from Monoma. “You really want to give up on your dream? Leave U.A. and our family because of this?”

“What else can I do?” she asked as her voice cracked. “I’m obviously not good enough.” Monoma knew how to respond, but couldn’t muster the strength to say it until he took a deep breath.

“OK, I honestly hate myself for saying this – I’ll probably ask Ibara to exorcise me later – but you need to be a bit more like Bakugo right now. He’s been where you are, but he didn’t give up. He stood right back up and kept going without missing a beat. For the love of God, don’t be outdone by him of all people.”

“…How can I face them? Everyone got hurt because of me. Some of them nearly died. You nearly died—”

“And you’re facing me right now. Do you really think any of them hold this against you?”

“No, but… I still blame myself.”

“Well, no one in there blames you. All they want is to see you. They’re in there, tired as shit, waiting up to see you.” Monoma put his hand on Kendo’s shoulder and turned her to look in her eyes. “Just come and see them. Please?” Kendo didn’t say a word, but after a few moments, she nodded. “Come on.” Monoma took her hand and led her back through the hospital floor. Once they were at the door to Rin’s room, Monoma cracked it open, letting Kendo hear everyone talking inside. “Ready?” Kendo nodded again, so Monoma slid the door fully open.

“Kendo!” Pony was the first to notice and say her name. The others gave her a wave, a smile, a short greeting, and Kendo didn’t respond.

“You aren’t hurt too badly, are you?” Ibara asked. Kendo shook her head no and looked everyone over slowly. Monoma took her hand, but she pulled it away quickly.

“Guys…” The moment she spoke up, Kendo began to cry, so she bit her lip to continue. “I’m so… so sorry.” Her hands moved up to cover her face as she sobbed. “I’m so sorry!” Monoma softly wrapped his arms around her as her knees went limp. Once she fell to the floor, her classmates stood up to move closer. “It’s all my fault.” Yui and Setsuna appeared on her other side and hugged her. Reiko and Kinoko moved her hands away from her face and held them. Ibara and Tetsutetsu put their hands on her shoulders while Shishida reached over and ruffled her hair. “I-I know that I don’t
“I love you guys.”

“We love you too!” Pony called out from across the room. Slowly, Kendo stood back up and rubbed her eyes dry. The others who hadn’t gotten the chance yet gave her a pat on the back or a quick hug while Kendo walked over to Pony. She leaned down and gave her a long, tight hug and then reached over to Rin to bump his fist.

“All’s well that ends well, it seems,” Shishida mused. Monoma nodded in agreement as he watched Kendo, but was roused from this by a knock at the door.

“What’s up?” Kuroiro asked. The four visitors came into the room with Nezu at the front.

“If I may, I’d like to say something to all of you,” he began. The principal cleared his throat and made sure everyone was watching when he bowed low. “As your principal, I feel as though I’m to blame for this whole mess. It was the shortcomings of U.A. that caused this situation to occur as it did. We were entrusted with your safety by your parents and we’ve betrayed that trust.”

“It’s not your fault, sir,” Kinoko said from the couch. “Really, we couldn’t have told you what was happening anyway.”

“Still, the fact that you couldn’t is proof of our failures enough,” Nezu continued. “Furthermore, Miss Kendo’s capture falls on our shoulders as well. Truly, we are at fault. Miss Kendo…” Nezu stepped closer to Kendo and bowed low once again. “From all of us at U.A., we humbly beg your forgiveness for our incompetence.”

“It’s fine, sir,” Kendo told him. “Really, I don’t blame you or the school.”

“Whatever the case, we’ll still make it up to you. All of you.” Nezu stepped towards the door and gave one last bow to the class. “Before I go, I’d like to personally congratulate you on your actions tonight. You’re truly a well-taught, powerful, and noble group. Thank you for your time.” After Nezu left, All Might motioned to Tsukauchi and the detective stepped forward.

“We’re still processing everything that’s happened and compiling the data, but I thought you’d like to hear what you’ll see in the news tomorrow,” he told them while opening a document. “After the police arrived, the building was swept and all weapons and machines were confiscated. Nine people were found on the scene and have been identified as the members of Head Games – Kashiko Dokasuru, Atsuen Sokudo, Suberidai Musei, Chimera, Airi Yokubo, Yusen Setsuzoku, Densen Byoki, Seijo Senbo, and Mugon Kodai. They’ve all been brought into police custody.”

“Wait, Kodai?” Setsuna interrupted. All eyes in the room went to Yui, who looked at the floor.
“Yui, is he…?”

“My brother,” she said.

“I’m sorry to hear that,” Kendo told her. “Yui, if you need to talk about it, you can always come to me. It’s not exactly the same, but I kinda know how you felt after what happened with my uncle.”

“I’ll be fine,” Yui replied. “At least I found him. Maybe… things can be better now.”

“Hopefully,” Monoma chimed in. “Sorry, go on, detective.”

“Right, let’s see. The two members of the League of Villains weren’t found after sweeping the area, but their blood was recovered from a few spots in the area, so we know they’re hurt and in hiding once again.”

“Sorry,” Rin croaked from his bed.

“Don’t be,” Tsukauchi told him. “Let’s just be glad you’re alive.”

“Thanks to me,” Kuroiro declared while cockily posing.

“You’re right. It is thanks to you,” Rin said. “I owe you my life, Kuroiro. Thank you.”

“…Damn, don’t gotta get all sentimental on me. Just forget about it already,” he replied bashfully. “It’s nothing. Fuck off. I don’t even care.”

“That’s the end of my report so far,” Tsukauchi continued, “but in short, Head Games is finished and their weapons have been stopped at the source. You may have just gone to save your friend, but in doing so, you’ve done a great service to the public. I’m glad the next generation of heroes is so capable.” Tsukauchi closed his document and went to exit before subtly locking eyes with Monoma. “Good work.” Monoma smiled back at him and the detective left, letting All Might step forward.

“Guess it’s my turn,” he said after clearing his throat. “I feel the same as Principal Nezu. We should’ve been able to help you and we couldn’t, and I’m sorry for that.” After a quick bow, All Might took a look around the room and cracked a smile. “Still, I’m impressed with all of you. Even if you were forced into this confrontation, I hear you all fought spectacularly. Young Kendo, I hear you were especially brave.”

“I wouldn’t say that,” she chuckled.

“Well, I would. After hearing about what each of you went through, I’d like to congratulate you all. I know I’m not the best teacher around – I kinda play favorites and I haven’t really given you all a fair shake, but I’ve really come to see what you’re made of. When one of your own was in danger, you didn’t hesitate to help. You fought so well because you fought for each other. Isn’t that right, Vlad?”

“Of course! My students are as close as can be! If you mess with one, you mess with them all!” Vlad King’s bombastic words of praise brought a smile to the faces of his students. “I think it’s plain to see, All Might, that each and every one of them has the heart of a hero!”

“I completely agree.” The students of Class 1-B looked around at each other while taking in the praise from the Symbol of Peace. After the hardships they had faced that night, something so simple yet so important was what put all of their hearts at ease. “You must all be tired, so I won’t keep you up. Rest well, my students. You’ve earned it.”
“If anyone needs anything, I’ll be in the around,” Vlad told the class. “Just shout and I’m there, OK?”

“In that case, can I get a hand?” Pony asked. “Not really sure how to work this thing and I wanna go to bed.”

“Of course.”

“Everyone, follow Pony’s lead and take off,” Setsuna ordered. “My dragon boyfriend’s going to sleep, so get out.”

“So pushy,” Reiko snarked.

“Hey, he needs his rest. I’m gonna kiss all over his face and then we’re sleeping.”

“Night, guys,” Rin said with a wave. The rest of the class slowly filed outside and left the lizard couple alone in their room.

“Nighty night!” Pony called out as Vlad wheeled her away.

“I’m going to sleep too. Long night,” Yui stated.

“Sweet dreams,” Kendo said to her. Yui smiled and went off to her room while Awase and Reiko took out their phones.

“Man, Mei called me a fuckton. Shouldn’t have turned my ringer off. Better call back.”

“So whipped,” Kuroiro quipped as Awase walked away, flipping his friend off.


“Fuckin’ get it, girl,” Tsuburaba said to her. “I’m gonna hit the hay too. Wanna join, Sen?” he asked with a wiggle of his eyebrows.

“Yeah, sure.”

“Aw yeah. I’m getting cuddles.”

“I’m gonna follow their lead and get some rest,” Honenuki stated.

“I guess I’d better join you, just in case,” Kuroiro claimed, “but it’s not like I like you or anything.”

“Very convincing,” Honenuki responded while pulling his grinning boyfriend along.

“I’m too fuckin’ wired to sleep,” Kamakiri announced. “I’m going to the lobby to watch TV. Anyone wanna come?”

“I think I’ll take you up on that offer, my friend,” Shishida affirmed with his normal politeness.

“Think there’s any good anime on?” Fukidashi asked.

“Probably. Let’s go check it out,” Bondo answered. While the four boys walked off to the lobby, Shoda’s hand was grabbed by Kinoko and she pulled him off.

“I’m in the mood for a midnight snack,” she told him while winking her one visible eye.

“Uh, sure I think have some cash for… Oh!”
“She’s got the right idea,” Tetsutetsu said. “What d’ya say, Ibara?”

“How bold of you,” she responded with flushed cheeks. “If you insist, then…”

“Yeah, I’m starving. Think they’ve got any food?”

“…I wouldn’t know. Let’s look together.”

“Sweet!” Tetsutetsu took the lead and walked off while Ibara waited momentarily to calm her blush.

“How pure of you,” Monoma joked. Ibara brushed off the comment and followed Tetsutetsu, leaving Monoma and Kendo alone. “And then there were two.”

“I’m gonna turn in too,” she told him. “Let’s sit for a little, first. I wanna talk about something.”

“If you insist,” Monoma coyly responded. The couple found a short bench nearby and sat down, their hands resting on each other. There wasn’t another soul in sight; it was just the two of them. “What do you want to talk about?”

“…It was in there, wasn’t it?” Kendo said while looking down the hall to the stairwell entrance. “That was where you told me you loved me for the first time.”

“That it was. More than half a year ago.”

“More than half a year… and I still haven’t said it back.”

“If you’re not ready to say it, then I won’t pressure you. I can be a very patient man, Kendo,” he said while she squeezed his hand.

“You really are.” Kendo fell silent for a long while, but her voice eventually returned in the form of a light-hearted laugh.

“What’s so funny?” he asked, now smiling from hearing her angelic laughter.

“We’ve been a couple for about half a year, and how long have we known each other?”

“…About a decade now.”

“We still call each other by our last names,” Kendo laughed. Monoma took a moment for the realization to sink in before laughing as well.

“Geez, you’re right. We’ve known each other since grade school and… how did we never switch?”

“I guess it never came up,” Kendo guessed. “We were stuck in our ways from day one.”

“That we were.” Monoma sighed and rested his head on the wall, next to Kendo’s. “Were you thinking about switching now?”

“Might as well. That is, unless you were planning on dumping me.”

“I wouldn’t dream of it.” The two hero students sat up straight and turned to face the other. They grasped each other’s hands and looked deep into their partner’s eyes. “In that case, I’ll go first. Itsuka, I love you.” Monoma leaned in, making Kendo blush as she prepared to reply in kind.

“Neito… I love you.” With those words finally freed from her chest, Kendo brought herself closer to Monoma and placed her lips on his.
Welcome

Chapter Notes

So yeah, I'm doing more of this. Decided I had more stories I could tell in this series, so I'm continuing on for a while more.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It was late March, when the cherry blossoms were beginning to bloom in full, that a certain U.A. class held a celebration. It was small and private with just them, but had the festivity and love to match more than 100 people. In their dorm building, Class B celebrated the end of their final first-year term and the arrival of their newest member, bringing the group’s number officially up to 21. In the common area’s center, a handful of boys sloppily danced around and sang karaoke with each other – Tetsutetsu, Kaibara, Tsuburaba, and Monoma.

Guess who just got back today?

Them wild-eyed boys who had been away

Haven’t changed that much to say

But man, I still think them cats are crazy

They were askin’ if you were around

How you was, where you could be found?

Told ‘em you were livin’ downtown

Drivin’ all the old men crazy

The boys are back in town!

The boys are back in town!

The boys are back in town!

The boys are back in town!

Nearby on the couch, Kendo watched and chuckled at their antics while taking a seat next to Hitoshi Shinso, their newest classmate. “Feel welcome yet?”

“Something like that,” he responded groggily. In the free space to his left, Reiko flopped down and stretched out, resting her head on his chest. “You too?”

“I just can’t party like them. Parties are too… people-y.”

“Reiko, get your ghost butt back over here!” From the kitchen, Setsuna called out to her friend and excitedly pointed to Awase. “The madman is on his twelfth chocolate lava cake! You gotta be here when he spews and I win the bet!” Shinso and Reiko conked their heads to the side and saw a green-faced Awase staring down a small chocolate cake and tightening his headband.
“For the kids,” he declared.

“What kids?” Shinso asked Reiko.

“Beats me.”

“Guys, those were for everyone,” Kendo scolded.

“This was a majority decision,” Setsuna defended as Awase shoved cake in his mouth. “It’s for a good cause. I got $100 riding on this!”

“Frr th kdzz,” Awase choked out as Kamakiri brought over a bucket.

“Here, you’ll probably… definitely need this.” He quickly retreated, hoping to avoid getting barfed on, while Fukidashi and Kinoko stood by and chanted.

“Go, go, go, go, go!”

“Is it always like this?” Shinso asked the beleaguered class representative.

“In our downtime, more or less. What d’you think so far?” Shinso turned his head back and saw Pony sauntering back into the party, having retrieved her favorite cowboy hat, and approached Rin, who’s scales were pointed out like spikes.

“Alriiiight, Pinhead. Yer time is uuuup.”

“Who’re you callin’ pinhead?” Both students immediately started laughing, along with Monoma and the other boys who had been singing and the group in the kitchen. Awase almost lost the cake in his mouth, but somehow kept it in.

“Damnit, it didn’t work!” Setsuna said between her laughs. “I so thought that would get you!”

“Frr thrr…” Awase someone swallowed the sugary treat and groaned in pain, doubled over the bucket. “…For the kids.”

“…Seriously, what kids?” Shinso asked again.

“Pay the man, Setsuna,” Reiko told Setsuna. “You said you bet a hundo, yeah?”

“Yeah, yeah, I’ll pay after he spews.”

“Oh, it’s gotta come out,” Awase moaned. “Someone punch me.”

“Dibs!” Kuroiro yelled, darting across the room. He vaulted over a couch to reach Awase and smacked him across the face with a satisfied, cheeky expression.

“OW! I meant my stomach, douchebag!”

“I can do that too,” Kuroiro assured him.

“Tone it down, Shihai,” Honenuki instructed while trailing Kuroiro. The white-haired boy backed off reluctantly and left Awase hunched over in sickness. Shinso, still watching, realized that whatever would happen would be gross and turned away, aiming his sight towards the corner of the common room.

“Those guys have the right idea, though I have no idea how they’re able to sleep in all this noise.”
On another couch, Shoda, Yui, Bondo and Ibara were all asleep with Shishida sprawled out on the floor nearby.

“The wholesome ones get tuckered out easily,” Kendo noted. The boys in between the two couches finally singing karaoke and dispersed, with Monoma approaching Kendo and Shinso.

“Having fun, Shinso? Let me tell you, this party is 1000 times better than any welcome party that Class A would—” His rant was cut short when a swift chop from Kendo hit his neck and stunned him, making him faceplant into where she had been sitting.

“Sorry about that.”

“It’s cool.”

“OH, HERE IT COMES!” Awase yelled as he hurried to the bathroom with a few people on his tail.

“Hey, Itsuka,” Monoma mumbled with his face in the couch cushion, “have you told Shinso about the Clash yet?”

“The what?”

“Oh, right! I totally spaced,” Kendo realized.

“Seriously, the what?”

“It’s the Academy Clash,” she told Shinso. “We were told about it by Mr. Vlad. Since you’re now an official member of our class, you’re obviously invited too, but he wanted me to see if you felt you were ready.”

“Hold on, back up,” Shinso requested. “I’m not sure what you’re talking about. What is this Academy Clash thing?”

“Oh, I’m so glad you asked,” Monoma monologued, now recovered and taking the reins from Kendo. “You see, once a year, at the end of the school year, hero academies from far and wide join together for a very, very special event – the Academy Clash. Battles between the schools are held as a way for students to gain valuable experience fighting against unfamiliar Quirks. Pros from around the country are invited to spectate these private joint training rounds in hopes of finding sidekicks or just to see how the next generation is doing. No moronic games or eliminations like the Sports Festival – just good old-fashioned battles and other heroic challenges where you and your classmates can truly shine!”

“…Cool.”

“You don’t seem to understand why I’m so excited—”

“I doubt anyone does most of the time,” Reiko interjected.

“You see, both our class and Class A will be attending, so this will give us a chance to definitely prove our superiority to the hero world!”

“That isn’t the point of all this,” Kendo interrupted while pushing Monoma’s face away. “It’s in a week, so Mr. Vlad wanted me to ask if your felt like going. If you don’t feel ready, you don’t have to go.”
“Uuuuuuhhh… hm.” Shinso looked to the floor and swirled his drink aimlessly. “I want to go, but… could I keep up? Not just with you guys, but with the other schools?”

“You did well enough to get in,” Reiko pointed out. “If you do well, that’s great, and if you don’t, it’s no big deal. Besides, the main event is group battles, so you’ll have back-up.”

“You’ve got a good point… Why not? I’m in.”

“Fantastic!” Monoma interjected. “Worry not, Shinso, for you are now part of greatest class to ever grace U.A.!!”

“HE SPEWED!” Shinso heard yelled from down the hall. “Aw man, it’s everywhere! Awase, why’d you even agree to this stupid bet?!!”

“You’re the one who out it forward, you crazy bitch!”

“Ryu, he called me a bitch! Beat him up!”

“Gimme a minute. It’s on my shoes.”

“EW!”

“…I can see that,” Shinso drawled.

“They’ll be all business on the day of,” Kendo backtracked. “Trust me, we take stuff like this very seriously.”

“I believe you, I believe you,” Shinso assured her. “I’ll try and do my best to not drag you guys down. Whatever happens, you’ll get the best of what I’ve got.”

Chapter End Notes

IMPORTANT: If you haven’t already, go check out three one-shots I did between this chapter and the last one - Heart of a Hero Draconic, HoaH Atlas, and HoaH Wild West Hero. They take place between the last chapter and this chapter and are important to future events, so check them out.

Also, check the TvTropes page for this story to see an awesome poster made by Kannra21 for this big return. It’s legit amazing.
The Academy Clash

The week before the Academy Clash was used by both hero classes to hone their skills and finalize any new strategies or super moves. When the day finally came, they suited up and were driven out to the location – Endo National Park. Hatsume had also tagged along as an “emergency mechanic” in case anyone’s support items needed urgent fixing, but most of the class had figured she was just as much there to market herself and her items. As for teachers, Vlad King and Eraserhead were obviously going along as well, along with All Might and Recovery Girl.

“OK, we’re arriving,” Vlad King announced to his class. “Remember, you’re here representing U.A. just as much as you’re her to show off your hero skills. Be smart, be mature, remember your manners, and don’t forget to give it your all.”

“Yes, sir!”

“I’m starting to get nervous,” Shinso admitted. “I’m barely in the course and now I’m up against all these other schools.”

“You’ll be just fine if you stick with us,” Monoma assured him. “No man left behind. We’re all showing off today and that includes you.”

“That’s right,” Kendo agreed. “We’ll all be backing you up if you need it.”

“What they said,” Reiko added on.

“Remember what to say if someone asks about Persona Code!” Hatsume blurted out while climbing over Awase towards the others. “It’s Hatsume Industries official tech! I have the jingle ready if you want!”

“Would you cram it?” Awase grumbled as he nudged her back into her seat.

“We’re here, we’re here!” Kinoko cheered from the head of the bus. “Let’s go!” All at once, the class jumped from their seats and hurried out the door.

“Remember what I said about being mature!” Vlad shouted as he followed them out of the bus.

Now at the edge of the expansive park, the students looked around and realized just how crowded with students and heroes it was. Every direction they looked, they recognized a famous pro. “Hey, that’s Chainsaw Jack!”

“Ooo, Look! It’s Sheildomotron!”

“Oh my gosh, it’s Vlad King!”

“Very funny, Tokage.”

“I know, I’m hilarious.”

“So, what should we do now?” Kendo asked her teacher while looking around. Among the crowd were several areas roped off for challenges, almost looking like a carnival. She could see a giant fighting ring, a sharpshooting stall, a rescue test, and many more trials.

“Well, the main event isn’t for another two hours, so until then, I’m letting you off the leash. Find a way to show off.”
“Right!” Like little kids at an amusement park, the class scattered into the crowd in an eager rush to show their skills. Vlad King watched them go with a smile and laughed to himself.

“Yours too, huh?” Looking to his left, Vlad saw Eraserhead approaching him and noticed his students were heading into the crowd too.

“It’s a big day. Let them have their fun.”

“How was Shinso?”

“Your boy said he was nervous, but his new classmates assured him they have his back.”

“He’s not ‘my boy’.”

“Riiiiight,” Vlad responded. “My kids are gonna show everyone here who’s the real cream of the crop, Aizawa. This day will be great for us, just you wait and—”

“Vladdy!”

“…Oh God, no.” Vlad’s neck turned rigidly when he heard a familiar voice, and he saw the Ninja Hero Hakkenden, AKA Aisa Sarutobi of Gaikoku Academy, coming towards him.

“What a coincidence this is, eh?”

“A colleague of yours?” Eraserhead asked.

“Oh, we go way back,” Aisa told him. “I could tell you some stories if you—”

“That seems unnecessary!” Vlad blurted out.

“Oh, Seki!” From the crowd, a voice came through and another woman approached Vlad – the Dragon Hero Ryukyu.

“R-Ryuko, I—”

“Oh, who’s this?” Aisa wondered. “A friend?”

“You must be Hakkenden,” Ryukyu greeted. “I’ve heard about you before.”

“Won’t you introduce us, Vladdy?” By this point, Vlad’s mind had entered its panic mode and he looked to Eraserhead for help, only met by a trollish grin.

“Seems you have your hands full,” his colleague said. “I think I’ll give you some privacy—”

“Eeeeeeeraser!” Suddenly, Eraserhead froze up. Vlad recognized the Smile Hero Ms. Joke was the one calling to him and watched her come up and slap Eraserhead’s back. “Nice to see ya here! Can’t be coincidence, huh? Did you come here just to propose to me, you sly dog?”

Vlad smirked back at Eraserhead, glad he was now in the same situation, but the awaiting looks from Ryukyu and Aisa popped his bubble quickly. Both he and Eraserhead looked at each other and wondered the same thing. Why me?

“Man, it’s so packed.” Having lost sight of most of her companions, Kendo settled for checking out the challenges on her own. As she navigated through the maze of people, the large circular ring caught her eye and she decided to get a closer look.
“Step right up to the Sumo Trial! 30 heroes enter, but only one will be left by the end!”

“Sumo, huh? I can get behind a test of strength.”

“Hey, Kendo! Over here!” From the crowd of students signing up, Kendo saw Pony waving her over, along with Kaibara, Tetsutetsu, Kirishima, and Shoji. “Come sign up! Your Quirk was built for something like this!”

“I was just thinking that.” Kendo happily stepped up to sign herself in for the next round and then moved on with the group to the roped-off waiting area.

“Aw yeah. I’m ready to show my stuff,” Tetsutetsu boasted.

“Hell yeah. Every man for himself out there,” Kirishima agreed. “I just wish we had gotten here a round earlier. Some guy is really tearing things up in there this round.”

“Oh yeah?” Kendo looked more closely into the current round and saw that one person in the center was dominating the round, and as the crowd was thrown out to the sidelines, she finally recognized who it was.

“Looks like there’s some familiar faces here, eh, Tetsutetsu?” Throwing out another group of competitors from the ring was Gou Yonaga of Gaikoku Academy, who let out a boastful battle cry.

“Yeah. It’s been a while since we’ve seen these guys. I hope they’ve gotten better.”

“Looks like it.” The U.A. students watched as the hulking student knocked more people from the ring until it was only him and one last opponent – Habuko Mongoose of Isamu High School. Gou moved to throw her from the ring, but the snake-headed girl jumped away from the danger and leapt onto Gou’s back. She hoisted herself onto his shoulders and leaned over his head to look into his eyes. After continuously staring into them, her own eyes emitted a bright green flash.

“Petrify!” The technique seemed to make Gou’s body completely freeze up. Habuko climbed off his prone body and, with great effort, pushed him out of the ring.

“We’ve got a winner, people! From Isamu High School, it’s Habuko Mongoose, AKA Medusa!”

“Those two got real stronger,” Pony noted.

“Friends of yours?” Shoji asked her.

“We met their classes from those schools at the License Exam. Fought in the first round, and they we joined forces for the second. That’s how we beat Ryukyu and Nejire,” she explained. “I wonder if we’ll fight one of them in our main battle?”

“Who knows? But remember, we’ve gotten stronger too,” Kendo reminded her. “Learning more about our Quirks, creating new super moves, getting new support items – even something two semesters ago is ancient history for hero students.”

“Guess you’re right—”

“Oh, but is it ancient history, Itsuka? If anything, you lot seem weaker than before! Oh-hohohohoho!” Once she heard a notoriously haughty voice, Kendo knew immediately who it was and spun around to meet her.

“Well, if it isn’t Victoria Hope. I was wondering how long you’d be able to keep to yourself.”
“Oh? Well, it is difficult for me to stay out of the spotlight; especially here and now. A powerful third-year student is sure to draw attention.”

“Yeah, and your big mouth must have nothing to do with that.”

“You’ve grown quite a bit more brazen, Itsuka. How sad a flower like you must bloom in such an impudent way.”

“Shot in the dark; is she related to Monoma?” Kirishima asked Tetsutetsu.

“No, but Kuroiro made that joke already.”

“Dang.”

“So, are you participating?” Kendo asked the older girl. “I’d love to smash you into the ground again.”

“Unfortunately, no. I’m just here with my classmates to collect Gou. After that last round, he’s being looked at closely by the attending heroes.”

“They’ll have to rethink things once I hit the stage. I’ve gotten stronger then you’d ever believe.”

“Oh-hohohoho! I’m looking forward to it.” Victoria turned her attention to her classmates carrying he still-frozen Gou away, and once the other U.A. students weren’t listening in anymore, she leaned in to Kendo and spoke softly. “I’m sorry to ask in this place, but I was wondering how you’ve been since that incident in December.”

“Oh, that… I’m fine now. No need to worry, Vicky.”

“I’ve been here for a little while and I’ve heard your class come up more than a few times amongst the heroes present. It seems they don’t know what to think, especially in regard to you. As in, whether you’re all strong for overcoming Head Games or weak for being targeted and drawn into their trap in the first place. You don’t exactly have the mitigating factor of winning the Sports Festival like that Bakugo boy to dissuade those thoughts.”

“Hm… then we’ll have to show them all here and now.” Kendo gave a smile and thumbs up to her rival as the next group of participating students started to climb onto the ring. “Trust me, Vicky. We’re all gonna show these pros what we’re made of.”

“That’s wonderful to hear, but if we should fight, don’t expect any mercy.”

“Good. I don’t want any.” After bumping Victoria’s fist, Kendo followed her schoolmates into the ring along with the other students, totaling 30 competitors.

“Now, let’s get this show on the road, folks! The last hero remaining in the ring will be the winner! Ready?! Begin!” As soon as the round started, fists started flying around the ring and attacks came from all sides. Kendo had stayed near the edge at the start, but started to swipe her giant hands forward to knock people away. In the center of the ring, she saw Kirishima and Tetsutetsu, in their Unbreakable and Heavy Metal forms, sending crazed punches out all around them. On the other side was Kaibara, who was spinning himself like a madman to keep others at a distance, and nearby him was Shoji, who simply picked up and threw out competitors.

“I gotcha!” A boy with a monkey-mutation Quirk jumped up from the crowd and pounced at Kendo, but as he descended, a set of horns impacted his side and rocketed him away. Attached at the bases of the horns were a blue leash-like wires that retracted them back to their owner, Pony.
“Those horn returners working out, Pony?”

“Yup! Let’s fight together, Kendo!”

“You got it!” The girls rushed headlong towards the center of the ring and attacked relentlessly. Before long, competitors were starting to be knocked out and the U.A. students were still going strong. That is, until Kendo heard Tetsutetsu’s and Kirishima’s screams as they were somehow flung across the ring, nearly falling out. “What the—who was that?” Kendo asked as she spun around.

“Was him,” Pony answered while grinding her hoof into the ring. Standing in the center where the hardening duo had been was an oversized student with a sumo-like costume and mirror glass on his palms. Pony shot one of her horns at him, but as soon as it hit his palm, it bounced and flew off in another direction.

“Just try and attack me! You’ll go flying!”

“I see. He can reflect attacks,” Kendo realized. “In that case…” She took off towards the center and dodged an incoming palm strike from the boy. As he tried to attack again, Kendo dipped around behind him, enlarged her hands, and hoisted him up over her head. “I’ll just pick him up and toss him!” With a step backwards, Kendo hurled him over her head and sent him flying out of the ring.

“Boss!” Several students watched in shock and horror as the sumo student flew off, and then faced Kendo head-on. “How dare you do that to our class president! We’ll knock you right out of here!”

“Then come at me! I’m starting to get into this!” Four boys rushed at Kendo to attack and she jumped back. With a confident look, she pulled her arms back and enlarged her hands, and once her feet hit the ground again, she threw herself forward. “Titanic Harite!” Her giant hands flew forward and she hit the boys with double palm strike, pushing them far out of the ring.

“Yeah, Kendo!” Pony cheered.

With the crowd in the ring thinning, Kendo looked around and saw each U.A. student was still in the fight, but Kaibara was being inched back by a large student with stone skin.

“Those fancy moves aren’t gonna do nothin’!” he shouted as he threw another big punch that Kaibara dodged around.

“You’re right. Guess it’s time to show off my new gear.” Holding his left arm forward, Kaibara showed off to the crowd a sleeker, thinner gauntlet over his upper arm. “A propeller and wind gun in one compact device – The Tornado Gauntlet II!” Clicking it to the right, the device opened up on the edges and Kaibara spun his arm, sending a swirling blast of wind forward. The stone student tensed up at the attack and slid back, but was able to dig in his heels right at the edge.

“This all you got?!”

“Nope. I just need to keep you in one place for a second. Time to show off my other piece of equipment.” Kaibara held out his right arm this time, which was sporting a brand-new, thick black glove. His individual fingers stated spinning against each other, making sparks from the friction, and soon, his hand was bursting into flames. “Here comes my…” Kaibara bolted forward and stopped spinning his left arm, ending the wind stream. The stone student tried to attack with a punch, but Kaibara slipped by and pushed his right arm forward, delivering a flaming punch that threw his opponent from the ring. “FIRE FIST!”

“Hot damn! Kaibara, you were holding out on us!” After complimenting her classmate, Kendo
looked around and realized she, him, Pony, Tetsutetsu, Kirishima, and Shoji were the only ones remaining. “Well, the referee said ‘last man standing’, sooooo…”

“I won’t go easy on ya,” Pony said as she pointed her horns at Kendo.

“Me neither, so don’t hold back,” Kaibara requested.

“Let’s do this!” the hard-headed pair screamed.

“I’ll give it my best,” Shoji stated calmly.

Pony made the first move and shot both of her horns, one at each of her classmates. Kendo and Kaibara both dodged and Kaibara tried to grab the wire, but the horns were pulled back too quickly. Tetsutetsu chased them for an attack, but Kendo slapped him away from the side. Kirishima then attacked Kendo with a punch that sent her tumbling across the ring, but she recovered speedily and stood again.

Across from her, she saw Kaibara using his dance-like moves to avoid and deter any grabs from Shoji’s extending arms. He tried for a spinning kick, but it was blocked and Shoji was finally able to grab him. That’s when Pony ran and attacked him in the torso with a rocketing double kick. “Hero Hoof!” Shoji was thrown backwards, still holding onto Kaibara, and both fell from the ring. “Heehee! Two for one!”

“Red Gauntlet!” from behind Kirishima attacked her with a punch, but Pony jumped up to dodge it. Kendo this chance to enter the fray once again and moved to attack her airborne classmate.

“Titanic Harite!” Pony tried to stop the attack with her horns, but Kendo dodged them and hit Pony with a palm thrust that threw her away. With one less opponent, she turned her focus to Kirishima, who hardened himself into his Unbreakable form.

“Just try and break through me!” After a beat, Kendo shrugged and wrapped her hands around Kirishima’s body.

“I’d rather just toss you out. Sorry.” With a flick of her wrists, Kirishima was sent flying form the ring, leaving just two competitors.

“That won’t work on me,” Tetsutetsu boasted while turning into his Heavy Metal form. “I’m way too fucking heavy.”

“We’ll see.” In the ring’s center, the two locked themselves into a grapple, stalemated by Kendo’s strength and Tetsutetsu’s weight. “Hrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr...
“Looks like we’ve got a perfect score, folks! All those attacks and the duo didn’t let a single one hit their mannequin! Give it up for U.A.’s Setsuna Tokage and Rin Hiryu, AKA Indominus and Shenlong!”

“Thank you, thank you,” Setsuna said while waving and blowing kisses to the onlookers. “Oh, you’re too kind!”

“C’mon, Sets.”

“I’m coming, I’m coming.” The pair left the trial they had completed and looked around the crowd for something else to do. “What next?”

“I’m not sure…” Both stayed quiet for a long while, simply standing and looking around aimlessly, until Setsuna finally made a suggestion

“…Wanna see if Ryukyu is here?”

“Yes!”

“Me too!”

“She’s gotta be here!”

“Definitely! Hold on, I’ve got a perfect way to find her.” Setsuna’s declaration was followed by her placing both hands on her head and pulling up until it was completely detached from her body.

“Still not used to that,” Rin said while averting his eyes. “Also, people are staring.”

“Who cares? We’ve got a dragon lady to find, Ryu.” Setsuna’s body crouched and then hurled her head into the air. Rin watched the head tumble and then fall back into her body’s arms. “Uuugh, feelin’ barfy.”

“Did you see anything?”

“Huh?”

“Did you see Ryukyu?”

“…Fuck. I forgot to check. Hang on, I’ll go for another flight.”

“Hello, you two.”

“ACK!” Setsuna flinched backwards into Rin’s arms and fumbled her head, taking a while to stick it back on her body. Once she did, she and Rin realized Ryukyu had come up behind them. “M-M-Miss Ryukyu! Hey!”

“Afternoon, ma’am,” Rin added while helping Setsuna back onto her feet. “We were just—”

“Just standing around and wondering what challenge to do next,” Setsuna interrupted. “We weren’t looking for you or nothing! Didn’t even think you’d be here! Right, Ryu?”

“…We were just looking for you.”
“Ryyuuu, now we sound desperate,” Setsuna whined.

“I’m happy to see you both here,” Ryukyu told them. “I was very impressed with your showing in that last game.”

“Oh, well, y’know, we’re kinda badasses like that.”

“I agree. It seems you’ve both grown quite a bit since we last saw each other. Why don’t we talk somewhere a little less crowded? I’d like to discuss something with you.”

“So, you’re givin’ me another shot, huh?” Kamakiri shuffled his foot in the grass and looked back up at Yoroi Mushi, seeing a hint of his eyes from under the dark helm. “What’s the catch?”

“No catch. I’d just like to see how much you’ve improved since our duel,” the old pro told him. “Especially since you probably won’t be fighting another swordsman.”

“Yeah, probably. I’ve gotten pretty good at fighting unarmed people, so watch close. I’ll impress you, old timer.”

“I’d hope so.”

“Time’s up! With a time of only 9.77 seconds, we can add that to the top 10 rankings. Give it up for Juzo Honenuki from U.A., AKA Mogura!” Honenuki waved to the audience and smiled before exiting the challenge, greeted at the exit by Fukidashi and Bondo.

“Great showing out there, man,” Fukidashi complimented. “Seems like your new hero name’s going over well too.”

“Thanks.”

“Looks like Kuroiro’s going now,” Bondo pointed out. Honenuki looked into the ring and saw his boyfriend at the starting point, staring down a rocky hill. On top stood the challenges’ commentator and operator, Pixie-Bob, who used her Quirk to form 10 small rock golems around the hill.

“He’ll probably bust out that new super move of his,” Fukidashi guessed. “He’s been pretty excited about it ever since he learned more about his Quirk.”

In the ring, Kuroiro stared down the rock foes and chuckled. “These creatures are no match for the extreme darkness inside of me,” he postulated. “Darkness swallows all that it touches, and with the power over the darkness formed in my abyssal body, I can swallow up anything!”

“Begin!”

“With pleasure!” Kuroiro instantly opened his chest portal, letting the audience see his super move begin. “Now, flickers of darkness, leave your master’s side and clings to a target! Drag them into my eternity! BLACK WISPS!” Despite the grandiose way of announcing his move, the audience seemed surprised to see that his description was not too far from reality. Flickers of darkness leaked out of his void and shot out, acting almost like embers from a fire, and spread out to cling onto the golems. “Now, return!” Once he called for them, the darkness pulled back on the rock creatures they clung to and were pulled back to the portal, where they were swallowed into Kuroiro’s body.

“Well, I can’t seem to control them anymore, so I guess he’s won!” Pixie-Bob declared. “13.55 seconds for Shihai Kuroiro of U.A., AKA Void!”
“Thank you, thank you.”

“Nice work,” Honenuki said as Kuroiro left the trial area. “Seems all that work on your new move paid off.” He was about to suggest they move on before seeing someone else stepping up to the trial. “Hm?”

“What’s wrong?” Kuroiro asked, also looking into the ring. “You know that guy?”

“I think so.” Though he couldn’t place a finger on it, the tall and well-built student in the ring seemed familiar.

“Begin!” As soon as Pixie-Bob started the clock, the boy raised his left hand, covered by a giant tan gauntlet, and let out several condensed wind funnels from the holes in it. The wind ripped the golems to pebbles immediately, leaving everyone watching awestruck.

“Th-That’s 3.18 seconds! A new record! Give it up for Shiketsu’s Inasa Yoarashi, AKA Gale Force!”

“Y-Yoarashi?” Honenuki stammered.

“You know this clown?” Kuroiro asked as Yoarashi performed a hot-blooded pose in the ring.

“He was at the recommendation student exam with me and Todoroki, and he… he completely blew us out of the water. Todoroki was the only one who could possibly match him, but in the end, Yoarashi was leagues ahead of every single one of us.”

“What’s he doing at Shiketsu then?” Fukidashi wondered.

“Rumor is he passed on U.A. for personal reasons, but still… if he didn’t, then I—”

“There’s no use thinking about that,” Kuroiro told him. “What’s done is done, and there’s no use thinking about what could’ve happened. It didn’t.”

“…You’re right.” Deep down, Honenuki knew he should take the advice, but still, he couldn’t help but stare at the powerful student ahead. Inasa Yoarashi. If we were to fight each other, then… I’d lose outright.

“And coming out of the obstacle course first is Minmax, AKA Yui Kodai from U.A.!” Once she crossed the finish line, Yui returned to her normal size and took a deep breath. The crowd gave her a round of applause, and one woman’s loud cheering made Yui turn her head.

“Yaaay, Yui! That’s my sidekick! Woohoo!” Yui gave a wave to Mt. Lady as she loitered away from the finished line. Other students were starting to come into view with another girl coming in a close second place.

“In second place comes Ketsubutsu’s Tatami Nakagame, AKA Tortugal!”


“Thanks.” Yui assumed she answered the question in her normal way, but Nakagame’s reaction made Yui second guess herself. The Ketsubutsu student was still looking Yui’s way and had gone silent. Did I say it wrong? Maybe I came off as unfriendly.

“They said you’re from U.A., right?” she asked Yui. “I’m sorry, but I didn’t catch your name.
“Yui Kodai.”

“It’s nice to meet you. I’m Tatami Nakagame from Ketsubutsu. I, uh, met some U.A. students when I got my license, but it must’ve been, well, the other class. The ones from the Sports Festival, I mean. Y’know, the ones always in the news. They were really impressive.”

“Mhm.”

“N-Not that your class isn’t impressive! I-I wasn’t trying to imply that, um, that your class wasn’t, uh…”

“It’s fine,” Yui told her. Nakagame’s face looked flushed with embarrassment, and through what Yui assumed was her Quirk, her head started to sink into her body. “Are you OK?”

“O-Oh, yes, yeah. I’m fine.” Nakagame’s head came back out, but was still red. Her hand twirled around the hair wing by her left ear and she showed a sharp grin to Yui. “U.A.’s really cool, so I’d bet your class is full of cool and strong people too, Kodai.”

“It is. Thanks.” By then, all of the obstacle courses competitors had crossed the finished line and were being ushered out. She was nice, Yui thought. “It was nice talking to you, Nakagame.”

“Really? I mean, um, thank you, Kodai. I hope we can talk some more later, but you’re probably busy and I think I see my classmate waving me over, so, um…” Nakagame stopped talking and waved goodbye as she walked away. Yui was left watching her go the other why while still looking back over her shoulder.

She seemed nervous. I wonder why…

“An internship?! REALLY?!” Setsuna came up close to Ryukyu and looked up at the draconic hero with a wide and toothy smile. “Like, for realsies?!”

“That’s right. This past winter, Uravity and Froppy were able to get more suitable internships, so I thought you would be up to the task. I was originally going to ask right away, but when I came to ask, you were both…”

“Right, yeah, the whole ‘trauma’ thing,” Setsuna responded.

“It’s an honor to get this offer, ma’am,” Rin said. “It’s been tough, but since we last saw each other, we’ve both improved greatly, and I think we’re finally ready for this. Right, Setsuna?”

“You know it! We’ll kick whoever’s ass you need, ma’am!”

“I’m sure you could. In that case, Rin, are you saying you’ve mastered your improved transformation?”

“Oh, uuuuuhhh…” Rin clumsily looked the other way and scratched his cheek, not speaking for a long while. “I’m close, I’m definitely close, but it’s still pretty hard. I don’t know if I’ll be using it today, but I’ll give it my best anyway. Maybe I can pull it off.”

“I believe you can, but remember that fighting your best doesn’t always mean fighting your hardest. It’s better to fight responsibly and reliably, making sure you don’t burn yourself out too quickly.”

“Right. I’ll try not to be reckless. I hope we can impress you, ma’am.”

“Yeah, you’ll be blown away,” Setsuna boasted. “We’re gonna kick ass like you wouldn’t believe!”
“I’m looking forward to it.”

“Here’s your autograph, young man.” All Might handed back the newly signed notebook back to the student and waved them off with a smile.

“You’re still pretty popular, All Might.”

“Hm?” Someone saying his name from behind made All Might turn, and coming up to him was a short, dark-skinned woman with prominent bunny ears poking into his face. “Oh, Miruko! It’s been a while. How are you?”

“Been good. Ranked up in the Hero Charts, as you saw,” she bragged before giving All Might a playful punch on the arm. “How ‘bout you? Retirement treating you good?”

“I’d say so. It’s given me plenty of time to focus on honing my teaching skills, which I’ve been told haven’t been, er-hem, the greatest…”

“Yeah, that’s kinda what I wanted to talk about. Your students, I mean.”

“Is that right? Are you thinking about taking an intern?”

“What?! HA! No way! Hahahahahaha!” Miruko laughed for a long time, but eventually stopped short and crossed her arms. “Like I’d want some kid following me around. Not gonna happen… but why don’t you tell me about that Itsuka Kendo girl anyway. I saw her win the sumo challenge and she seemed tough.”

“Ah, yes! Young Kendo is absolutely a strong young hero,” All Might began. “Not only that, but she’s the representative for Class B, so she’s also team leader of sorts. Her classmates have complete faith in her, and she’s also smart as a whip. If you were thinking of taking a sidekick, I’d absolutely recommend her.”

“You’re really building her up, but I’m not totally convinced,” Miruko responded. “I haven’t heard much about what happened back in December, but she was the one who got kidnapped, right?”

“…Unfortunately, she was, but I wouldn’t take that as a fault on her part. She was ambushed, you see, and after being freed, she went on to defeat her captor.”

“Is that right?” Miruko rubbed her chin curiously and seemed to be deep in thought.

“If I could make a suggestion, you could talk to Young Kendo yourself.”

“Trying to get rid of me already, huh?”

“O-Of course not! I-I was just—”

“I’m just pulling your tail, old timer,” the rabbit hero laughed. “I think I’ll do that. See for myself if she’s up for the task.”
“You really can’t tell me early?”

“I’m sorry, miss, but revealing the opponent teams could lead to unfair advantages.” Upset by the accusation, Victoria Hope puffed out her cheeks and scoffed.

“As if I need any sort of advantage. I’m just curious is all.”

“Give it a rest, Vicky.” Behind her, her classmate Miru Kimi appeared and grabbed her by the sleeve. “Sorry if my friend here’s being a little overzealous. She’s just kinda like that.”

“I am not,” Victoria claimed with a stamp of her foot.

“Riiight. Anyway, let’s go. Daisuke needs you in the medical tent.”

“Is there a problem?”

“Some weird shirtless guy wants to talk to our class rep. Something about a proposition.”

“Interesting.” Victoria and Miru crossed the park towards the Medical Tent, where they found Daisuke working with Recovery Girl and other rescue heroes as first-aid.

“Hey, over here.”

“So, where’s our visitor?” Victoria questioned, which Daisuke responded to with a lackluster gesture to the side. Sitting nearby with a casual countenance was a boy Victoria didn’t recognize.

“Hi there,” he said with a chipper voice and an immediate handshake. “My name’s Yo Shinso of Ketsubutsu Academy class 3-2. It’s so cool to meet the famous Gaikoku Academy’s highest-scoring third year.”

“Oh-hoho, you flatter me,” Victoria responded, “but flattery can only take you so far.”

“…I wanna beat this guy up,” Daisuke said aloud.

“Down, boy,” Miru said with an elbow in the boy’s side.

“So, Mr. Shindo, I hear you have a proposal of sorts.”

“You could say that. I heard from the grapevine that your class was involved with a U.A. class at the Provisionals License Exam last summer.” As he spoke, Shindo’s voice began to change. The tone dropped lower and the friendliness that had been in his greeting was quickly escaping. “How would you like to steal some spotlight for our schools? U.A. doesn’t deserve it all, now does it?”

“I’m getting a bad vibe from this guy,” Miru told her friend. “Tell him to get lost, Vicky.”

“You’re suggesting some sort of alliance?” Vicky asked while twirling a ringlet of hair. “Intriguing, but what is this about? How can you be sure you’ll fight against the class we know about?”

“I don’t. At least, not now, but I’ve been keeping count of how many schools and classes are here. There’s an odd number. One single class would have no opponent if every single class could only go once. They’ll have to mess with the rules a bit to give every school a chance to go, and I doubt they’ll want to pick a single class to go twice.”
“What are you getting at, Mr. Shindo?” The welcoming and pleasant air around Shindo was gone by this point. His demeanor had change to one of arrogance and pride. All three Gaikoku students present felt this, but none more than Victoria, who saw in him a kindred spirit.

“How would you feel about offering a joint proposal,” he began, “where a collection of students from several schools will fight the class everyone will be watching closely? I’ve already talked to a few Shiketsu students and I’ve heard you have an in with some from Isamu. All together, we can show all the pros here that not all great heroes come from U.A.”

“They like your style, Shindo.”

“Are you seeing the way we’re being looked at? We’re the talk of the whole event! Honestly, I couldn’t be happier!” Kendo gave Monoma a light smack on the arm to calm him down as the two went back to eating.

“Don’t get too excited. Save some energy for the main event,” she told him. “If you really want us to make a splash, that’s the place to do it.”

“Yes, yes, and splash we will. We’re too amazing to ignore. Everywhere we go, I hear whispers about our class.”

“Mhm.” I probably shouldn’t tell him about what Vicky told me, Kendo figured while finishing her food. Once she and Monona were ready to go back into the thick of the event, someone approached them on their left.

“Hey, uh, you. Red-head.” To their shock, it was the famous pro Miruko staring right at them.

“You’re Itsuka Kendo, right?”

“Uh, um, yes, yes ma’am,” Kendo stammered in surprise.

“I wanna talk to you. Let’s go somewhere private,” she insisted. In her disbelief, Kendo looked back at Monoma and saw him nodding and giving her a thumbs-up.

“This is your chance,” he whispered excitedly. “Don’t blow it.”

“That’s helpful,” she murmured back. “Uh, sure, ma’am.”

“Alright, c’mom.” Miruko turned back and walked off, gesturing for Kendo to follow. The rabbit hero led her throw the crowd and to the far edge of the park, far from anyone else who’d listen in. Finally, she stopped under the shade of some trees and looked to Kendo with crossed arms and a furrowed brow. “So, I heard some good things about you from All Might. He says you’re strong, smart, kind, a natural leader - all that good stuff.”

“Oh, really? All Might talked me up to you?” Kendo felt her face slightly flush, but repressed it in front of the pro. “I guess I should probably thank him. Ehehe…”

“Yeah, I checked with Vlad King too and he was REALLY eager to agree. I saw you win that round of the sumo match and that caught my eye. You’re tough, I can tell.” Miruko flashed a cocksure grin at Kendo, which made the hero student shuffle her foot in the grass shyly.

“I like to think so, yeah. My Quirk may be simple, but I can pack a punch.”

“There’s something kinda bugging me, though,” Miruko continued, making Kendo tense up. “The incident back in December with Head Games. What really happened? If you’re as strong as they
say, how’d all that happen, hm?” Kendo’s shoulders drooped and her eyes turned away from the pro’s judgmental, expecting face. After collecting her thoughts, Kendo sighed and leaned back on a tree.

“It’s not really that complicated,” she began, speaking low and hushed. “They were after me from the start. By the time I was suspicious of the two that attacked me, I was already cuffed in a way that made my Quirk useless. I was drugged, tied up, and back at their hideout before I even woke up, and all I could do was wait. I didn’t want everyone to come save me, but…” Kendo paused for a long while, still looking down at the dirt. Her hands felt clammy and weak. Her throat had dried up. Her eyes stung slightly. “…That’s a lie. I didn’t want them to get hurt… but I did want them to save me. I was scared, y’know? That whole night… I’d honestly just rather forget about it.”

“But you can’t, can you?” Miruko’s interjection was just as terse as her earlier statements, but a feeling in Kendo’s gut told her to hear the woman out. “Just a glancing reminder sends you spiraling, doesn’t it?”

“…Pretty much,” Kendo glumly replied. “All of us were like that for a while, but yeah, it always crossed my mind one way or another. Seeing Ibara or Tetsutetsu use their Quirks made me think of it. Seeing Monoma train in hand-to-hand combat made me think of it. Hell, even sitting around in the dark was… If I’m being honest, it’s been difficult to really feel safe ever since. Like I’ll always be weak and that it easily could happen again – or worse, happen to someone I care about. I haven’t felt like myself since then.”

“That’s the way it goes sometimes.” Miruko’s expression had changed and she now seemed uncomfortable. Her arms had uncrossed and were propped up on her hips. She was no longer looking straight at Kendo, and even one of her tall ears was bent forward. “OK, so… I wanted to see where you were at mentally with all that. Y’know, check to see if you were ready to HYPOTHETICALLY take a job with someone – not gonna say who – but this got real personal real fast. I guess I was kinda going headlong into personal stuff with this topic, huh?”

“Sorry if I dumped a lot of baggage on you, ma’am.”

“No, no, you don’t have to apologize. I, uh, was pretty much inviting baggage.” Miruko rubbed her neck awkwardly before going back to her previous judgmental stance. “It seems like you have a good head on your shoulders, but I need to see more before any decisions are made, you get me?”

“Right. In that case, I’ll be sure to impress whoever’s hypothetically keeping an eye on me.”

]“Teams are for weaklings – that’s my motto. Gotta rely on yourself in this world… but that really only counts for adults. Kids like you need guidance, and as a hero, I’m already used to people relying on me.” Miruko squinted her eyes and scratched her head, making her ears wiggle. “So, y’know… fight your best out there and someone MIGHT be impressed.”

“Think so? I hope I can meet this mystery person.”

“Don’t get smart with me,” Miruko chuckled. Kendo laughed lightly too and the two were left in silence momentarily. In this quiet, Kendo looked around and saw in the corner of her eye that Shoda were approaching her.

“Hey, Kendo! We need you for something!” he called out.

“What’s up?”

“I’m not really sure myself, but we need the class rep for something. Apparently, they have an odd
number of classes here, but some guy from another school had a suggestion and it involves us.”

“Uh, OK. give me two seconds—”

“Go ahead with your friend,” Miruko told her. “I was done anyway. Good luck out there.”

“Right. Thank you very much.” Kendo quickly bowed, ignoring Shoda’s whispering questions about what she was doing with the #5 hero, and then followed him across the park.

“Over here, you two.” Once they approached the tables where they had been signed in to the event, they found Shishida and Monoma already there.

“What’s the story?”

“A very interesting proposal,” Monoma told her. “It seems our notoriety among the attending heroes hasn’t gone unnoticed by others.”

“There seems to be an odd number of classes present, so in order to give every class present the chance to fight, another student had the idea to combine students from several schools,” Shishida revealed. “This united force would count as a single team and the ones who put this idea forward said they’d want to face us.”

“Who was it?”

“Right over her, Itsuka.” As soon as the voice hit her ears, Kendo rolled her eyes.

“I should’ve known you’d be pawing at the chance to face me again, Victoria.” She turned to face her rival again and saw her standing with an unfamiliar boy.

“For your information, I was approached to take part in this. It wasn’t my idea.”

“That didn’t stop you from worming 10 of your people into this,” the boy mumbled. “We haven’t met, have we?” Kendo said to him. “Itsuka Kendo, U.A. Class B representative.”

“Yo Shindo. Class 3-2 representative from Ketsubutsu academy.” He reached out and snatched Kendo’s hand to shake it. “It’s so great to meet more U.A. students. My class met your sister class at the Provisional License exam last year and we sure hit it off. I hope we can do the same!” Kendo was taken aback by the friendliness, but accepted it anyway, albeit with some uncertainty. “So, what do you say to our plan?”

“Did you run it by the event runners?”

“I sure did. They were perfectly fine as long as everyone consented.”

“In that case, I’d be fine with it,” Kendo told him while turning to her classmates. “Any thoughts?”

“I trust your judgement completely,” Monoma said with a showy thumbs-up.

“I feel the same,” Shishida confirmed with Shoda nodding in agreement.

“It sounds like we’re all on the same page,” Shindo said. “Hey, Victoria, do you mind telling the Isamu rep and the Shiketsu students?”

“I’d be happy to.” Victoria took her leave with a flip of her hair, leaving Shindo on his own with the three U.A. students.
“You guys really are impressive. Everyone’s been talking about your class here,” Shindo divulged. Before he could go on, Monoma spoke up, drawing his eye.

“Of course, they would, and that’s exactly why you put this together. You’re trying to ride our coattails.”

“That’s enough of that,” Kendo sternly told the copycat.

“He’s right, though,” Shindo explained. “I figured our schools don’t get enough attention compared to U.A., so letting our all-stars take you on would be a nice way of sharing the limelight.”

“A wise idea,” Monoma complimented. “I see a kindred spirit in you, Shindo. We both just want what’s best for those out of focus.”

“I guess so,” Shindo laughed. To Kendo, the laugh sounded odd. Strained. His whole face was starting to look strained too. “Whatever the reason, I’m glad I can get a good look at you guys. A lot has been said about you all since December. Especially you, Itsuka Kendo.”

“Uh…” Kendo quirked an eyebrow at the comment, but still tried to smile politely while thinking of a way to change the subject.

“You were at the center of it all,” Shindo continued. “You were the big hero who took down the boss, but you were also the one held captive. I can’t imagine what that must’ve been like.” At this point, Shindo’s duplicitous face had fully shifted to its true, arrogant self. Kendo wanted to respond, but his comments were bringing back memories that felt prickly and thorny on her mind. She couldn’t think of a single thing to say back, but fortunately, her companions stepped forward.

“I think you’ve said all you need to,” Shishida told him while showing his fangs.

“You should be careful if you say anymore,” Monoma warned.

“Don’t forget that you’re already picking a fight with us,” Shoda reminded him. “You wouldn’t want to make us mad.”

“Yeah, I’ll bet you’re a tough customer, shortstack. A whole year at U.A. and you still couldn’t shed those extra pounds? That’s a real shame.” Shoda opened his mouth to speak, but was unable to reply and had to stand there with a red face. Monoma and Shishida were prepared to give Shindo a piece of their mind, but Kendo, finally recovered, beat them to the punch.

“Shindo, was it? I know what you’re doing,” she told him calmly. “You’re trying to get in our heads to throw us off our game, but that’s not gonna happen. If you want to apologize right now, you’re free to do so and we can go into this fight with no hard feelings.”

“…And if I refuse?”

“You get to feel firsthand what happens when our class has a common enemy.” Shindo’s face didn’t change in response to the threat, and after a moment, he turned his back and walked off.

“I’ll take my chances,” he told them.

“That guy’s… a bit of a douche,” Shoda said.

“Are you OK?” Monoma asked.

“Yeah, I guess. I’ve heard it before.”
“We shouldn’t let one guy’s sucky attitude distract us,” Kendo stated. “Let’s spread the word to the others and stay focused. We’re here to show everyone what we’re capable, right? Let’s show them just that... and blow them all away!”
Role Call

Once the decision was approved and word spread to everyone in both teams, the main event was set to begin and the rounds were explained as being timed battles. Two groups would start at opposite ends of a sectioned-off area of the park and would have 25 minutes to fight each other. 10 impartial hero judges would score them at the very end and whichever team had the highest score would be the winners. They were also told they could go all out without fear of damaging their environment since heroes present with specialized Quirks could restore it right after. After the explanation, the order was decided and Class B learned they would be going in the second round, following up on their sister class’s fight in the first round.

“Figures they’d be the ones starting things off,” Monoma grumbled, standing a fair distance away from the crowd with Kendo. “Always so hungry for attention and praise.”

“Wow, the view must be great from that glass house of yours,” Kendo snarked at him. “You’ve been so antsy all day. Always talking about something – either Class A or our notoriety with the pros or our upcoming fight.”

“I’m just feeling excitable. We’re finally being seen for the skilled heroes-in-training we are. Especially you, Itsuka. I didn’t gleam many details, but I’ve heard you’re name more than a few times.”

“Yeah, about that.” Kendo glanced round to make sure they weren’t being listened in on and leaned closer to Monoma. “Vicky told me they’re questioning whether or not we’re strong or weak for what happened in December.”

“What?”

“Like, they don’t know if us taking down Head Games makes us strong or if being targeted and that badly hurt by the end makes us weak, and me getting kidnapped is sort of the center of all that.” Once her explanation finished, Monoma took a long while to be silently shocked before moving onto being flustered shocked and trying to articulate himself enough to be angry shocked.

“How does— How’re the— pros shouldn— Class A has— ooooooh, I’m pissed.”

“OK, take a deep breath. Who’re you pissed at specifically?”

“Everyone.”

“That’s the exact opposite of ‘specifically.’”

“Whatsoever! The pros! All of them. Whoever started any baseless rumors that we were ‘overwhelmed’ or ‘couldn’t handle it.’”

“Rin almost died. Pony almost died. YOU almost died.”

“Semantics!” Monoma ground his teeth and seethed for a long while, looking at the crowd of pros disdainfully. “OK, OK… whatever people have been saying… they’ve said it and that’s that. All we can do that is prove them wrong! Right?!”

“I can get behind that.”

“Great! Then let’s— PFFFT-HAHAHAHAHA!” Kendo flinched from the sudden laughter of her
companion and then followed his line of sight to see the cause. Set up near the forest where the training event was taking place was a multitude of large screens showing drone feeds of the many battles going on. “Did you see that?! Bakugo’s hands got stuck together with rubber cement! Look at him! He can’t use his explosions! He’s so confused and angry! Hahahahaha!”

“Yeah, yeah, laugh it up now. Just don’t provoke him later.” Kendo rolled her eyes as Monoma laughed on, and after a moment, she realized the laughter had doubled. Monoma had been joined by a familiar boy in a black coat, and after a moment of thinking hard, Kendo remembered his name – Romero Fujimi.

“I can’t believe he fell for the oldest trick in the book!” the zombie boy cackled. “What a goof!”

“There you are! Honestly, Romero, I can’t leave you alone for two seconds, can I?” Hearing another voice she recognized, Kendo turned around to greet her other comrade from Isamu High School – Kashiko Sekigai.

“Hey, Sekig…”

“Oh, Kendo! I’ve been wondering when I’d get see you. Have you been well?” Kendo was too distracted to even realize she had been asked a question. To her surprise, Sekigai’s old, simple costume had been changed up since the last time they saw each other. This new version resembled the old one, but had been given a Wild, Wild Pussycats-inspired makeover, complete with fur lined black boots, a short black skirt with white frill and a long white tail, white gloves, metal headgear resembling cat ears, and even a white fur collar with a cat bell.

“…Hm? Oh! I’m doing just fine, thanks. How, uh, how’re you?”

“…It’s the costume, isn’t it?”

“I mean, it looks good on you. Seriously, very cute.”

“Thank you,” Sekigai replied with a slightly red face. “It’s my first day with it. Romero, Tadan, Habuko, and I will be interning with the Pussycats and Aunt Tomoko insisted she redesign my costume. She says I’m her, er-hem… pretty kitty.” Kendo had no idea how to respond to her other than to continue smiling, and that’s how she stayed for a good 10 seconds.

“…Well, congrats on your internship.”

“Thank you. If you’ll excuse me…” Slipping by Kendo, Sekigai reached out and grabbed Fujimi by the ear, dragging him away from the still-laughing Monoma. “You two are both bad influences on each other,” she lectured.

“C’mon, lighten up a bit, Kashi baby.”

“Please don’t say such immature things here—” Her exit was interrupted when a patch of lumpy ground made her and Fujimi fall forward.

“Oof!”

“Meow!” There was a long silence from both of them which Kendo forced herself not to break by laughing.

*She really said meow*, Kendo thought while clamping her hands over her mouth. Once they were both back on their feet, Sekigai waved over more people and Kendo was forced to calm herself down, as well as make Monoma stop laughing at the current round.
“Over here, all.” The first to come over was a trio of students with black hats that Kendo identified as Shiketsu’s uniform hat. “This is Itsuka Kendo, Class B representative. Kendo, these are the three Shiketsu representatives we have on our team.”

“Good to meet you,” Kendo said while extending her hand to the tall boy in front of her.

“IT’S SUPER GREAT TO MEET YOU!” he screamed while violently shaking her hands. “I’m ALWAYS happy to meet more students from the amazing U.A.! My name’s Inasa Yoarashi!”

“I’ll remember it,” Kendo replied while shaking out her sore arm.

“Oh, did I shake too roughly?” Yoarashi asked. “I am so friggin’ sorryyyyyyy!” Kendo jumped back and accidently knocked Monoma away when Yoarashi slammed his head into the dirt in an overenthusiastic bow.

“Get up, You dolt,” the other boy of the group said. “You’ll dirty your hat.”

“AH! You’re right, Shishikura!”

“Apologies for him. As he said, my name is Seiji Shishikura.” The purple-haired, squinty-eyed student offered nothing more than his name, nor did he accept Kendo’s handshake, but the final Shiketsu student was more than happy to shake it.

“Hey, sup,” the big-lipped blonde girl said. “Name’s Camie. We’re real psyched to be fightin’ with y’all, feel me? This’ll be lit, fam.”

“Nice to meet you too,” Kendo said to her, assuming she had also extended a greeting. “I hope we have a fun fight out there.”

“It’ll be fuggin crazy, yo,” Camie told her. Kendo nodded and waved goodbye as their competition took their leave.

“Is it just a law of nature that every hero has a big personality?” Monoma wondered.

“There you go throwing stones again,” Kendo joked. “At this point, your glass house isn’t gonna last.”

“The irony isn’t lost on me, I assure you. Just making an observation.” With no other interruptions, they watched the first round play out, ending with Class A winning with 87.9 points in total.

“I guess we’re shooting for 88 points then,” Monoma said to himself.

“Whatever helps you fight your best,” Kendo sighed. The pair moved to see the classes leaving the forest, passing by the heroes sent in to fix the damage, and Kendo saw how ragged and beat up they were. Even with their win in the end, they were obviously worn out. “Geez, this may be tougher than we thought.”

“OK, line up, line up.” From the crowd, a boy came forward and gestured for Class A to come towards him. After a moment, Kendo remembered him as Gaikoku Academy’s healer, Daisuke Saitou. “Line up and I’ll heal you, but I gotta hit you to do it. How hard you’re hit is completely dependent on how big of a douche you seem like.”

“Is that necessary to say?” Kaminari asked.

“Try moving your shoulder above your head and then ask me stupid questions, you injured bitch,”
Daisuke shot back, making the Kaminari grumble and step forward to be healed. For the most part, Daisuke was content with a forehead flick or chop to the skull, but once he reached Bakugo, he reeled back and gave him a mighty blow to the gut.

“Woah, what was that?!” Kaminari questioned.

“Awesome, that’s what!” Daisuke replied with a loud laugh. Once everyone was healed, the landscape had been restored, and Bakugo was successfully dragged away from the Gaikoku student, the next round was ready to begin.

“Good luck then, U.A.,” Kendo heard behind her. Shindo had returned, now sporting his mask of friendliness, and had brought three classmates with him. One was a girl in an aqua-colored bodysuit and pink gloves and boots who introduced herself as Tatami Nakagame. With them was a tall boy with a strange helmet-looking head wearing a very casual-looking costume named Shikkui Makabe, along with a boy with shoulder-length black hair and a black costume with a red scarf who was named Itejiro Toteki. Kendo greeted them politely and Shindo quickly led them towards the rest of their team, but Nakagame retreated back quickly towards Kendo first.

“Sorry if Yo has been rude or anything today,” she said. “He tends to start trouble with others if we leave him alone. He’s a good guy deep down, honestly. He can just be a little competitive.”

“…This is so weird to be on the other side of,” Kendo said under her breath.

“Hm?”

“N-Nothing, Nakagame, and thanks.” The blonde girl smiled and left again, prompting Kendo and Monoma to find their class in time to be called up by the announcer

“Now, for our next round, we’ve got a special match-up. To compensate for the odd number of classes we have, a special team of students from multiple schools have joined together to fight against U.A. High School’s Class B. When I call your school, students, step forward and give your name and hero codename. Now, from the United Team, Gaikoku Academy, step forward and introduce yourselves!”

“Victoria Hope – Diamond Queen.”

“Gou Yonaga – Sleepwalker!”

“Mitch Zellner – Death Spike.”

“Miru Kimi – Watchtower.”

“Kaikaina Lawai’ a – Beach Girl!”

“Namida Kanashi – Bawler.”

“Nasuka Binshou – Highway Star.”

“Kobayashi Hanatsu – Dryad.”

“Bruce Frey – Balloonenstein.”

“Greta Shrika – Radio!”

“From Ketsubutsu Academy! Step forward!”
“Yo Shindo – Geo-Force!”
“Tatami Nakagame – Tortugal!”
“Shikkui Makabe – Rockenrolla.”
“Itejiro Toteki – Lock-On.”
“From Isamu High School! Step forward!”
“Kashiko Sekigai – Sensor Girl.”
“Romero Fujimi – Thriller!”
“Dadan Tadan – Lucky Strike.”
“Habuko Mongoose – Medusa.”
“Finally, from Shiketsu High School! Step forward!”
“Inasa Yoarashi – Gale Force!”
“Seiji Shishikura – Viscera.”
“Camie Utsushima – Miss Mirage~”
“Give it up, everyone, for the United Team! And now, our second team from U.A. High School, Class B! Step forward and give your names!”
“Itsuka Kendo – Battle Fist!”
“Jurota Shishida – Beastman.”
“Juzo Honenuki – Mogura.”
“Reiko Yanagi – Onryo.”
“Hitoshi Shinso – Esper.”
“Kinoko Komori – Titania!”
“Nirengeki Shoda – Impact.”
“Yosetsu Awase – Fuse.”
“Tetsutetsu Tetsutetsu – Real Steel!”
“Ibara Shiozaki – Maria.”
“Pony Tsunotori – Bronco!”
“Hiryu Rin – Shenlong.”
“Setsuna Tokage – Indominus!”
“Yui Kodai – Minmax.”
“Shihai Kuroiro – Void.”

“Manga Fukidashi – Echoes!”

“Sen Kaibara – Spiral.”

“Kosei Tsuburaba – Barricade!”

“Kojiro Bondo – Trapper.”

“Togaru Kamakiri – Mandible!”

“Neito Monoma – Phantom Thief!”
“Make way, make way, #5 hero coming through! Move it or lose it!” Miruko shoved her way through the crowd of heroes and pushed them to the side until a path formed for her. She cockily strode up to the head of the crowd and found a good spot to watch the monitors showing the event. *Alright, kid. Show me what’s up.*

“Good afternoon, Rumi.”

“Huh?” Miruko’s ears twitched from hearing her real name, and she realized she had ended up right next to her old friend Ryukyu. “Oh, hey Ryuko. ‘Sup?”

“Nothing much. How are you?”

“Same old, same old.”

“Is that so? You’re sure you haven’t been talking with anyone? Making any offers?”

“…For being so ladylike, you’re a sly one, Ryuko.”

“Oh, you flatter me, but tell me, what drew you to talk with this girl?”

“Uh, y’know… she looked tough. Gonna see if my gut’s right. How about you? Heard you were scouting some kids of your own.”

“I am. Indominus and Shenlong are sure to impress.”

“Heh. I’ll keep my eyes peeled then.”

“OK, I think we have every course of action prepared for, so whatever happens, there’s a plan. Is that good? Are we good?” Monoma asked.

“That was way too much fucking information,” Awase complained. “There is such a thing as over-preparing.”

“I think we’ll be fine if we just remember the basics,” Kendo said to everyone. “Stay in groups and remember to support each other.”

“And keep terrain in mind,” Monoma reminded. “We’re in a pretty diverse area of the park.” Both teams had been shown a basic map of the training area before going to their starting points and there were obvious divisions in the landscape. The middle of the area, from Class B’s southern starting point to the United Team’s northern one, was a simple grassy plain with some forest near the starting points, but to the west was a much denser forest and to the east was a rocky cliffside that stretched up and curved into the northern section.

“We’ll have to get a move on fast,” Honenuki added. “Yoarashi can and will close in on us quickly, and if we’re all packed together, he may wipe us all out immediately.”

“That’s what we got Rin for,” Tetsutetsu claimed. “He can fly up to fight the guy in the air, and if he goes Full Dragon, he’ll crush him! Right, buddy?”
“Uh, sure,” Rin anxiously responded. “Yeah, uh, yeah, I can pull that off… probably.”

“We’re about out of prep time,” Shinso told everyone.

“Then let’s get ready to move out!” Kendo ordered. The 21-man team prepared stood waiting in excitement for the starting horn to blare, and once it did, they began their run through the wooded starting area towards the grassland.

“Reiko, can you give us a bird’s eye view?” Kendo requested.

“On it.” Reiko flew ahead of the pack and up through the treetops, disappearing from her classmate’s sight.

“Anything?!” Monoma asked.

“Gimme a sec!” she called back down. “Looks like they’re splitting up! Some are heading west towards the mountains, some are going to the forest, and some are staying put! …What the hell…?”

“What’s up?!” Kendo called up. While waiting for her reply, the class reached the end of the trees and found themselves at the edge of the grassland, giving them a clear view of the forest and Cliffside nearby. They all looked to the sky to locate their comrade, which was easier than they thought since she had started barreling towards them in a freefall.

“Incoming!” Fukidashi called out. He was the first to move and ran underneath Reiko, aiming his head up. “FWOOOSH!” Sending a huge gust upward, Reiko momentum was slowed enough for Ibara to send out her vines to catch the ghost girl and safety pull her in.

“What was that?” Monoma asked.

“Ughh, I don’t know. I just got blown out of the sky. Not sure what did it.”

“…It was him,” Honenuki announced while pointing to the sky. “He’s already here.”

“HEY, DOWN THERE!” In the air above them, they saw Inasa Yoarashi hung in the air with a swirl of wind keeping him afloat. He was keeping a great distance, but was close enough that the class could see his hot-blooded smile. “YOU GUYS READY?!”

“It’s time to split up,” Monoma declared. “Remember to watch each other’s backs—”

“Heads up!” Pony warned while pointing to the mountain. Everyone looked in that direction and, seeing projectiles coming towards them, moved to let Tsuburaba forward.

“I got this!” Taking a huge breath, he exhaled a large and sturdy barrier that covered the whole class on that side. He continued to add thickness to his barricade, but once the projectiles reached it, they staked straight through to the other side of the half-foot-thick shield, though they lost enough momentum to immediately fall to the ground. “What the— they broke through my Dummy Thicc Shield!”

“Mr. Vlad said to change that name,” Pony reminded him.

“Hey, those spikes look familiar,” Bondo stated. “One of the Gaikoku students makes them. They look strange, though. They’re blunt and look rougher.”

“How’d they home in on us like that?” Tsuburaba wondered.

“Well, they came from the mountain, so if you want to find out, head up and see for yourselves,”
Monoma told them. “Let’s move out now.”

“What about him?” Pony asked while pointing up at Yoarashi.

“We just need someone keeping him busy so he doesn’t attack while we all run.”

“Guess it’s my turn already,” Rin said. “Kendo, can I get a boost?”

“You got it.”

“Go get him, dragon boyfriend!”

“Once I’m in the air, everyone make a break for it.” Kendo put her giant hand down for Rin to step onto, and his wings sprouted, she flung him into the air towards Yoarashi.

“Go, go! Split up!” he heard Monoma call out on the ground. Yoarashi put his arms up and out, then swiftly crossed them, sending a wave of wind at Rin. His scales protected his skin, but the gust still blew him upwards and off-course.

“Damn,” he grumbled while trying to correct his flight. Below him, he could see Yoarashi looking up with an excited smile.

“Cool wings, guy! Are you a dragon or something?! Or maybe a Pterodactyl?!” The twister around his legs grew in strength and blasted him up towards Rin. The gauntlet on his left hand produced a violent stream of wind that encircled it and he pulled that fist back. “CYCLONE PUNCH!” Rin’s wings beat mightily and he flew around Yoarashi in time to avoid the punch.

“Dragon Fang!” Pushing his Quirk’s strength in his arm, his fingers became claws that he jabbed at Yoarashi’s back. Just as the attack reached him, though, Rin felt a strong force push his hand away and he flew down in a spin.

“I knew it was a dragon!” Once Rin straightened his flight out again, he noticed air rushing around Yoarashi’s body, covering him in a shield of wind. “I saw you with Ryukyu earlier, so I had a feeling it was dragon! Can you do what she does?! Like, be a big one?!”

“Why don’t I show you?” Having realized his current form was no match for Yoarashi’s overwhelming power, Rin forced his new transformation into action. Pinpricks and hot flashes assaulted his body as he desperately tried to push himself further while keeping himself in the air. As his muscles strained and expanded agonizingly slow, something he had tried to forget staked into his thoughts.

All I wanted was to kill you quick and easy.

“A-AH!” Stopping all at once, Rin gripped at his chest and his breathing fell apart.

“…Was that it?” Yoarashi asked. “Oh well.” Rin’s senses returned to him just in time to see his opponent’s hand raise, forming a swirling sphere of wind about as large as his body. “Better guard, cuz this’ll hurt! STORM CRASH!”

“Oh crap! Ryu, watch out!” Setsuna’s call fell on deaf ears as she watched Yoarashi’s attack fling Rin away and drive into the cliff, kicking up stone debris and dust. “No, Ryu!”

“Let’s go check it out!” Pony told her. The girls dashed ahead of the group, leaving Shishida, Kaibara, and Tsuburaba to play catch-up, but the group’s last member, Honenuki, stayed behind and
looked to the sky. Yoarashi was talking into an earpiece and looking around the area, seemingly
deciding who to attack next.

*I can’t fight him alone.* Balling his fists tightly, Honenuki walked away from the cliff and towards
the center of the park. “Shihai! Bondo! Fukidashi!” His call was heard by the three boys, who had
been going to the forest, and they stopped to listen to him. “Rin’s down for the count. We don’t
have anyone who can fight this guy alone… so will you help me take him on?”

“You think we can really beat him?!” Fukidashi asked from afar.

“I don’t know, but we can’t let him interfere with everyone else.”

“That’s true, but you should be a little more confident,” Kuroiro told Honenuki as he walked towards
him. Bondo and Fukidashi looked at each other, shrugged, and followed him away from the forest.
“You should say something cooler, like ‘together, we can definitely beat this guy.’ Something like
that.”

“I’ll keep it in mind, and thanks.” With his team assembled, Honenuki turned his focus back to
Yoarashi, who had finally taken notice of them.

“Oh, hey! You guys next⁉️”

“Don’t sound so confident,” Kuroiro told his opponent. “You’re about to see the strongest person in
our class in action, so watch yourself. You may have momentarily defeated the Dragon of the Sky,
but now, you’re facing Mogura – the Dragon of the Earth!”

“Geez, those guys,” Monoma grumbled. “Messing up our plans. The groups are uneven now!”

“Then why don’t you go to the forest team to back them up?” Shoda asked.

“Because I need to make Itsuka look powerful and amazing at every opportunity possible to show
those naysaying pros what’s what! I mean, that already happens naturally, but still—”

“We get it,” Kendo told him.

“I can go with the forest team,” Yui volunteered. “If those spikes come again, I’ll be a huge target
anyway, so I’d probably be better off further away and with trees as cover.”

“Great idea,” Kendo told her. “Always the dependable one, Yui. Good luck.”

“…Mhm.” Yui silently began her run across the field while the team heading north continued their
own charge.

“OK, this’s fine,” Monoma said to himself. “We’re a little outnumbered now that four people are
stuck on one guy, but that’s fine.” Looking over his shoulder, he made sure each group had gotten
to their areas safety. In the eastern mountains were Kaibara, Tsuburaba, Pony, Shishida, Rin, and
Setsuna. Heading into the forest in the west was Yui, Kamakiri, Awase, Reiko, and Shinso. Staying
in the south to battle Yoarashi was Kuroiro, Bondo, Fukidashi, and Honenuki. Finally, himself,
Kendo, Shoda, Kinoko, Ibara, and Tetsutetsu charged north to meet the opponent’s leaders head-on.
“We’ve got some solid groups. These guys are about to feel it where it hurts.”
“It seems they’ve split their forces as well. There are groups heading to the forest and mountains and there’s a 6-man team heading to our location. The members approaching us are Kendo, Tetsutetsu, Shoda, Shiozaki, Komori, and Monoma.”

“I see. Keep an eye on them, Sekigai. Let me know when they’re approaching.” Victoria Hope strolled across the cliffside her group was waiting on, trying to see over the tree line in anticipation. With her was Gou, Namida, and Nasuka of her own school, Ketsubutsu’s Shindo, and Isamu’s Fujimi and Sekigai, who were also patiently awaiting the incoming challengers.

“They’re about halfway across,” Sekigai reported. “They’ll arrive soon if they keep this pace.”

“I doubt they will,” Shindo claimed. “They’re probably hurrying so they’re not targeted by Yoarashi and will slow down once they’re clear of him.”

“Let’s be ready anyway,” Victoria instructed. “Itsuka is a wily one and won’t falter simply. This won’t be an easy fight, Shindo.”

“Ryu! Hey, Ryu!” Setsuna kept running up the cliff’s trail, with her group not far behind, in a mad dash to reach the spot where Rin crashed. “You OK?! C’mon, say something!”

“I’ve got his scent. He’s just up ahead,” Shishida told her. Now going deeper into the rugged terrain, a pile-up of rubble marked the site where their classmate had landed. In a deep crater, they found him twisted up and half-buried in stone, grunting and hissing in pain.

“Ryu!” Setsuna jumped into the pit and immediately started moving rubble away, aided soon after by Shishida and Kaibara while the other kept watch for enemies. “You’re OK, right?”

“…Urgh… ah… S-Sorry.” Once the debris had been cleared, Setsuna put an arm on Rin’s back and helped him sit up with a groan of effort. “I thought I could pull it off, but…”

“Hey, hey, it’s fine,” she told him. Setsuna put her hand on his arm, feeling it’s tenseness, and realized his hand had instinctively gone to his chest. “It happened again, didn’t it?”

“…Yeah.” Putting his arm over her shoulders, Setsuna hoisted him to his feet, letting Shishida pull them from the crater.

“Well, whatever,” Setsuna told him. “Everyone got away from him and Honenuki is taking him now, so you did your job. Plus, now our group’s got you. We’re undefeatable now!”

“Holy crap, we’re gonna die!” Pony screamed. “Get down!”

“Huh?! Looking up, the team saw that from above, a rain of spikes and missiles coming straight towards them. “OH SHIT!”

“Get in the crater!” Tsuburaba ordered. Once the team dogpiled together, Tsuburaba began to create a barrier covering them from above. Everyone else ducked their heads and waited as the missiles shook the ground around them. Dust and rocks were kicked up, blinding the team, but the lack of stabbing and direct blasts told them that the solid air had withstood the attacks.

“We ain’t dead!” Pony realized. Looking up, the team saw Tsuburaba standing over them with a
cracked and hole-filled shield remaining above.

“Alrighty, we’re gonna make stopping THAT shit our #1 priority.”

“Agreed,” Setsuna added. As she rubbed the dust from her eyes, her sight returned and she saw the what the weight on her was. Rin had dove on top of her, turning his skin into scales, when the attack was coming. “Ryu…”

“How’d we do, Kimi?”

“They’re still up.”

“Dagnabbit!”

“Fuckin’ dicks!” The Gaikoku boys Bruce and Mitch grit their teeth and kicked at rocks in anger while their classmate Miru rolled her eyes at them.

“Don’t be babies. Let’s just get ready for another volley. Bruce, go back up that missile guy. They may find him if they follow his trajectory.”

“On it,” Bruce replied while forming a balloon and jumping away.

“Are you two still good for another go?” she asked her other teammates. Breaking off another one of Mitch’s spikes, Miru tossed it to her ally from Ketsubutsu, Makabe.

“Of course. We haven’t been training for nothing, y’know?” Makabe took the spike and started rubbing it all over, using his Quirk to transform it. The tip had become blunt, but it’s durability and strength was greatly increase, and he then handed it off to his classmate Toteki.

“You were right in assuming this Tsuburaba would be the most likely to disrupt our plan,” Toteki said, “but maybe another barrage isn’t what we need. Let me see him again, Kimi.”

“Sure thing.” The Gaikoku student approached Toteki and place her hand on his shoulder, activating her Quirk at the same time. “Shared Sight: One Vision.” With her super move in effect, both were given a view of Tsuburaba from the eyes of Kaibara, letting Toteki mark him with his Quirk.

“I’ve locked on. Now…” Spike in hand, Toteki slowly raised his arm and then threw it straight down, letting the spike rocket into the mountain. “Trajectory: Crescent Moon.”

“Yeah, I see you!” Tsuburaba yelled. On the craggy peak ahead of them was Isamu’s Tadan, who shook in fear from the attention.

“U-Um… give up?”

“…No,” Tsuburaba answered. Kaibara prepared his gauntlet to fly up and attack, but the opposing student had finally reloaded his turrets and was preparing to fire.

“Here comes another big one!” Pony warned.

“Don’t worry, I got him this time,” Tsuburaba boasted. Taking a deep breath, the group watched as Tadan fired more missiles at them, prompting Tsuburaba to begin his counter.

“Whistle Spear: Spreadshot!” From his mouth, lines of solid air flew up towards the missiles,
stabbing into them and setting them off early. The U.A. students ducked and covered their eyes from the bright explosions, but were protected from the shockwave by one last Solid Air barrier.

“Amazing!” Pony cheered.

“That’s right, y’all love me,” Tsuburaba bragged. “I bet that big guy got blow away, huh?”

“That’s where yer wrong, city slicker!”

“Ugh, this guy again,” Kaibara groaned. From the dust cloud, Bruce appeared with Tadan, aiming his hand pipe down.

“Y’all ready for another ass-whuppin’?”

“Another? We kicked your ass last time,” Tsuburaba claimed.

“Just ignore him and keep your eyes on the sky,” Kaibara instructed. “Let us handle these—” As he spoke, a crackling noise under his feet took Kaibara’s attention. He looked down and saw a line of crumbling ground pass by him. Once it was past him, a spike popped out from the line’s end and shot up into Tsuburaba’s back. “KOSEI!”

“Hrrrg!” Tsuburaba was pushed forward and slammed into the cliff’s face with the spike thrusting into his lower back. Kaibara grabbed it and yanked it away before supporting his boyfriend.

“You OK?”

“Nope,” Tsuburaba grunted. Kaibara looked and saw Tsuburaba wasn’t bleeding, but his costume had ripped, and through the hole, he could see a giant purple bruise. “I didn’t see it coming, eh?”

“Guess they can travel underground too. Everyone, stopping that team-up sending out the spikes is our top priority.”

“Then get movin’,” Pony stated. “We’ll deal with these guys.”

“Yeah, let’s head up,” Tsuburaba said. “Just gimme a sec to stretch and I’ll be good to fight. I’ll hang on and you fly us up.”

“If you’re sure, then that’s fine with me.” After picking up Tsuburaba to hold onto his side, Kaibara lifted his left arm up and clicked his gauntlet to the left. From there, the propeller blades inside unfolded, letting Kaibara and Tsuburaba take flight.

“Give ‘em another bombardment, big boy!” Bruce ordered Tadan while pointing to the boys in flight.

“C’mon, guys!” Pony directed. “Let’s take these two out!”

“Right behind you,” Shishida responded. The pair scaled the rocky trail with ease and chased Tadan and Bruce further into the cliffs, leaving Setsuna and Rin in their dust.

“Let’s go. We’ve got to follow them,” Rin said. He tried to step forward, but Setsuna’s grip kept him in place.

“Maybe you should take a sec. That was a nasty fall.”

“I’m fine,” he assured her. He then tried to escape her grasp but winced in pain after a single tug away.
“You are not,” Setsuna flatly told him. “Also, I’m not letting go of how you jumped onto me when those spikes and missiles were coming.”

“Huh?”

“Think for a second,” she snipped. “You, the injured guy, dove onto to me, the girl who can heal her injuries, to try protecting me.”

“I… It’s…”

“Ryu… listen.” Setsuna moved to face Rin directly, still supporting his weight with her arms, and took a long breath. “I understand why you’re doing this. I do. After all that happened, I know why you’d jump to protect me like that, and honestly, on the surface, it’s really kind. It’s heroic… but still, it’s still kind of insulting. Like just now, you were pretty much saying ‘my injured body can handle these attacks better than you.’ Like I’m weak.”

“I-I don’t mean to insult you,” Rin stated nervously. “And I know you’re not weak Setsuna—”

“Then stop rushing to my rescue!” she demanded. “I… I don’t want to feel like any hit you take is because of me. I don’t want that. I’ve had way too much of that already. I’m not some damsel in distress you need to protect whenever there’s trouble.” Setsuna tightened her fists and balled them around Rin’s shirt, pulling him closer. “I won’t let you die for me again. I’m a hero too, so… so let me be my own hero.”

“Setsuna… I—” Rin’s reply was cut off when Setsuna’s hands moved, still holding onto him, and he was thrown behind her. “Woah!”

“Sorry, but move!” she continued, staring down an attack she couldn’t fully identify. From what she could see, a giant ball of flesh was flying towards her. She put her fist up to bat it away, but it stuck onto her arm and expanded, trying to swallow her up.

“Setsuna!”

“I’m OK,” she responded. Setsuna pushed off the ground and broke her arm off, escaping the strange flesh lump and letting her land in front of Rin. Once her arm dissolved so a new one could grow, the blob retreated. Setsuna and Rin watched it move back, eventually reconnecting with a figure not far away.

“That’s quite an interesting Quirk. Bodily manipulation not unlike my own.”

“This guy’s from Shiketsu,” Rin realized once he saw the hat on their enemy’s head.

“You’re correct. I am Seiji Shishikura,” the attacker stated. “I’ve taken it upon myself to rid this group of any stragglers that fall behind. The only reason I haven’t defeated you and moved on is because you may counter my ability more th—”

“Blah blah fuckin’ blah,” Setsuna interrupted. “You gonna keep flappin’ your lips or are can I just beat your ass now?”


“Sorry Ryu, but I’m taking this fight all for myself. You just sit back and rest.”

“Are you sure?”
“Oh, I’m sure,” Setsuna declared while cracking her knuckles. “This time, Ryu, I’m gonna be your hero!”
“Keep your guard up. We’ve got blind spots everywhere,” Awase warned his group. He had taken the lead when they entered the forest, having Kamakiri and Yui at his sides and Reiko trailing behind with Shinso.

“Nervous?” she asked him.

“Yup.”

“…Need anything?”

“Nope.”

“…Good talk.” Reiko shrugged at him and took flight into the treetops ahead, hiding in the leaves. Shinso watched her appear and disappear among the shadows before refocusing on his immediate surroundings. A rustling in the brush behind him made him jump and take a battle stance, but to his chagrin, it was only a squirrel.

“First time?” Yui asked him.

“You know it is,” Shinso pointed out.

“…Sorry.”

“You’ll be fine,” Kamakiri assured him. “You got in the hero course, so that’s good enough for me to trust you anyway.”

“Yeah, and your Quirk is really strong,” Awase complimented. “It’ll totally break up a group’s flow, and against a single remaining opponent, it’s basically an instant win.”

“Mhm.” After Yui’s grunt of approval, the patrol continued with Shinso letting out a small sigh.

_Hanging out in the dorms and being in the field with these guys feels totally different, _he thought. _They’ve got their hopes in me to be a good teammate. Guess I’ll have to perform._

“Hey, uh… what the fuck?” Shinso was pulled from these thought by Awase stopping short and speaking up. Looking past his teammate, the brainwashing student was startled to see his own face staring back at him. The five figures in their path were near-perfect copies of themselves, with the only discrepancy being a strange sparkle of beauty they gave off.

“So, they’re already here,” Kamakiri realized while pulling his swords from their scabbards. “Whatever these things are, they’re the result of Quirks.” Hesitantly, Kamakiri extended his mandible into his clone, and finding that it merely began to fade when touched, he quickly dispatched the other three. However, once the final clone was gone, they noticed a snake-like head popping out from the bushes.

“It’s her! From Isamu!” Awase realized. Habuko’s eyes flashed yellow and her targets felt their bodies go limp and slump to their knees. Once they were down, Habuko ducked back again, and in her place, Nakagame came rocketing out of the bushes. At this extreme speed, she slammed into Shinso and pushed him far back until both crashed into a tree.

“Gurrk!” The first thing Shinso’s body did once he was stopped was cough for air. Nakagame
jumped away from him, and as Shinso tried to stand back up, a tree was somehow spouting next to him. As it grew, it wrapped over him, locking him in place.

“Get away from him!” Reiko flew down from the trees and landed between Shinso and Nakagame in a fighting stance. The Ketsubutsu student prepared to fight, but behind her, the rest of the U.A. group came charging.

“Guess I’ll have to retreat for now,” she said. Nakagame then activated her Quirk, making her legs collapse into her torso, which confused the people watching. Her legs then sprang back out, letting her leap from the danger. “We’ll be back though!”

“You OK?” Kamakiri asked Shinso. “Here, I’ll cut you free.”

“Why’d they attack him first?” Yui wondered.

“Probably trying to take out the weakest first to lower the number of enemies,” Shinso presumed glumly as he stood up.

“…Or maybe they were trying to take out the strongest first,” Reiko suggested, glancing between Shinso and her teammates. “Eh, guys?”

“O-Oh yeah, definitely possible,” Awase agreed with a thumbs-up, which Shinso drowsily frowned at.

“There’s gotta be more than those three around,” Kamakiri stated, trying refocus his comrades, “but we know that for now, those three… someone else say their names. I forgot them.”

“Nakagame, Habuko, and Kobayashi,” Reiko told him. “There’s another with some sort of illusion Quirk here too, and I doubt that’s all of them.”

“OK, I think I have a plan. Let’s split up,” Awase suggested. “These Quirks are pretty strong when used together, but one their own, three of the four we’ve seen are mainly support. Dividing their focus will hopefully force them to split up too.”

“That’s a decent plan, but it seems like they’re trying to keep us all together,” Shinso stated. Around the group, trees were sprouting in a circle that would entrap them at full size.

“Terror-Mite!” Kamakiri’s swords slashed in a semicircle, breaking through the spouting trees and giving the students an exit. “Spread out! Look for someone who’s ass you can kick!”

“Geez, Tatami really gave your kid a hard hit, Eraser.”

“He’s not ‘my kid,’ Joke.”

“Riiiiight. You should’ve told me you made a younger clone of yourself.”

“Do you ever stop talking?”

“Ahhahahaha! You don’t usually ask stupid questions, Eraser!”

“This way. I just saw her,” Reiko said as she flew down from the treetops. Shinso followed her through the brush, holding his capture scarf at the ready for when his enemy appeared. Once they reached a clearing, they saw Habuko running with her back turned to them.
“I’ve got her!” Shinso whipped his scarf forward and moved it to wrap around his opponent’s legs. Habuko jumped to avoid it, but it came too late and the scarf hit her.

“Crap, that’s not her,” Reiko realized when the contact made Habuko fade into mist. “We got played.”

“You can say that again. I guess the illusion maker is on our tail,” Shinso guessed. “Based on the hero names we heard, it’s most likely that girl from Shiketsu – Camie Utsushimi.”

“Seems that way. By the way, you’re multiplying.” Shinso quirked his brow at the statement and turned to see a swarm of sparkly clones of himself.

“Well, that’s a nightmare,” he drawled.

“I think I like these ones more. Shame she couldn’t fix your face.”

“Wow, thanks Rei—” The comeback was halted when Shinso felt something hit his back. A boot pressed into him and forced him to the forest floor. With the side of his face pressed into the grass, he strained to look back up and saw Camie putting her weight on him with a smile.

“I dunno what she’s talking about,” she told him. “Your face is fine. Cute, even.” Reiko jumped at Camie and threw a kick that the illusionist had to dodge, letting Shinso slip away. Now free, he flicked his scarf up at Camie, but she disappeared into the crowd of mirage clones and escaped.

“Looks like she can slip through the clones without making them vanish,” Reiko realized while helping Shinso up. “She’ll be tough to find, but it seems like she has no real attack power.” The pair stood and prepared to break through the covering mirages, but in an instant, they went away when a wave of force blasted through them. This blast of sound had burst out from the trees, forcing Reiko and Shinso to cover their ears and grind in their heels to avoid being through back.

“There!” Shinso shouted, his ears still ringing. In the bushes was Camie and Gaikoku’s Greta Shrika, who held an electric guitar in her arms and prepared to strum it for another sound blast. “Let’s get ‘em, Rei!”

“Right!”

“Fly-By!” Kamakiri tore ahead through the thickening brush and sliced apart the growing trees, looking around angrily for their controller. “Any sign of the tree hugger, Awase?”

“Nothing yet.” Awase held his Capture Gun in one outstretched arm while the other was at the ready in a pouch around her waist. Flicking his eyes around the trees, he watched for any sort of movement. I just need a clue to follow. Once I’m on someone’s tail, there’s no way they’ll escape from me. A rustle in the bushes made him whip around, and once his eyes locked onto Habuko, he fired a net at her. The snake girl jumped and dodged it, but Awase and Kamakiri sprinted ahead to intercept her. “Don’t look in her eyes!”

“Right!” Kamakiri responded. He raised his head and shot his mandibles up, thinking she’d be helpless in mid-air.

“Freeze Wink!” As the mandibles approached her, Habuko batted her eyelashes and sent out a yellow flash of energy from them. They flew straight into the tips of Kamakiri’s mandibles and stopped the attack dead, letting her land safety.

“The hell was that?” Awase wondered.
“Dunno. My momentum just kinda stopped,” Kamakiri told him. Habuko moved to make eye contact again, but Awase turned away and began digging through a pouch around his waist.

“Time to put my new move to the test.” From this bag, Awase grabbed several metal logs and began fusing them together into a single bar. “Construction-Done-Kwik…” Once he was done, he stepped forward and threw the metal bar straight at Habuko. She dipped to the left to dodge, but the bar caught the sleeve of her suit and she was welded to the bar, and in turn, the tree it crashed into right after. “Minecraft! Wait, I mean Weldcraft! Shit!”

“You say Minecraft every single time,” Kamakiri told him. “At this point, you should just roll with it.”

“Think I should?”

“Think you should.”

“Dude, I think she’d getting away.”

“Think she is?”

“Think she is.”

“…Fuck.” Kamakiri saw a scrap of costume still on the metal log, but the owner was missing.

“Wait, there!”

“I’ve got her!” Awase said as he ran after Habuko. “She’s just a decoy, so turn around and go after Kobayashi!”

“Huh?” Kamakiri whipped around and saw the tree controlling opponent run into the shadowy thicket, leaving behind seeds to grow into trees and block the path. “Oh, no you don’t! C’mere, hippie!”

Yui kept her eyes and ears open, but couldn’t find any trace of her allies or enemies. Instead, she was left in the calm grove by herself. This’d be nice if we weren’t trying to beat people up. We should come back sometime. To get a better view of her surroundings, Yui gradually increased her height, hoping to get a view over the treetops. As soon as her face was in the leaves, however, something lodged into her stomach and knocked the breath from her. Yui fell backwards and shrunk back to her normal size, now able to see the attacker was Nakagame.

“We meet again,” the Ketsubutsu said confidently.

“Mhm,” Yui grunted back as she caught her breath. As she got to her feet, Tatami stepped back and nodded her head. After a moment, Yui realized this was a signal and jumped to the side, narrowly avoiding an attack from behind. Once she rolled into a landing and stood back up, she saw her second opponent was Gaikoku’s Kaikaina Lawai’a, who’s arms had transformed into fishing lines. A powerful attacker and someone who can trip me up and bind me. This could be trouble.

“Let’s see if you’re tough enough to hang with the big girls,” Kaikaina challenged.

“I’m looking forward to see if you’re as tough and cool as you look,” Nakagame added, taking a moment to act composed before becoming red in the face. “I-I mean… let’s do this! Fight, I mean! Let’s fight! Yeah!”

“Keep it in your pants,” Kaikaina murmured to her teammate. “Anyway, are you ready, Kodai?”
“Sure.” Yui shrugged. Her opponents moved once she spoke, with Nakagame retracted her legs into her body and leaning forward onto her hands. Kaikaina lashed out her hooks and used the lines to wrap onto Yui’s arms, pulling them taut and locking Yui in place.

“She’s ready, Nakagame!”

“Right! Shell Tackle!” From her position leaning forward, Nakagame’s legs popped out of her torso, sending her body hurtling forward with her shoulder prepped for a body check.

Yui made no comment and shrunk her body quickly, escaping the binds and dodging the attack. Once her opponent sailed over her, Yui grew to double her normal height and attempted to kick Kaikaina. However, Nakagame had turned herself in mid-air and bounced off a tree, throwing herself into the back of Yui’s knee.

“Shell Tackle again!”

Once Yui went to one knee, she felt Nakagame grab hold of her leg. The older girl flipped herself out to land in front of Yui. She then used her Quirk to launch herself up at Yui’s chin, landing an uppercut that knocked her back into some trees.

“Fisher Net!”

Still dazed, Yui wasn’t able to move as Kaikaina’s lines wrapped and crisscrossed around her body and the trees she was crushing. Once her senses came back, she could barely move a muscle and felt that shrinking might tighten the hold.

“Looks like that’s the end of that,” Kaikaina stated with a smarmy grin. “Nakagame, could you knock her out?”

“I’m not done,” Yui told them matter-of-factly. “I’ll be out in a second… and then I’ll beat you two.”
“So, then I said ‘you better FUNG off or you’ll get your ass CAPPED!’ Eh?”

“…I don’t get it,” Tetsutetsu said.

“That’s because you have no taste!” Kinoko told him. “Your punishment is to piggyback me the rest of the way because my short legs make it hard to keep up!”

“OK!” Tetsutetsu gladly let his classmate on his back as the group heading north made it to the forest section just outside of their enemy’s starting point.

“Itsuka, do you want your new support item now?” Monoma asked.

“No, not yet. It told you to only give it to me if I say I really need it. I can’t be too hasty with it since it’s still technically a prototype.”

“Then I’ll keep it on my person for now, but if you really feel you need it, ask and I’ll hand it off to you.”

“Right. Thanks again for holding it,” Kendo said as a clearing in the trees came into sight. “Once we arrive, the fighting’s sure to start right away,” Kendo warned as she led the group through. “Be on your guard.”

“The terrain may work against us,” Monoma added. “From the map we were shown, they may have the high ground.”

“Well, we’re about to find out! Let’s do this!” From the trees, the group of six burst out and took fighting stances, expecting immediate action. Monoma and Kendo stood back-to-back with their fists up, Ibara’s hands were clasped and her vines were flaring out, Shoda crouched with his palms raised, Tetsutetsu crossed his metallic arms, and Kinoko held out her new spore-spreading gun to shoot.

However, there were no enemies in sight. They were on a barren strip of grass, and ahead of them was a rocky cliff that led up to an elevated mountain trail, but there weren’t any opponents visible.

“…Are we sure there’s people here?” Tetsutetsu asked.

“That’s what Reiko said,” Kinoko told him. “They must be hiding.”

“They’re up on the trail above us,” Kendo realized. “You were right, Neito. They’ve got the high ground.”

“Indeed we do, Itsuka!” Kendo groaned as Victoria came into view high above them, joined by Gou, Nasuka, Namida, Sekigai, Fujimi, and Shindo. “That isn’t our only advantage, though! We have you outnumbered and outmatched!”

“I’d make a comment on her bragging too much, but I’ve had my fill of ironic comments for the day,” Monoma mumbled to himself.

“Shindo, I do believe it’s your time to shine,” Victoria said to her companion. Shindo smirked and stepped forward to the cliff’s edge, looking down at his competition while putting a hand to the earth.

“Everyone get ready,” Kendo warned. They all waited in anticipation for what Shindo could do,
and then, they felt a shaking underfoot.

“An earthquake?” Monoma wondered. “No… No, it’s him! He’s making the ground shake!”

“Tremoring Earth!” From where Shindo was crouching, a pulse of vibrating force erupted, shattering the top of the cliff and making the boulders and stone chunks roll down.

“It’s a rockslide!” Shoda and Tetsutetsu yelped while Ibara and Kinoko ran ahead.

“We got this! Mushroom Wall!”

“Shield of Faith!” Giant mushrooms sprouted alongside the cliff while vines wrapped around them in a net-like pattern. The rocks rolling down the cliffs crashed into this barricade and were stopped clean, leaving only a cloud of dust and sand to assault the U.A. students.

“Thunderclap!” Kendo’s giant hands slapped into each other and cleared the cloud away before she raised a fist in declaration. “Let’s get to work, Class B!”

“Yeah!”

“United Forces, take them out!”

“Yeah!”

“Take us up, Ibara!” On Kendo’s order, Ibara’s vines wrapped around her, Tetsutetsu, and Kinoko and hurled them up the cliff towards the enemies. At the same time, Namida, Nasuka, and Shindo leapt down past them and landed on the grass, ready to battle Monoma, Ibara, and Shoda.

“Sekigai, run those scans now!” As Kendo’s team prepared to land on the trail, Victoria activated her Quirk and formed large diamond spikes on her hands. Behind her, Sekigai put her hands out, forming a rectangle with her thumbs and pointers, and a holographic screen appeared in this shape.

“Running detailed diagnostics. I’ll have Kendo’s weak points listed momentarily.”

“Looks like you’ve both improved,” Kendo said once she, Tetsutetsu, and Kinoko landed. “I’m glad. We won’t have to hold back.”

“Gou, get them.”

“Yes, ma’am!” The bulky Gou acted on his command immediately and hurled himself at the students, crushing the ground where he kicked off.

“Giant Shroom!” Under their feet, Kinoko summoned a large mushroom that brought them above Gou’s incoming attack. When his fist broke through the stalk of the mushroom, they jumped off.

“Heavy Metal!” While Kendo and Kinoko passed over Gou, Tetsutetsu activated his transformation’s strongest form and dropped like a ton of bricks. Gou was able to dodge the initial stomping attack, which formed a crater in the stone, and the boys then clashed fists.

“Dead Spray!” As Kendo and Kinoko flew forward, Fujimi took action and shot a stream of pink gas at them from a tube on his sleeve. With a wave of her hand, Kendo dispersed the gas, but beneath her, Victoria was aiming up with her hand to fire her diamonds.

“Gem Shot!” The spikes flew up at Kendo, and with her having just attacked and still in mid-fall, she had no defense and the spikes lodged into her torso. Kendo expected to feel great pain, but once she hit the ground and felt for injuries, she found mushrooms had sprouted over her stomach and
chest and halted the attack.

“A quick layer of my precious mushies can help anyone!” Kinoko stated, posing confidently with her Spore Guns pointed out.

“Thanks a bunch,” Kendo responded while scraping the gems and fungus off her costume. “I can take her from here, so can you deal with Fujimi and Sekigai?”

“You can leave it to me!” she claimed before pausing and letting out a peep of fear. Victoria had created layers and layers of large gems over her arms, forming giant, sharp hands of diamond that nearly matched the size of Kendo’s hands.

“Feeling a little size envy, Vicky?” Kendo joked.

“What’s wrong with taking a little inspiration, Itsuka? I’ll be with you in just a moment. First, I’ll deal with your little friend!”

"Get ready to fly, Kinoko,” Kendo told her classmate while wrapping her hand over her body.

“All this jumping around is gonna make me sick,” Kinoko complained. Once Victoria ran in to begin her battle with Kendo, Kinoko was thrown over head, high above Fujimi and Sekigai.

“EEEEEEK!” After fumbling in the air for a moment, she regained her bearings, if only slightly, and used her guns to spray spores down on her enemies. “Fairy Mist: Green Day!”

“What the hell?! It’s plugging up my tubes!” Fujimi complained.

“Heeheehee.” Kinoko landed with a flourish and proudly looked over her handiwork. The tubes running over Fujimi’s coat were plugged up with fungus and Sekigai’s visor and holographic pad were in a similar state, forcing her to abandon them. “That’s what happens when you mess with the Fairy Queen!”

“Fairy Queen, my fat ass!” Fujimi snarled. “You’re not gonna be actin’ so cutesy once you’re a zombie!”

“Ha! I’m always cute!”

While the battle on the cliff began, the six students still on the strip of grass below were also preparing to face off. Namida’s tendrils of tears were forming together while Ibara’s vines grew out, prepared to counter them. Monoma and Shoda stood on her left and readied themselves to fight. Across the way, Shindo was cracking his knuckles and rolling his shoulders with a sneer while Nasuka was tightening the bladed chains wrapped over his wheels.

“I’m guessing you want the shirtless guy?” Monoma asked Shoda.

“I’ll attack whoever I can. I’m not gonna hold a grudge just from some insults.”

“Well, you’re a bigger person than me. In that case, I’ll give him a metal punch for you.”

The battle began when Namida swung her water tendrils and sent balls of tears at the U.A. students. “Tear Bombs!” Ibara protected herself from them by batting them away with her vines and then sent a bushel of them to intercept the tear arms. Monoma used Poltergeist to dodge with Steel as a back-up in case he was hit while Shoda deliberately hit two of them, making two clumps of hair stand and glow.

“I’ll cover you two if you’d like to get in close,” Ibara offered.
“You’re the best!” Monoma thanked, using Poltergeist to fly ahead alongside Shoda. Between the forest and the battling water and plants, Nasuka and Shinso rushed to meet them and the boys all threw attacks that clashed into each other. Nasuka had kicked out at Monoma, but his leg was blocked by Shoda’s palms. Shinso attempted to hit Shoda with a haymaker, but Monoma used Solid Air to make a quick shield that intercepted his arms before the attack could land.

“Dual Impact!” Shoda thrust his palms towards Nasuka’s stomach, but the Gaikoku student raced backwards on his wheels and avoided the attack.

Ducking around Monoma’s shield and incoming follow-up punch, Shinso dove in front of Shoda and swung his arm. A sphere of vibration power had formed around his fist and he slammed it into Shoda’s stomach. “Vibro-Fist!”

“Shoda!” Ibara and Monoma cried out.

“Uurrrgh!” Shoda was sent careening backwards at breakneck speed, passing by his teammates and heading for a large boulder. Uninterrupted, the collision would’ve taken him out of the fight. However, in the last moment, a pileup of springy mushrooms burst from the boulder’s surface, catching Shoda and mitigating the damage.

“Nice one, Kinoko!” Monoma yelled up at his classmate.

“Of course! I’m always looking out for my Shoda!”

“What the hell?” Monoma heard Shindo seethe. He could see his teeth grinding at the sight of Shoda, and then he looked up the cliff at Kinoko. Seeing her smile and strut boldly while fighting made him cock his head and sneer. “She’s the one who interfered?”

“Oh no, you don’t!” Monoma yelled as he lunged at Shindo, using Steel and Large Fists for a giant attack. Shindo met this with a punch of his own, but Monoma’s combination overpowered him enough to toss him back. He had blocked to minimize the damage, however, and when Monoma landed, he felt a shockwave pass through his body. He fell to his knees and felt his arms wince and twinge around himself. A direct attack from this Quirk is bad news, he realized. The vibrations will travel through your whole body and your outward strength won’t matter in the slightest.

“Tear girl, through me!” Monoma watched Shindo run towards Namida and decided to chase after him, but as he began his pursuit, Nasuka approached his side. He attacked with his spinning wheel, but Monoma countered by using Swiveling on his arm, rotating counter to the wheel with Steel protecting his skin from the bladed chains.

“Your spin can’t hold a candle to mine!” Nasuka boasted as the rotation of his wheel ended the stalemate with Monoma’s arm and knocked him off balance. Nasuka swung his other wheel at Monoma to take advantage of this opening, but before he could, a bright flash raced across the field towards them.

“Flash Impact!” Shoda rocketed into the heat of battle with a speedy palm thrust to Nasuka’s chestplate, seining him soaring backwards.

“Thanks, Shoda!” Monoma said as he continued ran past. Shindo had stopped near Namida and was beginning to be wrapped in a tendril so he could be launched up the cliffside. Time to see what kind of power his Quirk is packing! Gradually, a bubble of vibration strength formed over Monoma’s fist and he stuck it into Namida’s tendril. With a shout of effort, he let this power loose into the water, making the giant arm of tears break apart and splash onto the grass. The aftershocks, though, would force Monoma to his knees once again, and this time, he had two enemies standing over him.
“Trying to rip me off, huh?” Shindo asked with a scowl. He crouched down and reached for Monoma’s head while the copycat was still crumpled from the shock to his body. Monoma assumed the coming attack would put floor him for the rest of the competition, but in the nick of time, he felt vines wrap around his body and pull him from danger.

“I’ve got you, my friend,” Ibara stated as she pulled the copycat from danger. Monoma could still barely move, but forced his hand to move so he could flash her a thumbs-up once she set him down.

“Oh, so now the plant girl wants some?” Shindo growled while stomping towards them. Ibara lashed out a few vines to entrap him, but Shindo snatched them out of the air and pulled them taught. With a smile, he sent vibrations through the plants and back to Ibara, making her clutch her head and cry out.

“Ibara!” Monoma tried to stand so he could help her, but the attack he had done with Shindo’s Quirk wouldn’t let him stand. After a few seconds, Ibara was finally able to detach those vines, but he the damage was severe and she dropped to her knees.

“Now send me up!” Shindo demanded. Finally, Namida used her tear arm to pick him up and hurl Shindo up the cliff. He flipped through the air and landed in a roll, then dove after Kinoko.

“What the— urrk!” He grabbed Kinoko by the neck and pushed her to the ground, letting her struggle ineffectually for a few moments. “Let go, jerkass! Lemme go!” Kinoko’s angry struggles paused once Shindo grinned excitedly and began forming a bubble of vibration around his hand. Kinoko could feel the waves of force inside and her eyes went wide. “S-Stop! Help! Someone!”

“Vibro-Gauntlet!” All at once, the force was released into Kinoko, making her scream out. The shockwaves passed through her body and into the ground as well, causing another rockslide that rolled down towards Ibara and Monoma.

“Incoming!” Despite his own warning, Monoma still couldn’t move well enough to dodge, nor could Ibara. Both struggled to stand up, but the debris was closing in fast and they braced for impact as best they could.

“Gotcha!” Suddenly, both were grabbed and yanked away from the rockslide. Monoma and Ibara were dazed by this sudden movement, but when they had come to a stop, they saw Shoda had dashed by them and pulled them from danger.

“W-Woah.”

“Thank you, Shoda.”

“It’s fine,” he said in a low voice, not looking back at them. Monoma was confused by his sudden shift in mode before remembering Kinoko had been the main target of the attack.

“You can have this back,” they heard Shindo say. They saw him jumping back down the cliff, and above him was the limp body of Kinoko had head thrown. Ibara’s vines rushed to grab her, and once they encircled her waist tenderly, she was reeled in towards her teammate.

“Kinoko, are you OK?” Monoma asked. Once she was in Ibara’s arms, they both gasped. She was coughing weakly and there was blood all over her face with more coming from her mouth and nose.

“Uuugh… my brain itches…” she slurred. Ibara held her tightly and glared with Monoma at Shindo, who was back on the grass.

“What’s with those looks? It’s a training exercise, isn’t it? It’s not like I enjoyed it,” he claimed with
a smile. His teammates shared an unsure look behind his back, glancing back and forth between him and each other. Even the fight on the cliff above had stopped when the attack went off. After a long while, the first one who moved was Shoda, who walked forward slowly. The kinetic energy still in his body crackled and whirred around his body until racing up to his hair, making it stand straight up and glow brightly. All was silent until Shoda looked Shindo straight in the eyes and growled three words.

“You’re going down.”
“We’ll have to play this out carefully,” Honenuki told his team. “Fukidashi, is your new technique ready for use?”

“You bet!”

“Then you’ll keep him occupied for now. Bondo and Shihai split off and wait for an opening.”

“Right.”

“What’ll you do, Juzo?”

“I’ll buy Fukidashi some time to prepare.” Honenuki walked forward, eyeing the opponent hung in the air. Their eyes met and Honenuki came to a stop, glaring up at Yoarashi. “There’s also something I wanted to try.”

“Hey down there!” Yoarashi called down. “You guys are next?!”

“That’s right!” Honenuki could see his big grin and quirked a brow, wondering whether he should ask the question on his mind. “…Out of curiosity…”

“Huh?”

“Do you… remember me?”

Yoarashi put a finger up as if he was about to answer, but stayed silent for a long while. He put a hand to his chin, then scratched his head, then knocked on his forehead a few times, all while looking directly at Honenuki. “…the test, right?! The test for U.A.?! Is that it?! I don’t have a name – Sorry! – but is that right?!”

“Yes, that’s right—”

“Awesome!”

“— and my name is Juzo Honenuki.”

“I’ll remember it, and my name is Inasa Yoarashi!”

“I’ll remember yours too.” Honenuki squatted own and took a deep breath while activating his Quirk, turning the ground before him into mud. Reaching his arms in, he dug deep until his fingers found stone and then pulled it up, bringing a slab of clay-like mud up with him. Let’s see if I’m strong enough to replicate it.

As he prepared to use this technique, Honenuki thought back to the night he had first used it successfully – his battle with Chimera where he had been strengthened by Trigger. That night was a taste of what’s to come, Honenuki decided. I’ll make that strength my own. I’ll unlock it for real. Here and now is where my evolution truly begins!

After pulling his arms back, Honenuki began jabbing into the slab, hardening the mud back into stone as they shaped into spikes. These spikes were sent flying from the powerful hits and were sent up at Yoarashi. “Mole Spike!”

“Wow!” Yoarashi seemed impressed by the attack, but with a swing of his arm, they were ground
into dust by a rough wave of wind. Honenuki had to brace himself for the wind as well to avoid being thrown off his feet. “You can control the ground?! I can control air! We’re like Yin and Yang, you and me! Different ends of the spectrum!”

“Yeah, except… I couldn’t hope to match you on my own,” Honenuki admitted. “If I’m gonna take you down, I’ll need help.”

“That’s valid!” Yoarashi told him. “You’re valid, man!”

“I appreciate it. Thanks for talking for so long too. Fukidashi, is everything ready?”

“That wind blew them a bit off course, but it’s all ready now.” Fukidashi walked forward and stood next to Honenuki while striking a pose. “I’ll bet you didn’t notice my muttering back there, did ya?! Of course, you didn’t because this is a stealthy set-up move!”

“What’s up?!” Yoarashi asked. “You’re doing a move?!”

“Not quite! I’ve already done it!” Fukidashi’s declaration made Yoarashi perk up to his surroundings and finally notice what Fukidashi had done. Strange bubbles were now floating all around Yoarashi and even more were starting to come from Fukidashi, who was whispering to himself and forming the bubbles from his head.

“Bubbles? I love bubbles!” Yoarashi declared while forming an air sphere in his hand. “But I’ve gotta blow them all awa—”

“BZZZZZRT!” Before he could unleash his attack, Yoarashi was assaulted with an electrical attack from behind. His manipulation of the air keeping him afloat faltered for a brief second, but he regained control quickly. “BAZAAM!” Once he did, a laser beam came at him from the side, making him have to dodge, and the bubbles started encircling him further.

“That there is my newest technique,” Fukidashi postulated. “By whispering the commands, I hide my sound effects in bubbles and set them up like mines for omnidirectional attacks. This is the power of Silent Way!”

“Very cool!” Yoarashi told him while making more wind swirl around him. “Now that I know, I can be a bit more careful in popping them all!”

“Only if you can keep up!” Fukidashi countered. Right then, Yoarashi began his counterattack and swing his arms, creating violent winds, and maneuvered himself through the air in erratic patterns. “BOOM! SHING! SIZZLE! BZZZZZRT!” Fukidashi responded by continuously setting off his sound mines around Yoarashi to try hitting him.

Eventually, in the mad flurry of Fukidashi’s unique attacks, Yoarashi moved towards him and Honenuki and thrust his left arm towards them. Around that arm was a twister of air that shot forward, growing into a massive cyclone as it approached. “Tornado!”

“Hold your breath!” Honenuki told his teammate before grabbing him. Once Fukidashi sucked some air in, Honenuki softened the ground below and they sunk into it. In the mud, Honenuki could feel the cyclone wind rippling the softened ground. Once it ended, he kicked off the bottom of the mud pool and he popped out with his teammate still in his arms.

“Bwaaah! Geez, that felt weird,” Fukidashi gasped. Now back on solid ground, the pair looked up to see Yoarashi was finishing his popping of the sound effect bubbles.

“You’re back!” he shouted like he was happy to see them. “That was pretty slick getting away!”
“BAZAAM!” Fukidashi sent a laser beam up at Yoarashi, but he was able to dodge easily since he knew where it would be coming from.

“It won’t happen again, though!”

“That’s fine. We won’t be running,” Honenuki told him. “Now that you’re in Shihai’s grasp, it’s only a matter of time before you’re within reach.” Over Yoarashi’s legs, Honenuki saw Kuroiro’s Black Wisps had stuck onto him while they were distracting him. They were gradually pulling Yoarashi closer to the ground, and when he tried to go back up, the power being used made him defenseless. Honenuki gleaned all this just by watching Yoarashi, but still felt uneasy at not knowing how powerful he’d be when attacking at full throttle.

“Splattergun!” Next to Kuroiro, Bondo took aim and fired streams of glue up at Yoarashi, covering a wide range with the shots. Even as Yoarashi tried to dodge, the different directions made the glue hit him and slowly pile up, speeding up his descent.

“Blooming Twister!” Yoarashi raised his arms and focused all of his power into them, making him drop to the ground and start sliding towards Kuroiro. The wind around his arms shot up in a thin, condensed funnel, and when Yoarashi swung his arms down, the funnel opened and blew out in all directions.

“Glue Squall!” Just before this attack, Bondo rushed at Yoarashi and sprayed his feet in a thick coat of glue. This didn’t halt the attack and he was the first be blown backwards, though Kuroiro was able to absorb him before they crashed.

Honenuki and Fukidashi were also blown away, holding onto each other, but Honenuki lessened the damage by softened the ground where they landed. “He’s way too strong,” Honenuki groaned, holding his head. “Even after all this time fighting, I can’t find any real weaknesses. Now that he’s fighting seriously, I don’t know if we can win.”

“Well, now’s your time to test it,” Fukidashi told him. “Bondo was able to stick him to the ground.”

“Really?” Honenuki looked closely and saw that the glue on Yoarashi’s feet really had stuck him to the ground, and despite the struggling, he wasn’t budging.

“I don’t know how long it’ll last, so get going. I’ll cover you.”

“Thanks.”

“You’re welcome. Now… BAZAAAM!”

With Fukidashi’s attack keeping Yoarashi’s attention, Honenuki began a sprint across the field towards his opponent. Yoarashi was countering with his overpowering wind, but as long as Honenuki was still running towards this fight, Fukidashi’s attacks kept coming.

“I really couldn’t have asked for better teammates,” Honenuki said under his breath, which made him run even faster. Finally, once he began the final stretch, Yoarashi noticed him and swung his arm, sending a blade of air slicing towards Honenuki. The softening hero ducked underneath this and dove into the ground until he reached stone. Once he did, he shot back up and popped up right in front of Yoarashi. All the mud rushed off his body except for a large glob around his right hand. That came off more slowly, but once it did, those watching saw a spiked stone gauntlet over Honenuki’s fist. Pulling his arm back, Honenuki flew towards Yoarashi and threw a punch. Yoarashi put up a barrier of swirling air around his body, but the gauntlet broke through and hammered his face, snapping his head back and drawing blood. “EARTH DRAGON CLAW!”
“BLLGYAKK!” Still stuck to the ground, the attack made Yoarashi lean backwards, but a gust from below made him stand upright again. Honenuki caught a glimpse of his face and saw his eye was now blackened and the bridge of his nose was split with blood rushing out. He wasn’t out of the fight though, and he pressed his gauntlet into Honenuki’s stomach, summoning a powerful wind. “TYPHOON!”

“HRRR-GYYYAAAA!” The blast sent Honenuki flying backwards in a tumble. He assumed he’d fly all the way out of the grasslands, but once his momentum slowed, he saw trails of blackness approaching him. Kuroiro’s Black Wisps had grabbed him, and he was now flying back towards Yoarashi, who was between the two.

“STORM CRASH!” Yoarashi formed two giant balls of rushing wind and shot them at Kuroiro and Bondo, knocking them away and making the Black Wisps let go of Honenuki. The momentum was enough, however, to carry him into range of Yoarashi.

Honenuki dove underground just as another Storm Crash came and he reappeared behind his opponent. Over both hands were smaller, sharper stone formations, and once Yoarashi turned to attack him, Honenuki pounced and shoved them forward into his torso.

“EARTH DRAGON FANG!”

“GYAAA!” Yoarashi lurched forward once the attack lodged into him, letting out a wheeze. “You’re… You’re damn strong!” Around his body, the swirling wind that had been protecting him grew in power. The stone around Honenuki’s hand were broken into gravel and he was thrown away.

“Dammit!” Honenuki saw when he landed that the glue on Yoarashi’s boots was being ripped away as well. “I’ll have to end this before he frees himself!”

“STORM CRASH!” Another air sphere formed around the gauntlet of his opponent and Honenuki braced himself for the attack.

“BOOOOOOOM!” It was dispersed, though, when an explosion from Fukidashi hit Yoarashi’s back. Honenuki used this brief moment of distraction to disappear into the ground again. As he sunk, he saw the glue trapping his opponent was almost all gone.

This’ll be the deciding attack! Once he hit the bottom of his mud pit, Honenuki forced all of his strength into his legs and kicked off. He flew up out of the earth just a Yoarashi took off into the sky. They flew sky high side-by-side, but Yoarashi’s ascent was slowed when he was caught in Kuroiro’s Ebony Lure.

Around Honenuki’s right foot, a boot of stone was formed. He spun forward, front-flipping at the apex of his jump before sticking his right leg out. “My final attack…” Like a meteor, Honenuki shot down from the sky on a warpath towards Yoarashi. With a final flip, he brought his stone attack down in the form of a mighty axe kick. “EARTH DRAGON TALOOOOOOOON!”

Yoarashi looked up once he heard this shout, just in time to receive the attack directly to the head. With roar of effort, Honenuki forced his leg down and followed through with his attack. Yoarashi was pushed down and the two boys crashed onto the grass with Honenuki on top.

“is… Is it over?” Bondo asked. “Honenuki, did you do it?” Honenuki didn’t respond as he stumbled off of Yoarashi. He fell to his knees, short of breath, and couldn’t move as his opponent sat up.

“Oh shit! I’m bleeding! Like, a lot!”
“I’d hope so,” Honenuki quietly responded. “Otherwise, I’d start thinking you were invincible…” Twisting his head back, Honenuki was able to see the handiwork of himself and his friends clearly on his opponent Yoarashi’s head was bruised and bloody and his breathing was heavy. “…but you aren’t.”

“Yeah, true! This was fun!” Yoarashi raised his left arm and formed a twister around it. “I’ll end this now, but let’s do this another time!”

“Sure.” Honenuki finally fell to his side, but was able to keep looking up at Yoarashi. The wind had entered his gauntlet and was now rushing out of the holes in the form of funnels. They raced up towards the sky and then turned to come back down, spreading out and expanding.

“TORNADO ALLEY!”

Knowing the fight was over, Honenuki watched the attack coming down all around him with no fear or resentment for his opponent. *I broke him down enough… I drew blood… Hopefully, that’s enough for someone else… to take him out of this fight for good.*

“HAHAHA! AW YEAH! THAT GOT ME SO PUMPED UP! MY BLOOD BOILING NOW!” Once his attack was finished and his enemies were down for the count, Yoarashi took to the sky once again. He was tired and drained, but still felt as if he could fight all day. “Man, I’m bleeding a lot. Eh, who cares? I just had an amazing, hot-blooded battle! Who’s next, huh?! SOMEONE ELSE COME FIGHT ME! I’M TOO WORKED UP TO STOP NOW!”

“If you need an opponent, I’m ready to take you on!” Hearing someone shout from below, Yoarashi looked to see who was challenging him. The voice had come from the mountain area, and once he looked, Yoarashi saw Rin staring up at him. “I wasn’t quite up to it last time, but now, I’m feeling ready.”
Heart of a Dragon

“How is this happening?” Shishikura asked himself, doubled over in pain and on his knees. “How are you this strong? You said your Quirk was self-healing, so how…”

“I know. Crazy, right?” Setsuna dashed at Shishikura with her fist cocked and swung at his face. He was able to dodge and the fist sailed by his head into the rock behind him. Once again, he was shocked to see her attack crack the stone apart.

“Setsuna, are you OK?” Rin asked from the sidelines. “Do you need me to tag in?”

“I told you to sit tight, Ryu baby. This guy’s all mine.”

“What the hell is your Quirk?!” Shishikura questioned. “Tell me this instant!”

“Oh, looky here, Ryu. He’s getting all huffy. Well, if you’re so desperate to know, then I’ll spill it.” Setsuna held up her hand to show Shishikura the way it was bruised and mangled. “See, it’s broken, and how’d it break?” As she spoke, the coloration and broken bones set themselves right, and she opened and closed her fist to show this. “Ever heard of hysterical strength, Super Meat Boy?”

“I have, and that isn’t my name.”

“See, my Quirk is healing myself, so I don’t have to worry about fighting so hard I break a few bones. I’ll just fix myself right after. After lots of training and overcoming my mental blocks, my body’s fighting at 100% all the time!” After pumping herself up, Setsuna attacked again with a roundhouse kick. “Black Mamba!”

“Foul Flesh!” Shishikura’s arms came apart into chunks and caught the attack, letting him begin using his Quirk on Setsuna. She popped the leg off, however, and jumped toward her opponent with her arms crossed in an X.

“Viper Fang!” She chopped both arms forward and struck Shishikura’s chest, throwing him onto his back. Setsuna shook out her healing arms and regrew her leg as Shishikura’s flesh returned to him. “How’re you doin’ after that, Mr. Meaty? Ready to surrender to the ‘U.A. trash?’”

“I’d never surrender to an immature troglodyte like yourself.”

“Hey!” Rin barked. “Don’t call my girlfriend a trogdlorite!”

“You tell him, baby!” Setsuna had turned her head briefly to speak to Rin, which prompted Shishikura to attack her with flesh chunks again. “This again? My mans, it’s just not working.”

“Setsuna, below you!” she heard Rin call out. At her feet, she saw bits of flesh flattened against the stone which flew up behind her. They stuck into her body as the other bits went to her front, and soon she was being engulfed and molded by it.

“This… is… so gross!”

“Setsuna!” Further away, Rin watched the lizard girl shrink into the flesh mound returning to its owner. Shishikura’s arms reformed and in his right hand was a fleshy meatball with Setsuna’s eyes and hair. “Wh-What did you—”
“I’ve made her far less annoying,” Shishikura scoffed. “In this form, she no longer poses a threat. Now, I’ll be doing the same to you.”

“Just try it,” Rin dared as he took a fighting stance. “Even if I’m injured, I won’t lose to the likes of you.” Shishikura scoffed at his declaration and stood still, eyeing him carefully. Rin looked uneasily at Setsuna’s strange form, but shook his head after a moment. “I have to play this carefully, so I don’t end up like that. Setsuna, I know you said you didn’t want me to help, but right now, I have to.

“Prepare yourself,” Shishikura hissed, and Rin clenched his jaw and narrowed his eyes for the coming battle. “…HGGRRR!” Before either boy could move, Shishikura’s nose suddenly broke and sprayed blood. Rin blinked a few times and saw that from the meatball form she was in, Setsuna’s leg had burst out and kick the Shiketsu student in the face.

“Setsuna?” Shishikura dropped her blob body, which was convulsed and shifting. Soon, another leg appeared, then two arms, and finally, her head. Setsuna had fully reformed, and one she did, she stood up and flipped Shishikura off.

“Little fucker. Don’t go badmouthing me or Ryu.”

“S-Setsuna! I’m glad you’re OK, but how did you turn back to normal?”

“Body manipulation is my thing, Ryu. It took a sec, but I kinda, just… put myself back to normal. This guy’s got some shit luck, huh? Of all the people he could’ve fought, he gets the girl who’s a hard counter.” With an impish grin, she skipped back to Rin and raised her hand. “Up top!”

“Good job,” he congratulated while returning the hi-five. “You were amazing.”

“Aw c’mon, silly boy, don’t gotta sweet-talk me~”

“Looks like at least one of your kids is impressive,” Miruko said while looking up at the drone feeds. “She’s called Indominus, right?”

“She is.”

“Holy shit, Ryuko, are you crying?”

“No!”

“Don’t you fucking lie to me.” Miruko rolled her eyes as Ryukyu wiped her own and they both looked back up to see Yoarashi’s battle with Honenuki’s team ending. “Man, that jacked Shiketsu kid is strong. Think he’ll sweep the rest of the U.A. kids?”

“I wouldn’t know. From the look of it, he’s on his last legs from all the damage he’s taken. Someone just needs one or two more good hits on him.”

“Someone, huh? You sure you’re not thinking of anyone in particular, Ryuko?”

“Of course not, Rumi. I’m completely unbiased.”

“Strike two for lying, Ryuko.”

“Over here! All that noise was coming from that big field!” Setsuna and Rin rushed back down the mountain trail, having heard a great commotion, and found their way to a vantage point on the side of the mountain. They could see Honenuki, Kuroiro, Bondo, and Fukidashi splayed all around the
“Looks like it,” Rin said. “That guy really is too strong.”

“Maybe, but it looks like they got in some good hits. He’s bleeding and looks a bit woozy.”

“You’re right.” As Rin watched Yoarashi shout to himself and begin flying into the sky, he clenched his fist. “He may only need a good few hits to take him out, but…”

“Hey.” Setsuna put a hand on Rin’s shoulder and turned him so they were face-to-face. “If you don’t feel up to it, then don’t. If you do though…” She traced her hand down to his chest and left it over where his scar was. “Then you’ll kick his ass. Just take it at your own pace and remember, this isn’t a life-or-death battle. Win or lose, this won’t matter by tomorrow.”

“You’re right…” Rin nodded to Setsuna and then turned back to Yoarashi, who was calling out for another challenger to fight with. “So, I’m gonna take a stab at it.” He stopped on the edge of the cliff and took a deep breath before shouting at the top of his lungs. “If you need an opponent, I’m ready to take you on!” His shout caught Yoarashi’s attention immediately. “I wasn’t quite up to it last time, but now, I’m feeling ready.”

“Alrighty! Come and get some, dragon man!”

“Actually, it’s Shenlong!” With a push-off from Setsuna, Rin sprinted down the cliff’s face and picked up speed quickly. He activated his transformation, turning his skin to scales, and pushed off once his wings had sprouted.

“Tornado Shotgun!” High in the sky, Yoarashi had formed funnels of air in the holes of his gauntlet and sent them down towards Rin. The dragon boy watched them come and flew around each, pushing his transformation as he ascended. His hands and feet turned to claws and his lower back sprouted a tail. His body grew in size and his face shifted into a fang-filled jaw. Letting out a roar, Rin soared towards Yoarashi in his Full Dragon form.

“That’s it! You got it!” Setsuna cheered from the mountain. “The D is back, y’all!”

“Tornado Fist!” Grinning like a madman, Yoarashi reacted this transformation by forming a twister around his right arm and flew towards Rin. The two boys clashed their fist into each other, sending a surge of force out in all directions with an earsplitting boom.

The blowback sent Yoarashi higher while Rin was pushed down. With a single wingbeat, he ascended and swung his tail to strike. Yoarashi countered this with a wave of wind that moved them apart and then formed ball of wind in his hand. “STORM CRASH!” The air sphere shot into Rin and he struggled against it. He felt it scraping his chest and damaging his scales, but his wings kept waving and he stayed aloft. With his mighty arms, he broke through the attack and rushed to attack again. Yoarashi’s next wind attack was dodged and Rin circled over ahead, delivering a tail strike to his opponent’s right side.

“You got him!” he heard Setsuna shout far below him. He wasn’t finished however, as Yoarashi was still in flight.

“NOW I’M PUMPED!” he screamed as he soared towards Rin. The air around his body had sped up and grown thicker, looking to Rin like air blades circling him. “Here’s my ultimate fighting skill – RAIJIN!”

Roaring in response, Rin attacked Yoarashi with his claws and found himself stalemated against the wind armor his opponent wore. Yoarashi attacked him with a flurry of punches and Rin felt that the
Raijin’s winds destroy his scales. *One more hit! Just one!* Another claw strike came, but Yoarashi dodged and then body checked Rin. The wind damaged Rin more and he found himself beginning to falter.

Yoarashi moved to go above Rin and held his two hands forward, where the wind around his body moved to. Once it had all condensed there. Yoarashi aimed down at Rin and fired his attack. “RAIGO!”

Strengthening his transformation one more time, Rin was engulfed by the enormous blast of wind and blown away. He shut his eyes at the last second before crashing into the cliffside he had taken off from. The wind pushed him deeper into the stone, blowing rock and debris away. For a moment, Rin though he had blacked out, but when all was still again, he was staring up at the sky in his human form.

“RYU?!” Setsuna then appeared in his line of sight, above the crater his body had made. She jumped down and looked him over fearfully, biting her lip. “You really need to stop crashing, OK?”

After a short laugh, Rin found the strength to hold onto her arm and she pulled him up. “I’ll have to work on that, huh?”

“Yeah, you do. I’m not fishing you out of the next crater.”

As they climbed out from the rubble, Rin looked up to see Yoarashi was still in the sky, but not moving around. He seemed tired and sluggish to Rin and his breathing was heavy. “One hit.”

“Huh?”

“Just one more hit. That’s all it’ll take for him to go down.” The couple looked to each other, then to Yoarashi, then back to each other. Setsuna’s silence worried Rin and he began wondering if she would chastise him for such a reckless idea. However, after a few moments, she grinned.

“Need a boost?”

“That’d be nice, yes.”

Setsuna moved in front of Rin and crouched down with her hands over one another. “You got one chance, hotshot. Make it count.”

“I will.” Rin back up, and after taking a breath, ran forward. His right foot hit Setsuna’s hands and she summoned all of her strength to enhance his kickoff.

“GOOOOO!”

“One last hit!” Rin summoned only his wings and transformed just his right hand into claws. “Here I come, Yoarashi!”

“Then come here!” the Shiketsu challenged. He swiped his hand tiredly and a gust assaulted Rin, nearly knocking his back to where he had taken off. With a beat of his wings, Rin moved himself to ride the wind up and ascended past his opponent. His claw moved back and his final attack was ready. At the same time, Yoarashi formed one last Tornado Fist to meet this attack head-on. “Here I come! TORNADO FIST!”

“FLYING DRAGON LANCE!” The boys rushed at each other and unleashed their attack without hesitation. Both attacks landed perfectly, and after a moment of hanging in the air, both began to fall. *It’s over,* Rin thought as he watched his opponent drop side-by-side with him. *We did it… but I
can barely move my wings. He was prepared to brace himself for a rough landing, but his fall was slowed gradually by a wind underneath him. “What the…” Looking to the side, he saw Yoarashi’s hand weakly stretched out towards him.

“I’ve only got… a little left in me,” he said. “Better use it like this.”

Rin nodded slowly as they both reached the grass, landing on their backs. Rin felt his scales disappear and stared up at the clouds shielding them from the sun. “It’s been a while… since I went all out like that.”

“Same here. All of you U.A. students… are really something.”
“Urgh… Feels like my brain got knocked around my head.” Kinoko was set onto Ibara’s back, strapped to her with vines, and was peering over her shoulder while holding a handkerchief over her bloody nose. From this new position, she watched Shoda walk forward towards Shindo, staying silent.

“Everything alright?” Ibara asked.

“Yeah, I’m just getting a better view. This is gonna be good.”

“Fatgum… it looks like he’s getting ready.”

“Huh? Oh yeah! Thanks for the heads up, Suneater!”

“Mm.”

“Shoda may be biting off a little more than he can chew,” Kirishima stated worriedly. “That Shindo guy seems pretty tough.”

“Maybe, but Impact’s seen his fair share of scraps now. No matter how tough his opponent is, he can send it right back at ‘em!”

“What’s that? Say again? Did you say that I was going down?” Shindo laughed. “The 4-foot-nothing stubby-legged fatso is gonna take me down? Alright, let’s test that! Give me your best shot!”

“Gladly.” Shoda had used almost all of his stored energy to save Monoma and Ibara from the rock slide. He had to search to deep within him to find just a little extra, but once he did, she pushed off the ground and soared towards Shindo. He thrust his palm forward, but his opponent blocked the strike with his arm while winding up the other.

“Vibro-Fist!” With an overwhelming right hook, Shindo sent Shoda flying into the cliff, creating a crater with the impact. Ibara and Kinoko called his name in worry, but after a moment, he pushed himself out and onto his hands and knees.

“How has he already recovered?” Ibara wondered. “Monoma and I were paralyzed with the aftershocks of those attacks.”

“It’s because the aftershocks are kinetic energy just like the punch,” Kinoko realized. “He’s the perfect counter for someone like Shindo. Just look.”

When Shoda got back on his feet, the energy in his body had made all of his hair stand up. He felt the whir of the energy through his body, amazed by it. With just one attack, I’ve built up so much energy, he thought, but damage is still considerable, and now I have to worry about something new. If I become overcharged with kinetic energy and can’t release it quickly enough, I may burst like a balloon with too much air inside.

“Hey now,” Shindo began, “that was nasty hit there. Maybe you should sit this out.”

“As if I’d turn my back now.” Shoda continued the fight by dashing at Shindo with his palm ready
to send out energy. “Flash Impact!” His opponent crossed his arms to block, taking the hit with only a grunt and a light skid backwards. “Storm Impact!” Standing firmly, Shoda unleashed a flurry of powerful palm strikes.

“You think these puny attacks will work on me?!” To Shoda’s surprise, Shindo was keeping up with his rapid strikes, blocking and deflecting them with an eager grin. “Hell no! My body’s been fine-tuned to deal with the aftershock of my own attacks! I’ve sculpted my body into a golden temple that’ll take any strike you can give it!”

“You and I have something in common then.” Shoda tried to strike Shindo’s chin, but the Ketsubutsu student leaned back to dodge and swung around with his leg outstretched. “I’ve needed to build up my body’s durability so I can take the hits that would give me my strength.” Shoda used his palms to block the kick and took in the energy from it. “Now, Dual Impact!”

“Geo-Cannon!” Shoda’s double strike was met with Shindo’s own and their strength met in stalemate. The clash sent out shockwaves that the other students could feel pass through their bodies. This was what I was afraid of. There’s too much energy! I can barely control it! Shoda could feel the vibrations from Shindo were building up in his body. Energy crackled around him as it leaked out. With his focus shifting, his opponent made a push forward and Shoda’s legs buckled.

“You’re mine!” With a battle-cry, Shindo launched his lug upwards into Shoda’s stomach, throwing him into the air. His glowing body twisted and tumbled at the apex of this flight, and once he came down, Shindo unleashed one more attack. “Vibro-Fist!” The punch sent Shoda flying back and upwards, skidding and bouncing up the cliffside until he crashed on the higher level, passing by Tetsutetsu and Kendo. The impact had embedded him into the stone and knocked down rubble that hid him from view, leaving his status unknown.

“LITTLE BUDDY!” Tetsutetsu screamed. He and Kendo moved to help their teammate, but found Gou Yonaga standing in their way. “GET OUTTA MY WAY!”

“…Nah.”

“I’ll deal with him!” Kendo told Tetsutetsu. “You dig Shoda out!”

“You’re not going anywhere, Itsuka!” Victoria re-entered the fray by launching herself at Kendo with her arm cocked, but Tetsutetsu stepped in her way and transformed into his Heavy Metal form. His arm met her fist and their even strength cancelled out the strike. “Insolent dullard.”

They pair traded blows and matched punches, keeping pace with each other, but the difference in their Quirks left Tetsutetsu high and dry. The diamonds chipped away at his armor until his knuckles were scratched and bleeding. “Kendo, I don’t think she’ll be letting me by! Can you help Shoda?!”

“Little busy here!” Kendo dipped around a punch from Gou and struck his head with her giant fist, hoping to knock him away. His body bent from the blow, but only slightly, and he lifted his leg to knee Kendo away. Her other giant hand blocked the attack, but she was still thrown backwards, crashing into rubble pile.

“Dead Spray!” A stream of pink gas came from Fujimi, who was perched on a boulder further away, but Kendo was once again able to disperse it with a wave of his hand.

“We’re outnumbered up here,” she mumbled while backing away as Gou approached her. Looking down the cliffside, she saw Ibara still holding onto Kinoko and locking her vines against Namida’s tear tendrils. “Guess we can’t get her up here to help… wait, where the hell is Monoma?!” Looking
around again, she saw no sign of the class’s copycat, instead seeing Nasuka and Shindo climbed up the cliff. “We’ve got more coming, Tetsutetsu!”

“Dammit, let me through!” Tetsutetsu struck Victoria’s face with a heavy blow, but her diamond armor kept the damage to a minimum. She slid backwards towards Sekigai and immediately put her hands up to fire her Gem Shot.

“He’s not unconscious, but it seems he’s too injured to move. Now that we have a numbers advantage, we should wrap this up shortly.”

“SHUT THE HELL UP!” Tetsutetsu screamed. “We ain’t gonna go down so easily! Shoda’s not done yet! Neither is Kendo, or Ibara, or Kinoko, or me!”

“His vitals have shot up. This adrenaline rush shouldn’t last long, though. He’s far too damaged and tired.”

Tetsutetsu clenched his jaw tightly and readied himself for battle again, but saw Shindo and Nasuka had reached their level and turned his attention towards them. “You!” he snarled, pointing at Shindo. “I’m gonna kick your ass for hurting my friends!”

“Sekigai, did I hear you right?” Shindo asked, ignoring Tetsutetsu. “Is that little pimple still awake?”

“Yes, but he’s not a threat anymore. He hasn’t moved since your last attack.”

Shindo nodded his head at the information, but still moved towards the wall Shoda was buried in. “Well, I like to be thorough.”

“HOLD UP! DON’T YOU DARE TOUCH MY BRO!” Tetsutetsu rushed to attack Shindo, but Nasuka and Victoria intercepted him. A chain-covered wheel ground against his arm while diamonds were stabbing into his side, nearly breaking through and piercing his body. “D-Dammit!”

“…Shindo, wait!” Sekigai suddenly said. “Don’t get closer!”

“You said he wasn’t moving,” Shindo responded while hastily reaching out towards the rubble. “What’s he gonna do?”

“It’s not him! It’s Monoma!”

“Huh?!” Just then, Shindo felt something lodge into his stomach. Something metallic and hard. Looking down, he saw an arm phasing through the stone. Soon after, a metal-skinned Monoma appeared in front of him and through another punch, this time nailing his jaw and sending him tumbling backwards.

“I knew you’d try something like that, Yo Shindo. I caught glimpses of your bloodlust and overall feral nature many times, but combat is when it truly comes out. I knew you and I were similar.”

“Hey, buddy!” Tetsutetsu exclaimed. “Where’ve you been?”

“Lying in wait for the moment he dropped his guard. Took him long enough. Even with my improved time limit, I’m just about out of time with our classmate’s Quirks.”
“What the hell,” Shindo growled as he stood up. “That warning couldn’t have come a couple seconds earlier, Sekigai?!”

“You’re the one who insisted on attacking an immobile opponent!” she shot back.

“You still could’ve—”

“Hey, quit yelling at my girlfriend!” Fujimi shouted, suddenly next to Shindo. “Fuck off outta here!”

“You fuck off!”

“Incoming.” The brief warning from Nasuka was enough to make the boys turn their heads in time to see Gou flying towards them, falling onto their heads. “Was that warning fast enough, Shindo?”

“Eat a dick.”

“Well, that was… something,” Monoma drawled as he saw Kendo approaching him and Tetsutetsu from behind. “Excellent throw, Itsuka.”

“Thanks. Good job protecting Shoda.”

“I aim to please,” he shrugged. As the three U.A. students reunited, the opposing team had regrouped and were standing to fight again. “Now, how about we finish this fight together?”

“Sounds like a plan.”

“Let’s do it!” Spearheaded by Tetsutetsu, the U.A. students went on the attack and charged their opponents. He aimed for Gou, but found Fujimi stepping into his path. The Isamu student clicked a button on his gasmask and then flooded his mask with his pink gas.

“Self-Immolation: Wraith!” Now under the effect of his own Quirk, Fujimi’s mouth and eyes became gaping black pits. When Tetsutetsu pulled his fist back, the zombified Fujimi did the same. Their attacks struck each other and bounced back from the equal strength.

“Holy crap!” Fujimi rushed at him again and began a storm of wild punches. Tetsutetsu blocked them, but at the speed they came, he couldn’t find an opening to counterattack. “I didn’t realize your zombies were this tough!”

“Bwaaahhggghrah!”

As Tetsutetsu and Fujimi battled, Monoma and Kendo had approached Gou together. Kendo’s fist struck Gou’s crossed arms and their strength matched each other’s, but Victoria had climbed a boulder and aimed her hand to interfere from above. “Gem Shot!”

“Steel and Large Fists!” Monoma dove in the path of the diamonds and held out his giant metal hand like a shield, blocking the gems. Behind him, Kendo struck Gou’s body and knocked him down, but Nasuka raced over and through a kick at Kendo.

“Thunderclap!” Slapping her hands together, Kendo sent out a gust of wind that blew Nasuka away, but Shindo entered the fray right after with a punch ready.

“Vibro-Fist!” His fist struck Kendo’s stomach armor, seeing shockwaves into her body and throwing her against the wall. Monoma responded to this with a giant punch, but Shindo dodged and backed away, cackling to himself. “I’ll crush you all one by one. First the little mushroom pimple, then the fatso, and now, I’ll break you two. Ahahahaha! AHAHAHAHAHAHA!”
“His energy just sparked!” Shindo’s unsettling laughter was stopped when Sekigai yelled out. When everyone turned to her, they saw in the corner of their eyes that a blue light was shining from underneath a pile of stones. The light gave off a pulse of force, nearly knocking a few fighters off their feet, and Sekigai spoke again. “His energy spiked!” Another pulse of energy came and the rubble shook. “Shoda is moving again!”

“What?!” Finally, the third pulse of energy made the stone rubble burst away from the fighter it had covered. Shoda was standing once again, glowing brighter than he had ever before, and staring at Shindo, who’s mouth hung agape.

“Now…” Shoda moved a foot back and put his hands up as his energy prepared to be released. “Meteor Storm Impact.” Kicking off powerfully, Shoda rocketed forward with a dome of energy surrounding him. He crashes into Shindo and they went flying off the cliff. Shoda’s palms stuck Shindo’s body in rapid succession, sending pulsing force into his body. The attacks kept coming until they broke through a tree and lost most of their momentum. Shoda tucked himself into a ball in mid-air and rolled into the grass safety while Shindo kept flying, rolling in the air until eventually falling to the ground.

“Woohooo! Go, Shoda!” Shoda heard Kinoko’s cheers behind him, but kept his eyes on Shindo. Somehow, after every hit had had taken, he was standing back up.

“Don’t press… your luck!” His bloody face was warped into a wild mix of fury, pain, disbelief. “You’re nothing! I’m the most powerful hero here! A golden GOD! You’re nothing! NOTHING!”

Shoda didn’t respond to his opponents rambling. Instead, he gathered the remaining energy in his body and held his hands out. Between them, a bright ball of energy formed. “I’ll take every hit you’ve given us… and pay it back. Mirror Punishment: Surge Impact!” The energy exploded forward and engulfed Shindo, blowing him away. Though he felt himself on the verge of unconsciousness, Shoda kept his eyes open long enough to watch Shindo fall back to the earth, completely out cold. “That last one was for calling me fat. All the others were for my friends.”
What I'm Made Of

Shit. Where'd she go this time? Shinso sneered and squinted as the forest continued to change around him due to Camie’s illusions. This’d be easier if Rei was still here. Could they have taken her down? No, if I’m still up, then she’d definitely still be fighting.

In the distance, Shinso heard a deafening blast of sound like the ones from before. That girl from Gaikoku is over there, and if she’s attacking someone, it’s gotta be Rei. Regrouping is my best bet right now. Persona Code won’t fool this opponent if she can keep her eyes on me. Shinso prepared to run in the direction of the sound attack, but changed his course at the last second and ran to the side. She’s most likely expecting me to head in that direction since it’s the shortest route. I’ll have to go around to avoid an ambush.

Now on the move and in a stable part of the forest, Shinso thought he’d be at ease again. However, he was sill sweating and felt a vein on his forehead bulge. What the hell’s wrong with me? I can’t even take on one opponent alone? Rustling in the trees on his right, made him grab his scarf in case of an attack. A shadow was moving through the brush with dancer-like fluidity and making easy work of catching up to him. Should I fight? Should I keep going? No, I’ll fight. I have to fight. I’ll show everyone what I’m made of!

“Minecraft!” After the shock of seeing a metal pole stake into the tree in front of him, Shinso instinctively rolled his eyes from hearing the attack’s name. The shadow he had seen turned out to be Habuko, who ran by him to avoid a net shot by her pursuer, Awase. “Quit running, snake! … Oh, hey Shinso. What’s up?”

“I’m hopelessly lost in a forest, being chased by someone who can create illusions and who I’m 50% sure has the hots for me, trying to find my girlfriend who’s being attacked by a discount Present Mic, and trying not to lose my shit while a literal army of professional heroes are watching live footage of my first real training exercise where I’m up against people with about two more years of experience than me… How are you?”

“I’m good. Kinda fed up with that snake girl, but I’m hanging in there.”

“…” Shinso stared blankly at Awase before another distant sound blast made him perk up. “Sorry, but I’ve gotta go.”

“What for? You’re worried about Reiko? She can take care of herself, y’know.”

“I know that, but I should be doing something. I can’t just sit back and do nothing, can I?”

“If you try and rush over there and be the big hero now, you really would be doing nothing. It’d be a waste of time.” Awase’s statement made Shinso halt in his tracks and turn back to face him, now glaring in annoyance.

“Then what the hell should I do, huh?”

“I’ll tell you what WE’RE gonna do,” Awase began. “We’re gonna defeat the two opponents who’ve grouped up to attack us. Reiko’s a hero too, so trust that she can deal with her problems herself. Whether that’s avoiding being taken out long enough for back-up or defeating the enemy herself, she’ll do what’s best. If it was Mr. Vlad or Eraserhead in this battle with you, you would trust them to handle their own problems, yeah? Start thinking of us the same way and have a little faith. You should put some faith in yourself too. Don’t just focus on what’d be the best possible
outcome right now, but what you can do in this moment.”

“…And what is it that I can do?”

“Finish this fight and taking these two down with me!” Awase bumped Shinso’s chest with his fist before turning his back. Seeing the trees around them shift blurrily and hearing the leaves rustle made them go on high-alert, ready to fight. Awase held his net gun at the ready, standing back to back with Shinso, who made his Capture Scarf flare out. “Get ready, Shinso! We’re gonna show everyone watching what you’re made of!”

“Right!” Out from the illusionary backdrop, Shinso saw Habuko’s head pop out and glare at him, sending out a green flash. “On your 6!” His warning came just before his body went limp, so Awase held him up with one arm and whirled around. He fired a net from his gun that Habuko dodged, but still cleared the illusions of that area.

“You’ll come from behind, right?” Trusting his gut saying an attack would be coming at his back, Awase turned around and found Camie approaching with a pair of cuffs. “I knew it!” Awase fired another net, which the Shiketsu student dodged as well. “Shinso, can you take her?”

“I can,” Shinso replied, now mobile again. “Leave it to me!” The boys separated and Shinso grabbed his scarf. He flicked it forward and snagged Camie’s leg, yanking it to draw her closer.

From behind Camie, Habuko rushed into the clearing and passed her teammate, heading towards Awase. Shinso saw her Quirk activate and Awase fall to his knees. Habuko then approached him and stared into his eyes.

“Awase!” Having watched her super move in action when they had first arrived, Shinso knew he had only seconds before Awase was out of the battle. He tugged on his scarf again and drew Camie closer.

“Oh, you’re looking to get up close and personal?” Camie asked. “Fine with me!” She took the pull as a challenge and dashed towards Shinso, causing the scarf to slack. In response, Shinso unraveled more of his scarf and threw it up, hooking it over a sturdy tree branch, and ran towards Camie. As he pulled the scarf taught, Camie was hoisted into the air by her leg. “Whooooaa!” She flipped upside-down and was sent careening face-first in to the tree.

With one enemy off his back, Shinso rushed at Habuko and Awase with his fist cocked. “Petrif—” Habuko’s super move was interrupted when Shinso’s punch struck her cheek and sent her tumbling away from Awase. Thinking quickly, Shinso grabbed Awase’s dropped Capture Gun and fired its last shot, wrapping up Habuko’s legs.

Once Awase regained control of his body, he stood up and gave Shinso a quick slap on the back. “Good job, man! See, you could do it! How’d that feel, huh?”

“I guess so,” Shinso said, catching his breath. “It felt kind of like… I don’t know. My body just kinda moved on its own.”

“That’s a good feel to have. You wanna help me finish this off?”

“Help how?”

“Human Shield!” Feeling immediate regret, Shinso was hoisted up by Awase to block Habuko’s view of him as he approached.

“…Is this helping?”
“Yeah, man.”

“…Right.” Shinso rolled his eyes once again as Awase tossed him aside and pounced on Habuko. He watched his teammate fuse her wrists together behind her back and then wrap her own sash around her head, effectively cutting off her Quirk.

“Snake has been captured!” Awase boasted.

“…Glad I could help.”

“I’m getting real sick and tired of your shit,” Kamakiri seethed. “Good thing I’ve figured you out.” As new trees sprout from the ground to ensnare him, he raised his swords, holding them in a reverse grip, and put the blades side-by-side. “Wherever the new trees appear, you’re on that side. Now… Crescent Hunter!” Extending his mandibles at the same time, Kamakiri whirled his body around slashing through his surroundings. The young trees were chopped by the swords while the mature ones around him were felled by his mandibles. “Found you!”

“Shoot.” With the trees being used as her cover cut down, Kobayashi was left out in the open. She prepared to flee, but Kamakiri’s eyes were trained on her.

“Mandiblade Secret Technique…” Holding his swords horizontally with their hilts overlapping, Kamakiri sprinted ahead and slashed at his opponent. Kobayashi’s light armor was cut through and her body was pierced. “DRAGONFLY!”

“Gyaah!” Blood was on his blades, but Kamakiri wasn’t worried. He knew his own skill level. He knew that his slashes were just enough to take her out of the fight and nothing more.

“Don’t worry. The cuts are shallow… but the scars on your pride may run deeper.”

“Where’d she go?! She was right in front of you!”

“I don’t know!” Nakagame and Kaikaina stood back to back, frantically searching their surroundings for Yui. “I thought she could just grow! I didn’t know shrinking was part of it!”

“Well, it is! Just find her!”

Is this a good time? Yui wondered. Hanging onto the bottom of Kaikaina’s wrap skirt, she complimented her own hiding space and let go to stand underneath both of her opponents. Yeah, this’ll be a good time. Squatting down and inhaling, the shrunken Yui prepared to unleash the super move she had been practicing. “Titan Cliff!”

Yui grew in an instant to more than double her normal size. The strength of her transformation and the uppercut going with it sent both targets flying away. Kaikaina went face-first into a tree, knocking her unconscious, while Nakagame was able to roll into a softer landing.

“Shell Tackle!” Nakagame used her Quirk to send herself flying at Yui for a counterattack. Yui responded by shrinking back down, letting the attack sail over her, and then grew back to a giant size. Once Nakagame’s momentum had run out, Yui made her move and grabbed her. “Uurk!”

“Got you.” Yui placed both hands around Nakagame and held her tightly so that her struggles would be useless.
“Well? What now?” Nakagame asked. “What’re you gonna do to me?”

“…” Yui was silent for a long while before giving Nakagame a quick squeeze. Show was hoping she’d fall unconscious quickly and silently, but instead, Nakagame let out a cute squeak.

“Kyaaa~!”

“Hm?” Upon taking a closer look, Yui realized that Nakagame had fainted, but with a large grin and a completely red face. “Is… Are you OK?” When no response came, Yui looked at the red on her face again and began to worry. “Did… Did I squeeze to hard?”
Sorry I disappeared for a while. Laptop's broken, so I'm uploading this from my parents'. I'll get my own back sometime next week so it'll be a little while until the next chapter.

All this screaming is getting annoying, and this damn sonar’s making it impossible to hide. Reiko was forced to dart away from her hiding place when a sound wave attacked her once again. She caught a brief glimpse of Greta strumming her guitar and considered counterattacking, but when the attack changed course to follow her, she decided against it and found another hiding place behind a boulder. This opponent’s way out of my wheelhouse. If I could last until the end of the round, that’d be just fine, but at this point, that may be wishful thinking.

“Yo, scream queen! We good in the hood or what?”

Crap, it’s the Illusion chick, Reiko grumbled. I may not be able to escape now if they regroup.

“I should be done shortly.”

“Fantastic.”

Oooooh. Hearing a familiar low and gravelly voice made Reiko stand up and walk out into the open. Across from her, Greta was still like a statue. “Is it bad to say I really wish your Persona Code crapped out right then so I could hear all that in your voice?”

“Meh. I don’t blame you.” She saw Shinso walk out into the open, missing his scarf, and flash a cheeky grin while pulling down his mask. “I’m glad it didn’t, though. Trying to trick her into responding without it… would not be lit.”

“Is that right?” Reiko said with a small laugh. “Are you the judge of what is and isn’t lit?”

“Obviously. I, myself, am quite lit.”

“The littest?”

“Yes. Did I fucking stutter?” The couple laughed at each other before refocusing on the task at hand.

“So, what happened with the owner of that voice? Judging by you being here and without your scarf, I’m hoping you kicked some ass.”

“You could say that, but I had a lot of help.”

“Yo!” Out from the forest, Awase appeared before the couple, carrying the restrained Habuko over his shoulder. Under his other arm was Camie, who was bound by the Capture Scarf that also went over her mouth to prevent use of her Quirk. “See? I told you she’d be fine.”

"Aw, you were worried. Lame. Got any extra scarf for the loudmouth over there?”
“Probably.”

While Shinso and Reiko pulled Greta into the Capture Scarf’s wraps with Camie and Awase secured Habuko against a tree, Reiko noticed that the slim amount of bravado Shinso was giving off earlier was going away quickly. “So, how do you think you did?”

“OK, I guess… I dunno. I was a little freaked out until Awase helped me out. I doubt I’d have won if we didn’t fight together—”

“Yeah probably not,” Awase chimed in, making Reiko give him a harsh glare. “That ain’t a problem, though. Being a hero is all about teamwork. Same with this exercise. They wouldn’t have thrown entire classes in here without trying to encourage some cooperation.”

“He’s right. Your win was still a win, even if you didn’t do it alone.” Shinso murmured a dry response, but didn’t seem convinced. Reiko had run out of supportive things to say and racked her brain for anything else, but before she could, Camie began to try speaking from behind the scarf.

“Ymm mmrr mmmng ffmm, mm.” Shinso and Reiko glanced at each other, unsure of whether or not to let her speak, but the annoying mumble that wouldn’t stop made them shrug and pull the scarf down from her mouth. “Phew. Thanks. Like I was saying, you were doing fine, man.”

“Think so?”

“Oh yeah. I couldn’t think of anything wrong in particular outside of some hesitation here and there, but you’re a beginner, so that’s expected. Plus, heroes with supportive Quirks like us don’t really work alone and take on big problems all by themselves. Leave that to big, strong heroes like Ryukyu or Miruko. People like us just gotta find our niche, y’know? So, yeah, you did good out there.”

“Uh…” Surprised by how knowledgeable she sounded, Shinso looked to Reiko and Awase and saw them nod in agreement. “Thanks. Coming a more experienced senior, that means a lot, Utsushimi.”

“My pleasure. I love to support cuties like you, feel me?” Ignoring the playful wink that followed, Shinso simply looked off into the distance while Reiko pulled his scarf back up over her mouth.

“And we never talked to her again.”

“Right.” Letting his eyes wander, Shinso looked down the path and saw Yui, in a larger form, heading towards them with two girls in her arms. “Looks like she’s finished her battle too.”

“Hey, over here!” Awase called out. “Took down two on your own? Good job!”

“Thanks, but I think I killed one of them?”

“…” All three of Yui’s companions were extremely confused when she shrunk down to normal sized and laid down her fallen opponents on the ground. Kaikaina had a big bruise on her forehead, but looked fine otherwise, and Nakagame was passed out, still blushing.

“This one,” Yui said, pointing to Nakagame. “I squeezed her a bit so she would stop fighting me, but her face had been all red since then and she hasn’t moved.”

“Well… she’s breathing, so she’s not dead,” Awase told Yui. “The blush is, uh… yeah… Did she make any noise when you squeezed her?”
“She did. It was sort of a ‘kyaaa.’”

“Oh honey,” Reiko mumbled while Shinso silently face-palmed. “Oh… honey.”

Across the training zone, in the mountainous area, Pony and Shishida leaped and jumped through the rocky inclines, chasing after Bruce and Tadan. “We just can’t get close,” Pony grumbled. “They’re just wastin’ our time.”

“That may be, but we’re also wasting theirs,” Shishida responded. “As long as we can keep these two away from our allies, our efforts won’t have been in vain.”

“Incoming spikes!” The pair ducked for cover as spikes zoomed towards them from the distance, aimed for Shishida. “Last time, it was me. They’re tryin’ to confuse us.”

“This must mean Kaibara and Tsuburaba either haven’t reached them yet or have been defeated. I’d like to hope for the first option, but Tsuburaba’s back was harshly injured when we last were together.”

“We’ve gotta worry about ourselves for now.”

“Quite right.” Shishida and Pony crept along with wall they hid behind until Shishida put his hand up. “I smell something. They’re coming from above.” He pointed up at the ledge over their heads.

“Gimme a boost,” Pony requested. “Throw me when they’re close.”

Shishida nodded and held his hand forward. Pony stepped into them and crouched, awaiting the throw. Soon enough, she felt Shishida’s muscles flex in preparation and she looked to the sky. Pony pushed off powerfully and Shishida’s threw her sky-high. “Yeeeeehaaaaaw!” She zoomed past the ledge, leaving Bruce and Tadan shook from her fly-by, and spun to aim her head down. “Horn Sniper!” Her horns shot from her head and flew down to her opponents.

Both boys jumped back to dodge, but below them, Shishida bounced between the mountains’ cliffs, bouncing nimbly until he reached their level. “Spinning Cannonball Deluxe!” Shishida spun forward and slammed into Tadan. The Isamu student was knocked backwards and Shishda kept going while grabbing his opponent’s arm. He clawed into the ground and heaved Tadan overhead, slamming him back down fiercely. “Let’s keep this up until the very end!”

“Yeehaw! You got it!”

We’re almost to the summit. See any missiles behind us, Kosei?” In the sky above the mountain, Kaibara used his Tornado Gauntlet’s propeller to fly him and Tsuburaba towards the source of the sporadic spike attacks, dodging any attacks that came as they approached.

“Nope. Looks like the others are keeping that guy busy.”

“Good. Are you alright to fight?”

“Sure. My back’s still feeling sucky, but it’s not like I’m the most mobile fighter. Don’t worry, I’ll back you up good.”

“Right. I’ll try and keep everyone’s eyes on me.” As they made their final approached, they saw
four figures at the top plateau watching them – Ketsubutsu’s Makabe and Toteki and Gaikoku’s Miru and Mitch. “I figured the spike guy was up here. Miru being here makes sense too. That’s how they could keep finding us. As for the homing, it must one of the other two.”

“I’m ready when you are, Sen.”

“Alright then. Here we go.” Kaibara’s arm picked up speed as he tilted it forward to pick up speed. The boys soared forward, catching their opponents off guard with their sudden speed increase, and the propeller blades retracted just as they reached the small plateau. “Hit ’em, Kosei!”

“Air prison!” Tsuburaba cupped his hands and blew out a box of Solid Air that encased Makabe before either boy hit the ground.

“Spike Storm!” Mitch turned his back to fire his spikes, which Tsuburaba countered with a barrier that blocked the attack. The U.A. duo hit the ground back-to-back with their fists raised.

“Watch my back,” Kaibara requested.

“Only if you watch mine,” Tsuburaba replied.

“Of course.” Facing Toteki and Miru, Kaibara saw they both had a collection of spikes in their arms that they lobbed at him. “Kosei!”

“I’ve got them! You get the source!”

The duo fluidly swapped position and Kaibara found himself facing Mitch with a cracked air wall in between. He leapt up, vaulted over the wall, and found himself as the target of another Spike Storm. With a quick spin of the arm still holding to the wall, he threw himself to the ground and made a dive for Mitch. “Spinner Swing!” Drilling his fingers partway into the ground, Kaibara spun his body around and slammed his leg into Mitch’s stomach, throwing him away. “That’s one down!”

“Just one? I’m already outdoing you, Sen!” To Kaibara’s surprise, Tsuburaba had already encased both Toteki and Miru in Air Prisons. “Easier than I thought, honestly, but we’ve taken them all down.”

“Oh yeah? Everyone?” Kaibara and Tsuburaba looked to the side, surprised to see Makabe had already broken through his own Air Prison and was slipping a pair of gloves on. “You miscounted, bro.”

“Yeah, ya miscounted, dickheads!” Behind them, Mitch had gotten back to his feet and flared out his spikes.

“Tsuburaba, can you take the porcupine?”

“I’ll see what I can do. Be careful with shellhead over there.”

“I’ll try.” Kaibara went on the offensive and ran at Makabe with his spinning arm cocked. At the last second, he hurled the arm down to the ground to bring his spinning leg up for a kick. Makabe blocked this strike with his arm and forced Kaibara away, making him tumble backwards. “What the hell?” During their clash, Kaibara had felt his leg grinding against something hard. *Does he have armor under his clothes?*

“Once my teammates are free, both of you are totally done.” Makabe didn’t attack again right away. Instead, he was rubbing his hands up and down his clothes. Kaibara watched closely and saw that the clothing now looked stiff and toughened as if they were made of stone, matching his sleeves
which had already looked that way. Lastly, he cracked his knuckles and hardened his gloves the same way before putting his fists up. “Good luck tryin’ to break down my Stiff Armor.”

“We’ll see if I need luck for that or not.” Kaibara put his fists up too and watched Makabe move closer. He moved like a boxer, but with a rhythm like a dancer. Once he was in range, he tried for a right hook that Kaibara swiveled around. Spinning his leg, he pirouetted and kicked, but it couldn’t break through his opponent’s jacket. Makabe threw a straight punch into Kaibara’s chest, knocking him backwards, and then rushed in to follow it up.

“Grindin’ Gauntlet!” Makabe sent a rush of punches at Kaibara, who put his arms up to protect himself as best he could. The attacks were heavy and damaging, eventually breaking through the guard to nail Kaibara’s cheek.

“Back off!” Kaibara used his Tornado Gauntlet to blast Makabe with wind, but it couldn’t blow him off his feet. It did, at least, buy him enough time to spin his other hand and ignite his glove. “Fire Fist!” Kaibara spun himself in one fluid motion to lodge his flaming hand into Makabe’s stomach. His opponent’s stiffened shirt seemed to block the brunt of the impact, but enough went through along with the heat to make Makabe groan and lurch forward. “Hot enough for you?”

“Nah. I’m fine with hotter.” Makabe then reached up and grabbed Kaibara’s shoulder to pull him into a headbutt. To Kaibara’s surprise, Makabe’s strange-looking head wasn’t just for show as it was just as hard as his clothing had become. Kaibara’s forehead was left bruised purple and bleeding when he was tossed away. “Had enough?”

“Nope. I’m good to keep going.” Putting his hands up again, Kaibara felt himself crack a smile. “It’s too bad time’s almost up. Fighting you is pretty fun.”

“Agreed, but it’ll be more fun when I knock you on your ass.” Makabe reached into his jacket pocket and produced several small rocks that had also been reinforced by his Quirk. Kaibara was forced to dodge around as the stones were pitched at him. Soon enough, a rock slipped by his defense and slammed into his left shoulder.

“Goddamn!” Kaibara was knocked onto his back and he clutched his shoulder, feeling it throb in pain. Makabe pressed this advantage and charged towards him to finish the fight. With the arm his Tornado Gauntlet was on out of commission, he had no clue how to fight back until he felt one of Makabe’s stones under his leg. Thinking quickly, he grabbed it, and pitched it at his opponent while spinning his hand. *It just needs to buy me a second to stand back up.*

Makabe swatted his arm at the stone to knock it away, but when the projectile came in contact, he was stopped. The spin put on the rock was grinding against his jacket and forcing him to halt. With a groan of effort, his finally knocked it away, letting it fly away and bounce across the ground. Now back on his feet, Kaibara blinked a few times, trying to understand what he had seen. *My spinning put that much extra power behind the rock? I’ll have to look into that. First things first – I still have to knock shellhead flat.*

“Grindin’ Gauntlet!” Makabe charged and Kaibara backed up, still holding his shoulder. His back hit a wall and his opponent rushed in. Kaibara dodged the attempted stomach blow and tried to slip away, but the left hook that followed blocked his path. Makabe went for another rush of punches, but just then, Kaibara found a way to counter. He jammed his foot into the hole left by Makabe’s first punch and launched himself into the air.

“Spinner Swing!” Rotating his leg, Kaibara brought down a heavy kick into the side of Makabe’s head, sending him tumbling away. Even though he landed on his feet, Kaibara still felt a shock of
pain in his shoulder and hissed. He hoped the fight was finished, but Makabe was standing back up.

“You just can’t stay down, can you, shellhead?”

“Not my style, Ballerina. If I can’t knock you flat, then I’m at least gonna keep fighting until the buzzer.”

“Heh. You and me have the same plan then.” Kaibara smirked and raised his fist, clenching it tightly. “You remind me of another hard-headed, sturdy fighter I know. He’s also gotten me fired up to fight before.”

“So you’re keep going too?” Makabe asked, stretching out his arms. “I won’t go easy on you just cuz we’re almost outta time.”

“Fine by me. We’ll both go down swinging.”
“Looks like time’s almost run out for this round,” Miruko pointed out. “I don’t think that Kendo girl’s gonna have time to do much. Real shame. I saw something in her, y’know?”

“…Yes.”

“You’re STILL crying, Ryuko?”

“I’m just proud of Shenlong and Indominus. What’s wrong with showing it?”

“Just put a frickin’ lid on it. Geez.” Miruko scoffed at her friend and then looked back to the screen showing the Cliffside battle. *C’mon, kid. You can do more, can’t ya?*

“Neito, what’s the time? How much do we have left?”

“How should I know?”

“How many watches are on your costume?”

“…Under 5 minutes, Itsuka. If you’re planning something, it has to be quick.”

“Got it.” Kendo took a moment to survey her surroundings and take stock of her enemies and allies. Shindo was completely out of the fight, but so was Kinoko and Shoda. Ibara and Namida’s battle had wound down and they seemed to be in silent agreement to look after their fallen allies instead of continuing their battle. Tetsutetsu and Monoma continued to fight against Gou, Natsuka, and Fujimi, but all five boys had worn themselves out long ago. The only fighters still standing and ready to battle were herself and her Gaikoku counterpart.

“Are you finally done avoiding me, Itsuka?” Victoria sneered snobbishly. “You can’t hide anymore, unfortunately. What a pity. You’ve done well to slip away this long, but alas, your streak ends here.”

“That’s pretty big talk from someone I flattened into the cement,” Kendo shot back with a smirk. “Psyching someone out is tough to do when you know you can’t beat them, but I’ll give you credit for trying.”

“You seem assured of your victory. I hope you can give us a good show.”

Though she had been perfectly confident in herself just a moment before, that one sentence from Victoria made the hairs on the back of Kendo’s neck stand at attention. Her skin crawled and a chill ran up and down her spine. It was then that she remembered when and where she had heard those words before.

“Shut up and sit tight. I’ve barely begun!”

“Please… don’t give up on me just yet.”

“Itsuka… you’ll bring me such sorrow when I kill you! I must savor this!”

“Everything alright, Itsuka?” When her eyes refocused, Kendo saw Victoria’s expression had softened with worry, though her tone and word choice disguised it. “Are you that scared of me?”
“I’m just fine, Vicky.” I can’t think about this now. This is my shot. I can’t waste it! Kendo felt her hot blood rush faster and adrenaline wired her body to fight. “Let’s do this.”

“If you insist. Gem Shot!” Spikes of gleaming diamond flew from Victoria’s armored hand and flew at Kendo, who clapped her giant hands together in response.

“Thunderclap!” The wave of force sent the spikes crashing into the dirt. With the path clear for the moment, Kendo pushed off and ran towards Victoria, shrinking her hands to reach her top speed.

Instead of attacking again, Victoria fortified herself by creating layers upon layers of jagged gemstones. “Just try and break through! You’ll shred those man-hands to ribbons!”

Once she was close, Kendo’s hands expanded again as she pulled her arms back. “Titanic Harite!” Pushing her hands forward, Kendo unloaded a powerful double-palm strike on Victoria. The armor cracked and crumbled as Victoria was knocked away, pushed by the incredible force. The sound of shattering echoed across the cliff as shards of diamond went flying away. With the shards, however, came a spray of blood that burst out from Kendo’s hands.

“AAAARGH!” Kendo dropped to her knees and clenched her eyes shut while gritting her teeth. With sharp pain across her palms and fingers, she was forced to undo her transformation. “Goddammit,” she hissed. When her eyes opened, she was staring down at her bloody palms.

Something was different, though. She was now longer at the mountain range with her teammates. Past her red hands was a black carpet. In her periphery, a broken set of monitors was slightly hidden by a tall figure looming over her.

Now, should I snap your neck now or take my time scraping every drop of blood from you? Any ideas, Itsuka?

Kendo’s breathing sped up. Her skin felt hot, yet a cold sweat was forming on her face.

Itsuka?

Her bloody palms were blinking in and out of her vision. In their place were metal cuffs that squeezed and suffocated her hands.

Itsuka?

Her body wouldn’t move. She couldn’t speak. All of her muscles failed her in that moment. She might’ve even passed out if not for a loud voice in her ear.

“Itsuka!”

“Huh?!” Just like that, she was back. She felt dirt on her knees and the sun on her head. A hand was on her shoulder, which she knew was Monoma’s.

“Is everything OK?” he asked, leaning in close. “Can you stand?” The look in his eyes told Kendo he knew what had happened to her. “Here, let me bandage your hands. Tetsutetsu can keep Victoria occupied until time’s up—”

“No.” Picking her head up, Kendo saw Victoria, on shaky legs, was reforming her diamond armor. “This is my fight. I’ll finish it.”

“Are you positive, Itsuka? There’s no shame in admitting you can’t.”
“I know, and thanks.” With a little help, Kendo got back to her feet. “If I thought I couldn’t handle it, I’d say so. I’ll be fine. You believe in me, right?”

“…Of course,” Monoma replied, flipping his hair as he usually did. He turned on his heels and walked back to Tetsutetsu and their opponents. “Your word is as good as gold.”

“Hold on,” Kendo requested. “If I’m gonna beat her, I’ll need a bit of an edge.”

Monoma stopped and peered over his shoulder at Kendo. “You told me to hang onto it for safe keeping. You said that since it’s based on a prototype not made for you, it may not hold up and that Victoria’s Quirk would shred it.”

“Even if it ends up destroyed, I’ll need it. Hand it over, Neito.”

“…Anything for you,” he sighed dreamily while fishing around in his pocket.

“Hang on there, Itsuka!” While holding her left hand out, Kendo turned her head after hearing Victoria’s demanding tone. “Whatever you’re about to do, it won’t matter! I’ve grown far beyond your strength level! My diamond armor can outlast any number of hits you can give, and with your hands so damaged, that number may as well be zero!”

“I knew you’d be stronger, Vicky. That’s why I needed this as a back-up plan, even if it wasn’t guaranteed to work perfectly or even hold up against your diamonds for long.” Kendo felt Monoma place the item in her hand and walk away. She gripped it tightly, brought it up, and then snapped it into place around her right wrist. “Let’s end this here and now.” On the red wristband she now wore, Kendo pressed down on the button while growing out her hand again. The band began to glow from its activation and the metal expanded around her giant hand. Glowing white bands swirled up and around until they locked fully around her hand like a mitt. Once they turned back to their red color, Kendo gripped her armored fist, smirked, and looked to Victoria. “Let’s see if the Full Gauntlet can handle this job.”

“I’ll rip it to pieces! Gem Shot!” Victoria’s diamond spikes flew at the charging Kendo, who used her new gauntlet to block her body completely. The gems staked into the gauntlet, denting and puncturing it slightly, but they fell away without slowing Kendo down at all. “Impossible!”

“Oh, it’s possible,” Kendo laughed. Once she reached her rival, she swiped her hand to try slapping her, but Victoria jumped back at the last second. The front of her diamond encasement was shaved away, however, and Kendo used the opportunity to punch again.

“Spike Outpour!” From her body, diamond spikes burst out and stabbed into the Full Gauntlet. Kendo felt them break through and pierce her skin, but trusted the item to hold up and kept the punch going. With Victoria essentially stuck into her, Kendo veered to the right and slammed her rival into the cliff, crushing her between the stone wall and her metal fist.

“You just can’t stay down, huh?” Kendo asked, breathing heavily.

“Says the pot to the kettle,” Victoria replied. “It looks like you’ve already doomed your little glove.”

“Yeah, I figured you’d be the one to wreck it.”

“Less than two minutes, Itsuka!” they heard Monoma yell. “Make sure you finish her off flashily! Show off a bit!”

“The only flashy one here is me!” Victoria claimed. She slipped her leg from the wall and, after growing sharp gems along it, swung it into Kendo’s stomach. The attack made Kendo’s hold falter
long enough for Victoria to escape and start reforming her armor. “If anyone’s going to give this battle a flashy finish, it’ll be me.”

“Just try it,” Kendo dared. She enlarged her other hand and put it up with the other. Blood was still dripping from them, but Kendo didn’t feel the pain. She smiled, matching the one Victoria had as well, and both girls readied themselves for a final clash.

Finally, they moved. Rushing to the middle, they began a ferocious exchange of blows. Shards of diamond and scraps of red metal went flying in every direction as they tore into one another. Time went flying by as their high-speed exchange continued until the final moments before the buzzer would sound.

“Now, Diamond Megaton!” A giant arm of gemstone grew over Victoria’s own arm, dwarfing even Kendo’s fist in size. Kendo didn’t shy away, however, and raised her armored hand.

“C’mere, Vicky!” The attacks slammed into each other, causing a stalemate of power for just a moment. It wasn’t long though, before the diamond cracked apart, shattering away and leaving Victoria stunned and defenseless. Kendo stepped forward onto a giant chunk of the diamond, pushed off, and spun forward in the air while holding her hands together. “Meteooooooooooor…” In the very last seconds of their fight, Kendo descended from the sky and slammed her fists down into Victoria, who could only block in response. “SLEDGEHAMMEEEEEEEEEEER!”

Victoria was driven into the ground like a railroad spike. The impact of that one spot sent a crack ripping across the cliff. As the rest of the students on Kendo’s level back away, the cliff broke apart and tore away from the crack, crumbling into giant rubble.

“AVALAAAAANCHE!” Tetsutetsu screamed while laughing hysterically. “HOLY SHIT! YOU FUCKING BURIED HER!”

The rubble slid and tumbled down the cliff, booming all the while. Ibara used her vines to grab everyone on the grass and hoisted them all into the air with her, using her vines as stilts. “Oh, my good Lord!” she blurted out.

“AMAZING!” Monoma yelled out. “MAGNIFICENT! I’ve fallen in love with you all over again!”

When the rockslide subsided, Kendo was stood on the new edge of the cliff. She spotted Victoria in among the rubble, somehow still twitching and trying to move. When the buzzer finally came, she gave up and stop moving, seemingly slipping into unconsciousness. Looking over her handiwork and proof of her strength, Kendo couldn’t help herself. She smiled and raised her armored fist into the air. “How’s that for a flashy end?”

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