When It Surfaced

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When the doctor told his mother that his Quirk was likely never to surface, Midoriya Izuku couldn’t believe what he was hearing. It’s impossible for a Quirk to stay dormant for that long, right? Right? But, deep down, he knew that it was true. That would explain why he wasn’t able to use telekinesis like his mother, or fire breathing like his absent father. He had no joint in his pinky toe, he practiced pulling in objects with the many All Might figurines on his dresser, and even tried setting a twig on fire. So why didn’t he have a Quirk like the rest of the kids his age?

OR Midoriya Izuku is a very late bloomer, Bakugou Katsuki is a very bitter bean, and All Might just wants his boys to get along.
When the doctor told his mother that his Quirk was likely never to surface, Midoriya Izuku couldn’t believe what he was hearing. It’s impossible for a Quirk to stay dormant for that long, right? Right? But, deep down, he knew that it was true. That would explain why he wasn’t able to use telekinesis like his mother, or fire breathing like his absent father. He had no joint in his pinky toe, he practiced pulling in objects with the many All Might figurines on his dresser, and even tried setting a twig on fire. So why didn’t he have a Quirk like the rest of the kids his age?

*He might as well been born Quirkless.*

He was thrown into a world of pity and anger, bullying and isolation. His best friend left in search of better, stronger friends, leaving him behind with nothing more than a cold stare of indifference. Soon, the happy-go-lucky kid that everyone used to know was turned into a silent, hopeless shell of his former self. And no one did anything about it.

Several years passed by in what seemed to be slow-motion for Midoriya. He was used to every name in the book by now, *Useless* and *Quirkless* being some of them. His mom, Inko, tried her best to help, but nothing seemed to make her son smile anymore. He lived because he had to, ate because he needed to, and carried on. Bakugou no longer talked to him, which was a blessing and a stab in the back at the same time.

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Midoriya walked down the empty street, observing the sunset with quiet interest. It was utterly silent in the evening where he walked in order to get home. It’s longer, but away from the jeers of his classmates. He clutched the strap of his backpack tighter with the thought of them and walked into the dark tunnel ahead, blocking his sight of the sky. With a sigh, Midoriya returned his gaze to the ground, watching as his feet stepped in puddles collected from the rain.

Suddenly, a twisting feeling settled deep in his gut. Something didn’t feel right. The boy quickened his steps, shooting backward glances every now and then. He nearly reached the end of the tunnel when something *slimy* grabbed his shoulder, whirling him around so fast he dropped the books in his hands.

There, lurking over him, was a large green monster entirely made from mud. A sadistic grin and two round eyes shone in the dark tunnel, and before Midoriya knew it, he’s being enveloped. Mud crept into his mouth and nose, blocking his air as he struggled helplessly against this villain. Panic set in, then asphyxiation. Tears were running down his cheeks and saliva dribbled past his lips as he choked on whatever was trying to get through.

“Don’t worry,” the monster laughed, “I’m just hijacking your body. Calm down. It’ll only hurt for about 45 seconds, then it’ll be over.”

Of course, that did nothing to calm Midoriya’s panicking mind; instead, he just fought harder. He didn’t want to go just yet. But a voice in the back of his head said otherwise: *Didn’t you want this to happen? You don’t have a functioning quirk, you’re friendless, and your mom is ashamed of you. You might as well die, right?*
Finally, Midoriya went still. Something in his heart hurt, regret maybe, but the voice got to him. Maybe it would be best for him to slip away and become just another casualty in a world of heroes and villains. In another life, he would be happy. Black spots filled the edges of his vision and the pain in his lungs faded into a dull ache. \textit{I'm sorry, Mom. I'm so, so sorry.}

Then a voice appeared, so faint in his ears, and all hell broke loose. The monster, Sludge Villain, Midoriya recognized, was instantly blown to pieces with a gust of wind. \textit{What the?} Blown back with him, Izuku smacked his head on the side of the tunnel, promptly knocking him out.

Midoriya regained consciousness when he felt a tapping on his cheek. “Kid? Come on, wake up kid!” A soft, but familiar voice talked to him. It’s so familiar, but it’s stuck on the tip of his tongue . . .

Opening his eyes, it took Midoriya a while to clear his vision. And when it did, he has to take a double take. All Might, his hero and \textit{inspiration} was crouching next to him with a nervous look on his face. Nerves kicked into overdrive and Midoriya scrambled to his feet, stumbling over his words. “Oh my gosh, it’s you! It’s \textit{really} you!” He exclaimed, covering his mouth with his hands. He felt as though he could pass out again.

He hadn’t smiled like that in a very long time. Then he was told that he couldn’t become a hero.

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It seemed that the list of misfortunes involving Midoriya Izuku had no end. Because of him, Sludge Villain escaped and was holding his ex-best friend captive. He stood there, watching as Kacchan—Bakugou, now--struggled with the mud around his nose and mouth. No one was doing anything about it. Not even the pro-heroes could do anything, since Bakugou’s explosions were too dangerous. So here they were, standing there, \textit{watching} as the blond began to suffocate.

Midoriya’s heart began to hammer against his chest, and as much as he hated Bakugou for leaving him, he couldn’t allow him to die. So, in a moment of pure stupidity, he dove past the line of pro-heroes and into the fray. Ignoring the baffled yells of the adults, he rushed through the sludge and fire and smoke. Clutching his backpack with one hand, Izuku threw it at the villain, distracting him long enough to climb on him and dig the boy out. Something in his hand was tingling, aching to be released, so in pure instinct, Izuku outstretched his hand and \textit{pulled}.

Bakugou was free with a yelp of surprise, pulled by an invisible force. Midoriya could only look at his hand with amazement before he was smacked aside by the villain in a fit of rage. He hit the wall with a thump, a pained groan forcing past his mouth. Something warm trickled over his lips, the bitter taste of copper filled Izuku’s mouth. Lifting a shaky hand to his nose, Midoriya could immediately feel blood rushing from his nose. His head pounded and he couldn’t move from his spot on the ground. The villain approached him, his sharp teeth curled into a smile, as he reached a hand toward him.

A large explosion blew a piece of the arm clean off. Wind and smoke billowed Izuku further into the wall, which forced him to cover his eyes with his arms. A figure stood in front of him, flames igniting from their hands. “Oi, Deku! Get up, you useless son of a bitch!”

\textit{Kacchan}. He knows it’s him, and with renewed strength, he shakily stood. Midoriya’s head was pounding, colors spun in an endless whirl as blood ran freely from his nose. He’s pretty sure that his telekinesis wasn’t strong enough to bring down Sludge Villain, but Bakugou’s determination forced his legs to bear the weight of his body. He leaned against the wall for needed support, but vertigo sent him straight back down.
Midoriya heard an irritated sigh, then hands yanked him to his feet. To his disbelief, Bakugou wrapped his arm around his shoulders and offered a supporting weight. If they weren’t in danger, Midoriya would have definitely lost his mind. Instead, he gratefully accepted his help—even though it’s surprising and completely out-of-character. Bakugou, with another exasperated sigh, helped Izuku through the smoke and into the arms of a pro-hero nearby. Midoriya’s mind was already cloudy with his headache, but Bakugou’s unexpected kindness just muddled things further.

Faintly, Midoriya could remember All Might returning to finish the job. Though, in his dizzy spell, he couldn’t remember anything that was said to him other than All Might asking how he felt. His nose finally stopped bleeding, yet his headache still pressed against his skull. Maybe it was his Quirk? It didn’t hurt until he pulled Bakugou out of the slime.

“All Midoriya? Did you hear me?” All Might asked him. Izuku snapped out of his thoughts and offered All Might an apologetic smile.

“Sorry, sir. I was distracted. What were you saying?” He scratched the back of his neck with a nervous laugh. All Might shook his head, but a large smile rested on his face.

“I just wanted to say how much you inspired me today. When you jumped in to help Young Bakugou—which, might I add, was a stupid thing to do—you sparked something in me that made me activate my Quirk once more. The look in your eyes was pure determination. And, in that moment, I knew.” All Might looked down at him, his hollow eyes managed to shine with pride. “You can be a hero.”

Tears welled up in Midoriya’s eyes, threatening to spill as he looked at his shoelaces. All his life, he had so much doubt that he’d ever become a hero. Not only that, but Bakugou rubbed more salt in the wound with the talk of being Quirkless. He was never inspired to do better by anyone but his mother, but even her voice held sadness behind the fake cheerfulness. He finally had someone outright tell him that he could, and it was from his idol, no less.

“Thank you,” he whispered. “I can’t tell you how much I needed to hear that.” It didn’t matter about the taunts and the pity, the doubt and the tears. All Might believed in him and that’s all he could ask for.

“Of course, my boy. Though, I do have to ask you something. I thought you said that you didn’t have a Quirk?” The thin man tilted his head to the side, much like a dog when it’s confused. Midoriya smiled behind his hand when he made the connection, but then he remembered that he actually had to answer his question.

“I thought so, too. I mean, the doctors always told me that my quirk was dormant and would probably never appear. So I’m as surprised as you, I suppose.” Izuku faced forward, locking his green eyes with red ones from a distance. “Kacchan?”

Bakugou was clearly waiting for him at the end of the street, yet he didn’t respond to Midoriya’s call. All Might looked at the boy, then back at Midoriya. “Well, Young Midoriya, I think it’s time for me to go. It seems you have someone to take you home.” He smiled at the boy, patting his shoulder. “I’ll see you soon?”

Realizing that it was a question, Midoriya rapidly nodded his head. “Of course! Now that I have my quirk, I’m considering applying for UA again. I just hope I can make it in.” All Might’s smile only got wider.

“We’ll just have to see, my boy! I have the utmost faith in you.” And with that, he walked away, past Bakugou and disappeared down a corner. Once All Might was out of sight, Bakugou immediately
approached.

His head was low and his hair covered his face. “So, care to tell me what the hell that was about?” Despite his naturally loud voice, his tone didn't actually sound angry. Instead, he sounded curious.

There was no way that Midoriya could tell him that he was talking to All Might. One: he wouldn’t believe him. Two: he absolutely had to keep his secret. He promised the hero that he would, and Izuku doesn’t break his promises. “A family friend of mine. He’s really close to my mom.”

Bakugou raised his brow, but doesn’t press the matter. Instead, he raised his head and looked at Midoriya straight on. “Look, I don’t want you to think that I’m a damn damsel in distress. Next time you try and save me, I’ll kill you. Got it?” His tone doesn’t have a hint of malice however, so Midoriya smiled at him and nodded.

“Sure thing. Sorry, Kacchan.” He said and walked ahead, leaving a wide-eyed Bakugou behind him. It took the boy a few moments to snap out of it and catch up to Izuku, and they both walked in silence. It gave Midoriya enough time to think about today and how much changed for him. He almost died, then he was saved by All Might, and then after that, he saved his bully with the quirk that just now decided to surface. He would definitely need some time to think when he got home.

When they finally got to the front of his apartment complex, Midoriya didn’t know what to say. Should he say goodbye? Or maybe he should just leave? Before he could even finish thinking, Bakugou cleared his throat. “And Deku?”

Midoriya had to turn around in order to face him, since Bakugou kept his distance from the house. “Yeah?” He answered, a small part of him still in disbelief that Bakugou was even talking with him to begin with.

“You have to show me that quirk when you get better, you piece of shit.” He bit out, turned his heel, and walked away with nothing more than a brief wave. Honestly, if Midoriya wasn’t hellbent on passing out on his bed, he would have definitely passed out now. Did Bakugou really tell him to feel better, albeit in a very bitter tone? This day just got stranger and stranger.

Midoriya slowly worked his way up the stairs to get to the door, fumbling with the keys as he tried to get in. He could smell dinner through the cracks of the door, which urged him on even more. Izuku walked into the entranceway, slipping off his shoes on the way to the living room. “Mom, I’m home!”

Inko then came barreling down the hall, embracing her son tightly in her arms. Her eyebrows were knit in worry as she observed the burns and bloodstains on his uniform. She shook her head, straightening out the wrinkles in his shirt. Finally, she looked at him dead in the eye. “You’ve got ten seconds to explain why you are late and covered in blood.”

Izuku took in a deep breath, and the words just started tumbling out.

It felt good to finally relieve everything off of his chest. Izuku had been bottling up everything for so long that he could feel the tension between his mother and him. And as much as he hated it, he couldn't bring himself to explain why he was acting the way he was.

Which was why the news of him developing a quirk—a variation of his mother's, no less—was music to Inko’s ears. She covered her mouth with watery eyes, and her signature red face began to spread across her cheeks. Whenever Inko was about to cry, her ears always flushed red; Midoriya also had a similar crying face, but he luckily had less sensitive skin. His mom wrapped her arms
around him in a tight hug, burying her face in his shoulder.

Teary-eyed himself, Midoriya rubbed her back and didn’t say anything until she calmed down. He’s pretty sure if he tried, his voice would crack. When her shoulders finally stopped shaking, Midoriya cleared his throat and pulled away. His mom’s face was still flushed, but now with a grin.

“I’m so happy for you, Izuku. Oh, my baby, I’m so proud.” She grabbed his hand and lead him to the kitchen. “But this quirk of yours isn’t something to take lightly. When I developed my quirk, I was able to gradually improve due to my young age. But you’re fourteen, and are just now getting used to it. Your body and mind aren’t used to the strain.”

That made sense. Midoriya’s headache and nosebleed were likely from overexertion. “What can I do to improve?” He asked, following his beaming mother to the sink. She wet a paper towel and wiped the dried blood from his face.

She hummed in thought, thinking back to her childhood years. “Well, you could start with something light. I practiced on paper and other things.” She tossed the bloodstained towel in the garbage and tugged at Izuku’s shirt. He pulled it over his shoulders and handed it to her. “Or, since you already managed to pull Katsuki, you could work on heavier objects in small increments. I don’t want to see you pushing yourself, you hear?” Her stern gaze never failed to scare the hell out of him, so Izuku just nodded.

He leaned back on the counter, propping up his elbows. “Loud and clear, mom.”

“Good. Now, are you hungry? I was just about to make dinner.” She asked, setting his shirt on the edge of the sink. Izuku yawned behind his hand, shaking his head slightly. He was hungry, but right now, all he wanted was to be alone and think.

“No, I’m good. Sleep would be great.” He mused, sitting up again. Inko nodded her head in understanding and pressed a kiss to his temple.

“Good night, son. I’ll see you in the morning.” She murmured in his hair, which was tangled and covered in dirt. He’d definitely have to shower before he slept.

He kissed her cheek in response, muttering a quick g’night before he headed up the stairs to his room. He took in the sight, relieved to be back in a place that he considered a sanctuary for his thoughts. Posters of All Might lined the walls. A bookshelf filled with old manga and hero books was pressed against the wall in front of his bed. And to think a few hours ago, he would have never come back to this place. He would have been dead, and god, he wanted to be. Guilt and shame settled deep in his stomach, but he squeezed his eyes shut and grabbed his pajamas from his dresser. Izuku headed into the bathroom and looked at himself in the mirror.

He looked terrible, his face and chest riddled with scrapes and bruises. Eyes were sunken in and dark circles made their home under them, but what’s worse was that his arms and legs were thin. Izuku’s body frame had always been on the frail side, but with the stress and frustration, his body had become dangerously thin. He could see the faint outlines of ribs and his collarbone jutted out. With a gulp of much needed air, Izuku turned away and shedded the rest of his clothes.

The water felt better against his skin than his shirt, so he relished in the warmth that follows. Blood mixed with the water as pink washed down the drain, and Izuku scrubbed away the grime from his hair. With a sigh of content, he leaned forward and presses his hands against the tile, ducking his head low to let the water run down his back. He needed this.

After his shower, Midoriya shuffled into his room and flopped rather indignantly on his bed. A lot of
things were running through his head right now, but he tried desperately to shut them out. All he wanted to do is sleep and start a new day.

And eventually, as he shut his eyes and tried to fall asleep, he did.

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The teasing from Bakugou stopped, but others still bullied him. Bakugou Katsuki didn't look at him the next day, or the day after that. Izuku began to wonder if he did something wrong.

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It was four o’clock in the morning and someone was throwing rocks at Midoriya’s window. At first, he tried to muffle the noise with his bedsheets. Then when that didn't work, he put in his earbuds and played music, yet the ping of the windows being tapped eventually annoyed him enough to investigate. Izuku groggily got out of bed, too tired to even put on a shirt, and pulled the curtains open. At first, it was too dark to see anything since the streetlights in front of his house had long went out, but then he saw the silhouette of a muscular man with his hands on his hips. That’s strange, it’s as if a giant All Might figurine is standing in front of his apartment. Wait.

“All Might?” Midoriya exclaimed and scrambled to open the latch. When he finally did, a rock flew towards his forehead and hit him, drawing out a groan from the boy.

“I'm so sorry, my boy! I didn't see you there.” he boomed and Izuku had half a mind to shush him so he didn't wake up the whole neighborhood. He doubted that seeing the Number One Hero in front of his apartment complex would go down well.

Instead, he settled for asking him why he was outside at four. “What are you doing here so early? I have school, you know!”

The idol just laughed, throwing his head back as his shoulders shook. “You, Young Midoriya, are going to be training with me to get into UA!”

Wait, training with All Might for a chance to get into Yuuei? Was he still dreaming? “Training? For Yuuei, which is a year away, and I just developed my Quirk, so the chances of me passing are very low, and I'm rambling, I'm so sorry.” He clamped his mouth shut, embarrassed.

“Worry not, my boy! By the time the entrance exams come, you’ll be ready to go! I have a feeling that you’ll do great!” All Might responded. “Hurry down, now: we’re losing precious time!”

“Right. Like waking up at four to train is a normal thing to do.” Midoriya muttered to himself before closing the window, tossing his pajamas in the basket and fishing out his old workout clothes. They were a bit too loose for his comfort, but it was better than nothing. He put on his worn red sneakers and tiptoed down the stairs toward the door.

The air was still warm from the summer air when Izuku stepped out into the street. All Might greeted him at the street light and lead him down toward the beach. Last time he was there, garbage and other junk littered the sand, so why are they going there? The sound of waves lolling on the shore came to his ears, and Izuku was brought back to simpler times with his mom. They would always go to the beach to walk and enjoy the scenery, but ever since Inko got a new job as a nurse, she’d been unable to guarantee a time to dedicate to her son.

“Oh, there you are Young Bakugou! I was wondering if you'd show.” All Might said cheerfully, and that tore Midoriya from his thoughts. No way. Kacchan is here?
Sure enough, the angry blonde was staring off into the horizon with a scowl. He didn't face them yet, but Izuku wondered if Bakugou even knew that he was coming to train. He definitely wouldn't have shown up if he did. He was dressed in his black tank top with mirroring shorts and his hair was as unkempt as ever, but something about Bakugou had Izuku looking his way. He looked *tired*, which was something the boy hated to outwardly express. He would always call it a weakness and yelled at anyone who called him out for feeling any sort of fatigue.

Bakugou scoffed quietly, tilting his head towards the two. His eyes narrowed slightly at Midoriya, a silent glare, but didn't say anything. Instead, he looked up at All Might and gave a wide grin. “And miss out on training? *There's no other place I'd rather be.*”

A chill went down Midoriya's spine when the grin was directed towards him, a murderous glint in Bakugou’s eyes. He would have shrunk back if not for the large hand on his shoulder that held him in place. All Might chuckled, patting Midoriya on the back before addressing why they are here.

“You two have caught my eye, and I believe that there is potential within you both. Young Bakugou, your fiery personality and impressive capabilities can be put to good use with proper training. And Midoriya,” the man turned his attention onto the boy, “your quirk has just resurfaced and needs to be expended as early as possible. With any late quirk, the user must learn to control it before it deals physical and mental damage.”

“My headaches and nosebleeds were prime examples.” Midoriya nodded, pushing down the fear of Bakugou to make room for the excitement of working with the Number One Hero. It isn't every day that the Symbol of Peace dragged someone out at the break of dawn to train them. He would take full advantage of his kindness, it would be idiotic not to.

All Might flashed him a grin, before pushing him towards Bakugou. They both stood rather awkwardly next to each other. “Now, with the task at hand. This beach has been tainted with litter and other trash for years with no one even batting an eye. I will divide the shore in two, one side for muscular endurance and the other for quirk progression. You both are tasked with clearing the beach in ten months’ time, in perfect accordance with the UA entrance exams.”

Bakugou cracked his knuckles with a smirk. “Sounds easy enough.”

“Ah, it would, wouldn't it? Only there's a catch. You both have to work *together* to complete it. Teamwork is something that you both need to work on, and I'd be a fool not to teach it to you now.” All Might crossed his arms and looked at them with shadowed eyes.

“What?” They both exclaimed at once, equal expressions of shock on their faces. Bakugou was always a lone wolf when it came to training, snapping at anyone who tried to come into his personal space. And with Izuku, the thought of working beside his childhood friend who *despised him* both scared him and gave him hope. Not to mention how weak he was right now both with his quirk and physique. He'd surely let Bakugou down.

But All Might simply looked at them with his usual smile. “Now, if I had any doubts that you two would succeed, I wouldn’t have instructed you to do it! You two could become something *more*, don’t you think?”

Izuku couldn’t help but direct his attention to Bakugou to see his reaction to all this. His face was void of any emotion, but his fingers tapped together in a rhythm, which was a telltale sign that Bakugou was thinking about it. Ever since he was little, he had the habit to wipe his face of emotions and hide his tapping fingers from anyone so that he fooled everyone into thinking that he was clear minded. In truth, Bakugou calculated everything and anything within his head at a mile a minute, going through any possible outcome quickly before making his move. It took months for Izuku to
figure out that Bakugou did that, but he never told him that he knew.

“Okay. We’ll do it.” Bakugou shoved his hands in his pocket, shielding his tie from Izuku’s prying eyes. “But don’t blame me if we don’t get anything done because of this nerd.” He pointed at Izuku with his thumb, an exasperated look on his face.

“I won’t let you down.” Midoriya muttered, mustering enough courage to look him in the eyes. Red met green as they stared at each other, an unspoken challenge drifting between them. They weren’t going to give up, not on this once in a lifetime opportunity. So Midoriya looked out into the pile of trash with a nervous, albeit determined, grin. He wasn’t going to give up. He’d put his body through hell before ever deciding to raise the white flag.

“Of course you won’t, boy! Now, for the first pile,” All Might gestured to the rubble, “this will be the physique trial. You both will have to carry or drag the items in order for me to see the horizon. Then, the second trial will begin. Ready?”

Bakugou clenched his fists, a wicked grin plastered on his face. Beside him, Izuku offered a more mild smile, tentatively inching toward the pile. He could feel the heat of Bakugou beside him, accentuated by the excited sparks that burst from his palms, and used it to fuel his own determination. It would be difficult, both working together and being able to physically move the trash, but Izuku’s days of giving up and being the pushover were over. He would strive to be better. He *had* to be better.

“Begin!”

Chapter End Notes

Feedback is very appreciated! This is the first fanfic that I've posted of BNHA (lol, I'm VERY behind on the bandwagon) so I'd love to see how you like it! I wanted to add a twist, you know? ANYWAY, leave a comment and Kudos if you liked it! I'll try and update every week (no promises though)! Also, *shameless plug in* my Tumblr is eeriegrove but like this fic, it's very new! I'd love to see you there! (Also, I am combining two chapters to form a bigger chapter, because I'm unhappy with how short they are!)
Izuku wished he had eaten something before leaving. His stomach growled every other minute, which didn’t go unnoticed by Bakugou as they shouldered a significantly heavier box. Bakugou was in the front, bearing the brunt of the weight as Izuku lagged behind, much to Bakugou’s disapproval.

“It’s hard enough that I have to deal with your ass, but your stomach growling every damn second is really getting on my nerves,” he snapped. Bakugou set down the box with a huff before turning to Midoriya, a harsh scowl on his face. “I don’t even know what All Might sees in you; I mean, look at yourself! You’re as thin as a twig and your quirk is weak. You’d have better luck in a different high school.”

“Well, that’s harsh,” Izuku thought to himself. It wasn’t his fault that he caught the attention of the hero, but he had a feeling why. When Midoriya jumped in to save Bakugou, he moved on his own accord, despite him believing that he had no quirk. His selflessness showed that he had the makings of a hero, and the fact that he had a quirk now increased his chances. But his physique was a real problem. The fact that his ribs showed unnaturally proved that Izuku’s eating habits weren’t healthy and that he needed to get back on track soon. He feared what would happen if he continued to skip meals due to stress.

“That’s rude, Kacchan.” Midoriya murmured, stretching out his arms to alleviate the soreness.

“It’s the truth. You’ll never be a hero if you're like that.” he replied, heading back to the pile to get the next item. Izuku stayed behind, contemplating the meaning behind his words. “Catch up, you idiot. I can't do all the work around here, though I wish I could.”

With a sigh, Izuku trailed behind him, forcing his sore body forward. They’d been at it for an hour now, the clock at five in the morning. All Might offered to bring them water, but they both denied it. Bakugou wasn't thirsty and Midoriya didn't want to slow him down. Now though, he wished he had taken up the offer. Now that the sun was rising, the heat was strong on his back. If it wasn't for the occasional breeze from the ocean, he was sure that he wouldn't have been able to continue for much longer.

The silence that the boys shared was awkward and antagonistic. Bakugou just wanted to finish the section and go home to get ready for school, and while Midoriya wanted the same thing, he also wanted to to be able to mend the pieces of their broken friendship. He knew that it wouldn't be fixed immediately, Bakugou Katsuki was the most stubborn person he's ever met, but as soon as he saw Midoriya as an equal, he hoped he’d begin to treat him better. Well, at least a little better.

Finally, Midoriya couldn't stand it anymore. “Hey Kacchan?” he spoke up, helping the boy with another object. He couldn't help but notice that the weight was more evenly distributed now instead of Bakugou lifting more.
All he got as a response was a short hum. They walked along the path to where they were supposed to dump the trash.

“When do you think we’ll be done today?” Midoriya went for something neutral. If he asked about something personal, Bakugou wouldn’t respond and would close up. That type of conversation would have to wait.

At first, Bakugou didn’t say anything. They just continued walking back and forth with garbage in their hands. Midoriya was about to give up when he finally got a response. “Probably in another hour.” It was short and held his usual bite, but it was an answer nonetheless.

“Oh thank goodness, because I don't think I could do this for long time. Plus I have to get ready for school, and my mom wakes up soon, and once she realizes that I'm out of the house, I'll be through, and--”

“Oh, shut up will you? I don't know if your rambling is annoying or freaky. Maybe both.” Bakugou snapped, shutting Midoriya up quickly. He hadn't even realized that he was beginning to ramble. Well, there goes my progress with Bakugou.

“Sorry.” Midoriya stuttered and lowered his gaze to the sand.

“What kind of son doesn't tell his mother where he is, anyway? I thought you were a goody two shoes.” Bakugou huffed, gesturing to a cardboard box to the side. “Pick that up and put shit in it.”

Izuku did what he was told, filling the box to the rim with the loose garbage that he could find. Bakugou did the same, only there was more piled in his box. “Well, uh, Mom would kill me if she knew that I was training instead of sleeping. Plus she didn't take the villain attack too well.”

“Psh, Auntie Inko didn't ground your useless ass for that? My old hag threatened to homeschool me instead of me going to Yuuei.” They walked closer together, still a few feet apart, but definitely closer. “She always overreacts.”

Izuku laughed softly, grateful for whatever caused Bakugou to be in a talkative mood. “Oh tell me about it. Mom put on her 'you have one minute to tell me what the hell is going on' voice as soon as I walked into the door. I thought I saw a devil.”

That drew out a surprised laugh from Bakugou, and he quickly covered it with a cough. “She should've grounded you for your shitty stunt that you pulled. I had it under control.”

No you didn't. “Yeah, sorry.” Midoriya trailed off, spying something in the pile that he was holding. It was dirty, but he could clearly see the two tufts of hair. It was an old All Might figurine, and someone had thrown it out. “Woah, no way.”

“What, stupid Deku?” he peered over, trying to see what Izuku was trying to dig up. He tried to keep his face impassive, but his red eyes sparkled with something similar to curiosity. Midoriya pulled the figure out gently, brushing off the the dirt with his hands. It needed a lot of work, but it was intact.

“It's one of the first All Might figurines to be released in the public! It looks like it’s been here for years.” Izuku didn’t bother to hide his awe and excitement, handling the figurine like a precious newborn. He thumbed the date etched into the bottom, confirming his theory. It was made twelve years ago, back when the Symbol of Peace was first starting to become a worldwide hero. It was a miracle that it was even recognizable, judging by how old it was.

“Tch, you’re such a nerd.” He reached for the figurine, likely trying to hold it for himself, but the motion just reminded Izuku of his hero journal and how it was burnt from his hands. He
unconsciously flinched away, hiding it in his chest with both hands. For a second, Bakugou looked genuinely shocked, before he scoffed and walked past him, picking up his box and leaving Midoriya behind. Guilt crept into Izuku, but he shook it off. *No, it was justified. He’s been destroying my things ever since his quirk manifested, so why wouldn’t I be cautious?*

But his interest in the figurine was forgotten, and with a sigh, he put it back in the pile. Besides, he wouldn’t have enough time to clean and fix it up. It would just be a waste of space among all of his other figurines on his bookshelf. He carried it back to the dumping spot and set it down, looking at the figure with a sad frown before turning back to help Bakugou with their task.

As the hour passed, he didn’t notice that the figurine was nowhere in sight, as if it had been removed…

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Sneaking back into his apartment was harder than sneaking out. The sun was already out, which meant that his mom would be waking up any minute. Once she saw that he was covered in dirt, sand and sweat, it was over. So when he turned the spare key into the door and opened it with bated breath, expecting the disappointed face of his mother, he was surprised to see that the curtains were still closed from last night. That meant that his mom was still tucked away in bed or at least getting ready for work. Izuku crept up the stairs, skipping the steps that he knew creaked, and snuck into his room without a problem. He’d take a shower soon, but him being up this early would likely be suspicious, so he waited until he heard Inko roam the house. Then, grabbing his school uniform from his closet, he trudged into the bathroom and immediately peeled his clothes off. He was already feeling sore, so he could imagine how he would feel later on.

A small knock interrupted Midoriya’s thoughts, and he opens the door just a crack. “Hey honey. How are you feeling this morning?” she asked him, peering up at him with a sad smile.

Izuku felt bad that he had to lie to her about the training, but it was something that he wanted to do. She wouldn’t let him continue with it, and then he would never get into UA. “Just a little sore, Mom. My headache is gone, too. I’m just really hungry.” he wasn’t lying about any of that, but he purposely left out the fact that the reason why he was sore was because he spent three hours lifting heavy equipment.

She nodded. “I would expect as much. You didn’t eat dinner, after all! How will you get into UA without eating your proper meals? I’ll make your favorite omelet.” she fussed, as per usual, but Izuku was grateful nonetheless. Where would he be without his mom?

“Thanks Mom, love you.” he said with a bright smile, and Inko nearly cried from the sight. It’d been years since Midoriya had smiled that way, and seeing him bright and early with that face nearly made her hop around in joy. She happily walked downstairs, and Izuku shut the door, starting the shower and waiting for it to heat up. He avoided looking at the mirror today.

After the refreshing shower, Izuku finally noticed the time. He was going to be late for school if he didn’t get a move on, so he quickly got dressed and hustled downstairs. His mother was already setting the plates down on the table when he got there, and he sat down with a small smile. The omelet looked delicious as always.

They ate in comfortable silence until Midoriya finished, quickly wiping his mouth with his sleeve and standing abruptly. “Thanks for the meal, Mom! I have to go before I’m late.” He gathered his things, stopping at the door to wait for his mother. She pressed a kiss to his cheek with a smile, before waving goodbye. Izuku closed the door behind him and walked until he was out of sight, before jogging to school. If he got to school before the first bell, he’d avoid the attention of everyone
else. That was his plan.

However, things for Izuku never really went according to plan. When he walked past the gate, the haunting sound of the bell drew in ice cold dread into his system. It wouldn’t be long until they came along. Izuku kept his head low as he traveled the halls, but a harsh grip on his arm dragged him into the nearby lockers with a loud bang. Oh crap, of course they’d find me. One of the lackeys snickered beside Izuku.

“Well, look at what we have here! Midoriya, late to class? Wow, today must not be a good day for you!” Ren, a brazen student with a powerful electric quirk, taunted him. He pinned him to the locker with a smirk, but not like how Bakugou did. With Bakugou, he wouldn’t think of him as anything worth putting his hands on, instead using his words to hurt him. But with Ren? He’d give Izuku as many bruises as he wanted, and shock him into tears. All because he was “quirkless.”

Ren inched his hands closer to Izuku’s skin, his hands enveloped in small bouts of lightning. If that came in contact with him, it would definitely hurt. Izuku squirmed, trying to fight off his hands, but more came to hold him down in place.

“A loser like you needs to know his place!” Ren spat, and Izuku decided that he had enough of the words thrown at him. He had enough of the pain and suffering caused by others just because he was different.

So, with gritted teeth, he pushed.

Izuku pushed Ren back with his telekinesis, his hand outstretched. Ren was heavier than Bakugou, so the amount of force that he had to put in was significantly more than when he had to pull Bakugou from the villain. Ren was sent flying against the wall with a surprised grunt, sliding down to the ground with a daze. His loyal followers immediately released Midoriya and helped Ren to his feet.

While they were distracted, Izuku struggled to stay on his feet, dizziness preventing him from going far. His nose was dripping blood, he could taste it at that point, and it wouldn’t be long until Ren snapped out of his little trance. With a hand on the wall for support, Izuku tried to get away, at least to another classroom to get help, when a strong current of electricity pulsed throughout his body. He collapsed to his knees, face scrunched up in pain as Ren held onto his wrist, sending more and more shocks to Izuku’s skin. He could feel his skin around his wrist begin to burn.

“So, it looks like little Midoriya here has the guts to bring his quirk into this! Well, lucky you, I guess! You finally got what you wanted!” He turned Izuku around, ceasing his attack with his quirk. Ren’s usual playful smirk was replaced with a scowl, and Izuku genuinely feared for his life. Ren was going to kill him. He didn’t even see the fist until it collided with his jaw, sending Midoriya sprawling to the floor with a grunt. In no time at all, Ren was on top of him, punching the daylights out of Midoriya with no consideration of how far he went. His lackeys were hesitant, muttering to themselves on what they were going to do.

Izuku tried desperately to push him off, not just with his quirk, but he was only successful in pissing Ren off more. He shielded his face with his arms, but it was only a matter of time until he was in so much pain that he could no longer hold up his hands. Instead, they fell to the sides of his head while Ren just continued hitting, his anger overtaking common sense. Midoriya’s vision began to blur at the edges, blood pooling at the back of his throat when Ren got a lucky hit in on his cheek, causing him to bite his own tongue.
Tears built up in the corners of his eyes, and Midoriya wished he was anywhere but there. *Why isn’t anyone doing anything to help me? I don’t deserve this!*

Suddenly, someone dragged Ren away and another person carefully approached Izuku. A warm hand rested on his face, and his wounds slowly began to feel better under the warmth. He was still bleeding and in the back of his mind, he could still feel the pain, but it felt a lot better. However, Izuku’s consciousness began to waver, and he groaned as the hand pinched his cheek.

“Sorry Midoriya, but you can’t fall asleep right now! The nurse is on her way, and she’ll help you, okay? My quirk can only make you feel painless for a short time.” A girl’s voice rang in his head, echoing and cutting out at times. He cracked his eyes open to see a girl in the same uniform as him, and she looked like she was from his class. He tried to thank her, but all that came out was a gargle as he spat out blood, coughing to the side so he didn’t get any on her. She soothed him by resting her hand on his head, but her eyes were elsewhere, watching something. Curious, Midoriya slowly craned his head to look too.

It was blurry further away, but he could see someone in school uniform punching what he assumed to be Ren and pushing him against the wall, holding him there. His pants were baggy and his jacket was slightly undone, and it reminded him so much of Bakugou that he nearly laughed. *As if Bakugou would come to my aid.* But if he strained to hear them, he could make out the booming voice of his hero cussing out Ren.

“You fucking idiot! I’ll kick your ass!” He spat, and after a few seconds of trying to figure out why it sounded so familiar, Midoriya realized. It was Bakugou. And he was beating the ever living shit out of Ren.

“Ka--” he coughed up more blood, and the girl shushed him.

“I wouldn’t speak. You bit your tongue pretty hard, so you’re bleeding a lot.” she told him.

“Bakugou, that’s enough! We gotta take Midoriya to the nurse.”

Surprisingly, Bakugou stopped his onslaught and simply shoved Ren to the floor. “Don’t fuck with me, Ren, or I swear to every living teacher in this hellhole that I’ll make you feel twice as much as Midoriya feels right now.” And with that, he stalked over to where Izuku was laying on his side. He crouched in front of Izuku so he could see him clearly, and in his dizzy stupor, Midoriya reached out to him. He got a hold of the edge of his sleeve, gripping it tightly as he began to cry. The pain was returning, and with that, he had to close his eyes. The lights were too much to look at.

“Alright, you carry him, I’ll run over to let her know that we’re on the way. Be gentle, you hear?” The mystery girl told Bakugou with a bite in her tone. She sounded terrifying. All she got as a response was a scoff from Bakugou before Izuku felt hands grab him, hoisting him up.

“Alright, you piece of shit. This is a one time fucking thing, you hear?” Bakugou muttered, before he moved Izuku’s arms to wrap around his neck. “I’ll give you a piggyback, but if you get blood on my uniform, I’ll kill you.” Midoriya couldn’t say anything, so he simply hummed as they walked down the halls. His head felt so heavy, so he prayed that Bakugou wouldn’t kill him as he rested his chin on his shoulder. He was just so *tired*.

“Didn’t I just--? Oi, you better not be falling asleep on me! You heard what that shitty extra just said!” Bakugou tried to shake Midoriya awake, but grogginess took over, and in a few moments, Midoriya slipped out of consciousness.

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Everything ached. Distantly, he heard the sound of someone clicking a pen and the sound of birds from a nearby window. *How pretty*. Izuku tried to move, or at least open his eyes, but he couldn’t. He was so exhausted. Who was with him? Was it the nurse? He heard the door open, and someone gasped. *It sounds like Mom.*

“--ie Inko! He’s been unconscious for an hour now, and the nurse said that he’ll begin to wake up soon. I tried to call sooner, but…” The voice sounded so foggy, and it echoed painfully against his head. Was that the nurse? She sounded a lot different than the last time he saw her.

His mother sniffed, probably crying. Izuku desperately wanted to show a sign that he was here and that he was going to be fine, but he couldn’t move. “It’s okay, I heard from your teacher. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, Katsuki. If it wasn’t for you…” her voice trailed off, getting caught in her throat. She was choking up, tears spilling from her eyes. *I want to see you, Mom. I’m sorry.*

“I, uh, yeah. No problem, Auntie. Though, could you explain to the hag why she’s about to get a call from the principal? She’ll kill me if she finds out that I got in a fight, and I think you’re the only one who can calm her down.” The voice, Bakugou’s, stuttered. He sounded flustered from the thanks.

Finally, Izuku could make a small voice from the back of his throat. He twitched his fingers, one by one, until he was able to open his eyes. Colors swirled for a moment before settling to form the ceiling. *Was it always this white?*

“Oh, Izuku! My baby, how are you feeling? Are you in pain? Is there anything I can do?” she rushed to his side, holding his hand gently. Her face was beet red from crying, and he began to cry too. How many times was he going to make his mom cry and worry about him? *Why are you such a disappointment?*

“Mom,” his voice was scratchy, “it hurts so bad.” He laughed through the tears though, just to show her that he was okay. “But I’m sure the guy who did this is feeling a whole lot worse, huh Kacchan?”

The blond looked as startled as Inko, before he hid his smile with his hand. “Oh, you bet your ass that he is.” But he stopped smiling to glare at Midoriya, the joke seemingly forgotten. “What were you thinking, using your quirk like that? You idiot.”

Inko nodded, her own glare on her face. “I agree. You promised that you wouldn’t overexert yourself, and you pushed the kid into a wall? I hardly think that was the paper that you were supposed to be practicing on. I should ground you, ya know.”

Panic set in as Izuku realized that she was absolutely correct. She should’ve grounded him when he got home that evening, but she gave him a pass. Now, he wasn’t so sure. “I’m sorry. It was instinct, and I knew when I tried to get away that it wasn’t going to work.” he rested his head against the pillow, preparing for the worse.

“But, I’m just glad that you finally stood up for yourself. These bullies have been messing with your life for years, Izu. I can’t stand to watch my only child go down that road again. It nearly made me lose you.” Izuku’s eyes widen from that. *Lose me? What did she mean by that?* “Don’t look at me like that, mister. I’ve seen your journals. You write down everything, like how you felt you didn’t…didn’t want to go on anymore.”

*Oh. So she did read those. I always wondered why they were moved around all the time. *I’m sorry.*” he could only whisper, ashamed of himself. He no longer felt that way about himself, but just hearing about it made him feel guilty.
His gaze traveled to Bakugou, where he saw the most heartbroken face he’d ever seen Bakugou make. His eyes were nearly like saucers as he stared at him, completely at a loss for words. “Well, I guess the cat’s out of the bag…?” Izuku tried to laugh it off, but it only made things more tense as Bakugou just clenched his fists and walked out of the room. No goodbyes or anything, not even to Inko.

However, not even Inko could look at him in the eyes. “I just wish you’d confide in me, Izu. You’re the only one I have left, honey.” She sounded so heartbroken, and Izuku could only nod before the tears came harder, choking him. He sobbed, sitting up in the bed to hug his mother.

“I didn’t want to worry you. I wasn’t thinking straight, and I’m so sorry. It won’t ever happen again, I promise.” Izuku said in her hair, burying his face in the sweet smell of her shampoo. “But, I have to ask. Do you know about Kacchan? How he, uh, treated me?” He was walking on thin ice here. One wrong move, and he could possibly never see Bakugou again.

“Yes. But I know how much you care for him, and today, I saw how much he cares for you, even if he doesn’t show it properly. Though, I don’t think it’s exactly easy for him to show how much he cares.” Inko murmured.

Izuku hummed in surprise. That was definitely unexpected. “What do you mean by that?”

“Honey, you and I both know that he doesn’t deal with emotions well. But it isn’t exactly his fault.” she pulled away, giving him a watery smile. “But I can’t tell you what he doesn’t want you to hear. It’s hard for him to talk about it, and I only found out about it by accident. When he’s ready, I’m sure he’ll tell you.”

Midoriya was definitely curious, but he knew when not to pry. He’d wait until Bakugou and him were able to actually have a complete conversation without an argument before asking him about it. They were already getting closer, at least, Midoriya thought that they were. Bakugou’s face before he left was something Izuku’s never seen before. I should check in with him after all this. I don’t like seeing him upset like this.

Izuku settled back into the bed with a yawn. The sun still shone brightly into the room, but Midoriya was still dead tired. His mom kissed his forehead and grabbed her things. She had to get back to work, but she would try and get off early to check in on him at home. He waved her goodbye and closed his eyes.

He’d apologize to Bakugou in the morning.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! If you enjoyed this chapter, leave Kudos and a comment to show that you did! Also, if you haven’t already, check out my tumblr 'eeriegrove' for more prompts of KatsuDeku, especially exclusive prompts that follow in the When It Surfaced AU! Again, thank you for the support and see you all next week~
Why Does This Hurt So Much?

Chapter Summary

Where Izuku lies, and ultimately pays the price for it. Twice.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for updating so late in the day! I usually post at noon, but my lazy ass decided to sleep in until 1. Oh well, here you go! Leave a Kudos and a comment to show your support, and I hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Five months passed and Izuku hadn’t been able to talk to Bakugou once. The usual brash and tempered boy was replaced by a silent, docile lookalike. In fact, the signature glare that he’d send Midoriya’s way was diluted to an empty stare, and when their eyes met, he’d immediately look to the ground. To say that it was unnerving was an understatement.

Even All Might noticed the change. He had tried to get Bakugou to fess up, but he would always make up an excuse like ‘I’m not in the mood for talking’ or ‘I’m thinking right now.’ It was driving Izuku insane, especially when he knew that it was his fault. They were getting a little better before Ren’s attack and before Inko revealed Izuku’s secret. I just wish that he’d tell me what’s going on. Being ignored feels worse than being teased.

The one good thing that came out of their silence was their productivity. They had finished with the first pile, and were now working on the quirk’s one. Only, Izuku was having trouble. In between bouts of nosebleeds and insufferable headaches, he also had issues with control. One second, he’d have a box floating, and the next, it wasn’t. It was frustrating, to say the least. But he refused to give up, not when they were halfway to the finish line.

Izuku was lifting a rather light pile of trash when he felt it. His stomach twisted, and he only had a few seconds to drop the items before he gagged, tears in his eyes, throwing up his dinner. He felt miserable, not to mention confused, so he stayed in that one spot until Bakugou realized that Izuku wasn’t moving. He approached him, his steps quiet.

“Deku, what…? Oh--oh my god.” His face paled when he looked at Izuku, which made Midoriya freak out more.

“What? I just threw up, there’s nothing to be worried about.” Izuku tried to calm him down, laughing nervously. Is there something on my face? Bakugou frantically looked around for All Might and called him over.

“You don’t feel it? There’s literal blood coming from your eyes, Deku! It’s everywhere.” he told him, inching closer to Izuku. Meanwhile, Izuku began to panic. What did he mean? Wasn’t he just crying? He swiped at his eyes, peering down at his fingers, when he froze. There was red all over his hands.
Izuku found it hard to breathe. “Oh.” he sounded so small at that moment, and Bakugou began to pace.

“You must have overworked yourself or something! First it was your nose, and now the eyes? This, this can’t be good for you, Izuku!” he pulled at his hair, obviously freaked out, but Izuku couldn’t believe his ears. **He called me Izuku. My actual name.**

They didn’t even notice All Might until he cried out in alarm. “Young Midoriya, are you okay? Your eyes…” His usual smile was wiped from his face, instead he sported a frown. “Was it your quirk?”

Now that Izuku was thinking about it, his head felt terrible. It was as if someone jammed a sharp object in his brain a couple of times, and then tried to stitch it back together. This wasn't the usual pain. Something was definitely wrong. “I think so, but it’s never done this before. The thing I was carrying was really light.”

All Might hummed in thought. “Well, I don’t think it’s a good idea to use your quirk right now. At least until we know what’s going on. Besides, it’s about that time that you two head back anyway.” He placed a hand on his chin, thinking to himself. “I wonder if I need to contact a friend of mine.”

While he was distracted, the two boys slipped away, walking down the street back to their neighborhood. Like usual, it was a quiet walk, but it was tense. Bakugou would look back at Izuku to check on him, to see if he was still bleeding, but he wouldn’t say anything. It was frustrating. Izuku wanted to slap some sense into him, but of course, he knew who would win.

“Kacchan.” he said without knowing, and immediately regretted it. Bakugou flinched slightly and kept walking. He didn’t acknowledge him at all. “Please don’t shut me out.” he pleaded, catching up to him. He grabbed his sleeve, forcing him to at least stop.

“Deku, don’t even think about touching me, unless you want me to send you to the moon.” he snapped. A couple months ago, Izuku would have definitely let go with a stutter. But now, he was sick of it. He knew that there was a reason why he was acting like this, and that he struggled with showing how he felt.

“I don’t know, I heard space had a nice view. VIP seats for the stars.” Izuku smiled at him and held onto the fabric with his fingers. “But before you blast me away, I want to say something. That time in the infirmary, when my mom revealed that I wanted to die, you reacted in a way that I’ve never seen before. You seemed really upset about it, and I wanted to apologize. I never wanted you to think that it was your fault or anything like that, but then you started to ignore me, and I don’t necessarily know why, but it hurt.” Izuku gulped, stowing away his fear in the back of his mind. “I don’t want to be hurt like this anymore. I want...I just want to be friends again.”

Bakugou’s voice wavered when he responded. “And what if I don’t? What if I was sick of you and your shitty attitude towards heroes and never giving up? What if I was done dealing with your selfless actions and you always putting yourself in danger?” He took a step closer, pointing his finger directly into Izuku’s chest. “What if I never wanted to see you after this again? What would you do?”

What could I do? If that is what he wants, I have no choice, do I? But Izuku shook his head, chasing away the thought. He wouldn’t defend him from Ren if he didn’t care. He wouldn’t call his mom to tell her that he was injured if he didn’t matter to him. “I wouldn’t give up. I’d annoy you every second until you’d relent.”

Bakugou just scoffed, turning his back on him and began to walk away. “That’ll get old fast. Can’t wait to see you give up first.” Izuku nearly laughed then, and before he was left behind, he caught up with the blond.
“You’ll be surprised how long I’ll stick to something. C’mon, you’d know best. I still wanted to be a hero, even after I was told that I had no quirk.” Midoriya said, and Bakugou groaned.

“I totally forgot about that. Crap, this might get more annoying than I thought.” he drawled, but he smiled nonetheless. They didn’t have to walk far until they arrived at Izuku’s apartment, so Bakugou waited until Midoriya was about to go inside before beginning to leave. Midoriya turned back and watched him leave, hating that he got the last word in.

So, disregarding the rest of his neighbors, he called out to him. “I’ll see you later today, Kacchan!” The boy didn’t even look back when he lifted his hand to wave goodbye. However, there was something off about his wave. So Midoriya squinted, and doubled over laughing when he saw it. Bakugou Katsuki had flipped him off.

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It was eleven o’clock at night when he got the call. He startled awake, searching through the layers of sheets and pillows until he found the source of the noise. It was from an unknown caller, so he had half a mind to let it go to voicemail. But he picked up anyway, tentatively putting the phone up to his ear.

“Hello?” His voice came out as a whisper, still laced with sleep. He rubbed at his eyes with his free hand.

“Deku? What the hell, you actually answered? Shouldn’t you be asleep or some shit, idiot nerd?” Bakugou’s voice came in through the speaker, but he sounded softer, more tired.

“Yeah, I should.” Izuku sighed, laying back down. “But someone decided to call in the middle of the night, so I had to wake up and answer it. I wonder who that person is, Kacchan?” A chuckle crackled through the speaker, before it went silent.

“Look, I’m gonna make this real short. I, uh, can’t really sleep tonight. So I was looking for something to distract myself. Not that I necessarily need you to fulfill my boredom or anything. Consider yourself lucky to be able to talk to me at all, I guess.” Bakugou rambled, and Midoriya began to quietly laugh.

“I didn’t realize the great Bakugou Katsuki rambled! And here I was thinking that I was the only one.” Izuku teased him, before interrupting himself with a yawn. It was going to suck waking up tomorrow after staying up late, but being up with Bakugou was worth it in his opinion. It was good to catch up with a friend.

He grumbled from the other line. “I do not ramble. I was explaining my situation, you little shit. Besides, you have it bad. You speak a mile a minute.”

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I don’t deny that, but it still is embarrassing to hear someone else say it. “Anyway, was that all that you needed to call about? There’s nothing that’s bothering you or anything?” Izuku knew that if there was, Bakugou would likely not say anything, but he wanted to ask anyway. He wanted to let him know that he was there if he needed him.

“Yeah, just bored out of my mind. Besides, why the hell would I tell you anything? You’re not my friend.” His words lacked bite though, so Izuku didn’t let that affect him too much.

Another yawn broke free from Izuku’s lips, and he curled up into the sheets. “Well, what do you want to talk about? I’m up for anything.” He was beginning to feel comfortable again, and he fought off sleep. He needed to stay up.
It was silent for a while, and Izuku started to think that Bakugou had fallen asleep or hung up on him. However, he could faintly hear his breathing through the speaker and a stifled yawn. “I dunno. Never did this before.” He sighed, and the sound of rustling sheets met Izuku’s ears. “Wait, I have something. How long have you been bothered by Ren?”

Izuku had a feeling the conversation was going to go down that path. Shortly after the incident, Ren had continued to torment Midoriya, but he made sure to do in private, where he couldn’t get caught. But he wouldn’t tell Bakugou that. “Um, I think shortly after you started bullying me. I was five or six when he started shocking me, but it wasn’t painful yet. It was just like static, and it scared me more than it hurt me.” Just talking about it tightened his throat, and before he knew it, he was softly crying. It wasn’t vocal, just a few tears sliding down his cheeks.

“Oh.” Bakugou said, falling quiet. “When would they…?” he trailed off, uncertain on how he’d say it.

“Corner me?” Midoriya suggested for him.

“Yeah.”

“In the mornings, if I got to school later. After school, too. They’d wait until I was off campus.” he whispered, curling in on himself. It was hard to relive it, but the fact that Bakugou was asking him was even harder. Izuku wouldn’t forget that he had done the same thing, only verbally, except for that one instant where Izuku got in between another student to defend him. Even then, it felt like Bakugou was pulling his punches.

It took a moment for Bakugou to respond. “Has Ren bothered you lately? After I kicked in his shit?” he asked, and his voice had a hint of a warning. If he said yes, Ren would pay the price. But if he said no, Bakugou wouldn’t get involved and he wouldn’t get in trouble with the school. He’d be able to go to UA without too many disciplinary issues. Bakugou can’t get in trouble anymore. If he does, Aunt Mitsuki wouldn’t let him go to UA. I’m not worth that.

“No, he’s steered clear of me. I think you scared him.” he lied through his teeth, wiping his tears away. “I never thanked you for that. So thanks.” Why does this hurt so much?

Bakugou scoffed. “Yeah, you needed the protection. You’re too weak to defend yourself anyway.”

They talked for a couple hours, creating small talk and sharing a few stories about their life at home. Soon, Izuku began to doze off, missing a couple words in his exhaustion. But when he fell asleep, his tears were dry and a small smile was on his face.

He hadn’t slept that well in a long time.

The next day, Izuku woke up later than usual. He checked the time, nearly choking on his own spit when he saw that it was six. He slept through an hour of training. Midoriya scrambled to find his phone, and winced when he saw how many messages he saw.

Kacchan 5:03 AM: Hey, you piece of shit. You're late.

Kacchan 5:30 AM: Are you running late or something? Did Auntie catch you?

Kacchan 5:45 AM: Are you okay, shitty Deku? Is it your head?

Kacchan 5:50 AM: Okay, I'm coming over. You better be dead on the floor or something, or
else I'll kill you for skipping.

That was ten minutes ago, which meant that Bakugou was nearly at his house. And he couldn't get caught with sleeping in. So, praying that he wouldn't get too much of a headache, Izuku strained to lift his desk, the beginning of a headache already pressing into his skull. He felt the beginnings of a nosebleed, and nearly cried in relief when he heard the telltale sound of Bakugou at his window.

He wobbled to the window, opening it a crack before a wave of dizziness sent him back to his bed. He plopped down at the edge, holding his head in his hands. _Was it worth it? Probably not, but at least I'll have something to go off of._

“Shit, it was your head.” Bakugou muttered when he slid through, looking at Izuku’s nose. It was dripping profusely, and some of it got on his sheets. A tissue was shoved in front of his face, and he gratefully took it.

“Thanks, Kacchan.” He used it to block his nose, and watched as Bakugou wandered his room with wonder in his eyes. “I just saw your texts. I'm sorry I made you worried.”

Bakugou scoffed. “As if I'd be worried about _you_ , shitty Deku. All Might was throwing a fit.” He took a seat at his desk, watching him with a frown. “Did you wake up like that, or did you use your quirk?”

“I woke up with it.” he lied, twisting his fingers out of habit. “I was just able to walk out of bed to open the window, that's how bad it was.”

Bakugou hummed, picking up a pen from his desk to click it with his thumb. “Something must be up with your stupid quirk. Maybe you need to let it cool down? I have no fucking idea.” he muttered and averted his eyes to the various All Might figurines that lined the desk. “You have to at least take it easy today. Your dumbass brain probably can’t handle the quirk right now.”

Izuku thought about it for a moment, and it definitely made sense. He hadn’t stopped using his quirk ever since it surfaced, and every single time he used it, it caused a migraine and a nosebleed. If that wasn’t due to overuse, Midoriya didn’t know what to think. “Yeah, you might be right.”

“ _Might_ ? I am right, you dick.” he barked, sending Midoriya a glare. The boy just simply laughed and waved him off. As aggressive as Bakugou appeared to be, it no longer scared Izuku away. Instead, it just reminded him that there was a reason why he was acting like that, and he was willing to accept it.

“Right, right.” he waved, dismissing the idea with a smile. It felt good to finally be close to Bakugou again after all those years of rivalry and bullying. If Izuku hadn’t of saved Bakugou from the Sludge Villain, he wouldn’t be sitting there playing with a pen while he looked at Midoriya with genuine concern. Though, Izuku couldn’t help but think of the negative things. _What if the only reason why he’s being nice to me is because I finally have a quirk? What if I never had a quirk, and he continued to call me useless? What if nothing ever changed? _

What if I had died when the villain first attacked? Would he have cared at all?

Midoriya’s smile dropped and he slumped his shoulders. It wasn’t a bad question, nor an illogical one. Bakugou only showed interest with him after he saved him with his quirk. Izuku looked down at the floor, deprecating thoughts filling his head as he processed everything. Before he knew it, tears started to pool in his eyes.

Noticing something was awry, Bakugou cocked his head to the side and stopped clicking. “Oi, what
get up and knelt in front of the crying boy, uncertain to do with his hands as he lifted and lowered them. “Are you crying?”

All he got as a reply was a sniff and a slight nod. Bakugou huffed, bringing his fingers up to brush Izuku’s hair from his eyes. However, his aim was off slightly, and he poked the corner of his eye rather harshly. Midoriya flinched, which made Bakugou feel even worse. He removed his hands and kept his distance. “Shit, sorry. Your hair’s too damn long, I can’t see anything through it.”

Midoriya’s shoulders began to shake, but not because he was crying. His thoughts were more clear now, and definitely less malicious, but he wasn’t crying due to them. He was silently laughing at how worried Bakugou got when he poked him in the eye, and the situation itself. **We’re both idiots right now.**

“Woah, woah. Fuck, don’t cry. Shit, I don’t know how to deal with you, you fucking idiot.” Bakugou was fidgeting now, unable to see through Izuku’s mop of hair to know that he was laughing.

“Kacchan, I’m not crying.” he whispered through his fingers, looking up with watery eyes. Izuku moved his hand to show his smile, and the sigh of relief that came from Bakugou nearly made him double over laughing again. “Sorry, Kacchan. I seem to be worrying you a lot.”

Bakugou turned his head away to shield his pink cheeks as he sported his usual scowl. “I wasn’t worried, you piece of shit.” he grumbled, but he peeked at Izuku from the corner of his eye anyway. “Why the hell did you start cryin’ anyway?”

Izuku didn’t really want to worry Bakugou further, nor did he want to scare him away with his troubling thoughts. So, thinking back to all of the childish games of Twenty Questions that he played in the past, Midoriya looked up at him with a small smile. “Pass.”

Bakugou immediately scoffed, glaring holes into Izuku as he tried to get the boy to break his facade and tell him. When he didn’t, Bakugou sighed and relented, sitting down on the floor with his legs crossed. “Since when did we fucking start playing twenty questions, you sly bastard.”

Midoriya shrugged. “Now, I guess.”

Before Bakugou could retort however, the sound of a door opening startled them both into silence. Midoriya began to panic, knowing full well that it was his mother down the hall. He stood up frantically, grabbing Bakugou by the hem of his shirt and nearly dragging him to his closet, much to the blond’s displeasure. “Oi--!”

“Shh! If my mom finds you, we’re both dead! Hide in here, and for my sake, please don’t make any noise.” Midoriya silenced him with a firm push into the dark closet, closing the door silently. He made his way to his bed and swiftly covered himself with the blankets, seconds before his door creaked open.

“Izu, dear?” came his mother’s voice through the cracked door, hushed in case he was asleep. “Are you awake?” Midoriya stayed utterly silent, biting his tongue to keep him from making any sort of indication that he was awake. A soft sigh, then the sound of shuffled footsteps approaching him made Izuku flinch by accident. “Oh honey, are you having nightmares again?”

Midoriya didn’t respond. She still thought he was asleep, so he had to play the part, no matter how much it hurt to lie to her. He shifted in the sheets slightly, making sure it looked like he was simply shifting in his sleep, and made a small groan in the back of his throat. Inko sighed and sat down on the edge of the mattress, cupping Izuku’s cheek with a cool hand. She ran her fingers from his cheek
to his hair, combing through his curls.

“I wish I could do something more for you sweetheart. I feel so helpless.” she sighed, removing her hand. “It hurts, you know? To see you spiral down into this mindset. Looking through those notebooks, seeing how much you wanted to die, it scares me Izuku. I wish you’d talk to me, let me help.”

Guilt crept into Izuku’s stomach, and he had half a mind to ‘wake up’ and hug her. But he stayed where he was, back facing his mother as she talked. “But I can see why you’d keep quiet. I did nothing to support you when I thought you were quirkless. I should’ve...I should’ve done more as a mother.” No, mom, you’re wrong! It was all me, not you! Please don’t think like this.

Finally having enough of the torture, Izuku rolled over, feigning exhaustion as he opened his eyes. “Mom? What are you doing in my room?” he croaked, clenching his fist under the sheets to hide his fluke. Inko looked startled for a moment, definitely caught off guard, before she smiled and kissed his forehead.

“Oh, nothing. Thought I heard something, but it was just you sleep-talking! You gave me a scare, I thought there was someone in the house!” she told him with a small laugh, before walking towards the door. “Well, I’ll let you get back to sleep. See you in an hour, Izu.”

“Yeah. See you in an hour.” he echoed back, looking at his mother’s departing back with a sad smile. He had no idea that his mother felt so guilty over not supporting him. Izuku sat up and waited until the house was quiet again before walking to the closet, opening the door for Bakugou. The blond tentatively stepped out, as quiet as the house as he observed Midoriya.

“Hey, are you--?”

“Maybe you should leave, Kacchan? It’s about time you started getting ready, huh?” he faked a smile, his cheeks pulled taut as he fought back tears. Bakugou didn’t need to hear that conversation; hell, Midoriya shouldn’t have heard that conversation. The boy looked at Midoriya one last time before nodding, pulling open the window and swinging his legs outside. Before he hopped out, he gave one last glance to Izuku with an unreadable expression on his face.

“See you.” he muttered, and then he was gone.

***

Needless to say, the walk to school was an awkward one. Neither Bakugou nor Midoriya could look at each other as they walked alongside the road. It was a particularly cold morning, so Midoriya stood closer to Bakugou in order to feel the warmth radiating from him in waves, occasionally brushing shoulders. Thanks to Bakugou’s quirk, he always remained on the warm side, no matter the weather. They didn’t say anything about the previous hour either, both of them too nervous and hesitant to speak their mind.

Izuku got in the first word. “I’m sorry for kicking you out like that.” he said, scratching the back of his head with a chuckle. “I wasn’t really sure how you’d act after my mom said all of that, so I pushed you away.”

Bakugou scoffed, shoving his hands further in his pocket. “Yeah, whatever. Not like I cared what happened.” he said, but he looked at Izuku with an eyebrow raised. “Speaking of, how are you feeling? About that whole confession bullshit.”

Midoriya pondered it for a moment, feeling like he was treading on eggshells. He didn’t really talk
about his feelings too often, so the feeling of vulnerability was pretty suffocating. “It’s a bit...overwhelming, I guess. I don’t usually hear my mom talk like that, especially not about me.”

Bakugou hummed in response, moving his eyes back to the sidewalk. “It, uh, wasn’t my place to hear any of that. But, if you want to talk about the things that she said, you have my fucking number,” he sounded grouchy as always, but the care hidden deep in his tone nearly made Izuku cry again.

“Thank you, Kacchan. I’ll consider it.” Midoriya said. He didn’t really plan on telling him everything, some things should be left unsaid at that point, but he was still grateful (and surprised) for Bakugou’s kindness.

“Don’t call me that, Deku.” he groaned. “It doesn’t even sound cool.”

“I think it’s cute! Plus it stuck with me, so there’s no getting rid of it anytime soon.” Izuku teased, nudging his shoulder lightly. “Besides, Deku doesn’t sound too cool either.”

“It fits you, stupid. ‘Kacchan’ makes me look like a kid.”

“But you are a kid.” he retorted with a teasing grin.

Bakugou relented with a sigh. “Whatever, this is a waste of time.” He paused in front of a convenience store, fumbling around with something in his pocket. “Anyway, you go on ahead. I gotta buy something real quick.”

Midoriya raised a curious brow, but he didn’t want to annoy Bakugou by asking him. “Okay. I’ll walk slow for you.”

“Idiot, I can walk fast. Don’t make me hit you.” he bit out, before he stepped in the store. Izuku smiled to himself and continued walking, slowing his pace so it’d be easier for Bakugou to catch up. He enjoyed the crisp air for a moment, shutting his eyes to bask in the sun. Days like these are pretty great. I could get used to this.

Suddenly, Midoriya collided with a solid body, forcing his eyes opened to immediately apologize. “Oh, I’m so sorry! It was just a beautiful day, and I had my eyes closed…” his voice trailed off when he looked up into the very familiar eyes of Ren, immediately causing his body to freeze. Ren smiled down at him, but there was no friendliness in his eyes. Oh, I’m so dead.

“You know, it really is a beautiful day,” the boy chuckled, cracking his knuckles. “Especially after seeing you without your little guard dog.” Before he had a chance to cry out or call Bakugou, he was being dragged into a nearby alleyway by the hem of his uniform. Midoriya tried to pry his fingers off of his uniform, but Ren held on, pushing Izuku onto the floor. He landed with a huff, immediately trying to scamper to his feet. A quick kick to his side kept Midoriya prone to the floor, and Ren tutted above him.

“Now, now. Is that any way to treat a friend?” he crept closer, a manic grin on his face as he loomed over with electricity sparkling in his palm. Midoriya clenched his eyes shut, lifting his hands in a pointless effort to keep him away from his face. I’m just so sick of him already.

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“Just get it over with, Ren.” Midoriya spoke softly. He prepared for pain, gritting his teeth together. Suddenly, a loud explosion startled Izuku out of his little trance. Behind Ren’s silhouette, he could clearly see a very angry blond standing at the entranceway. Is that...?

“Oh, over my dead body, you fucking mistake ?”
Thank you so much for reading! If you want more to read about BakuDeku, you should check out my Tumblr! Just type in 'eeriegrove' and I should pop up :) Enjoy the cliffhanger!
I'll Be Behind You.

Chapter Summary

Where Bakugou grows tired of Midoriya's bullshit, and a secret gets a whole lot more complicated.

Chapter Notes

School has officially begun, so my updates will be a bit later in the day! Sorry for the inconvenience! Enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Midoriya couldn’t help the sigh of relief that blew from his lips when his eyes caught on Bakugou’s red ones. He was still pinned by the collar, but the threat of being shocked was no more. Bakugou approached Ren slowly, purposely releasing small explosions in his palms to scare the boy. However, if he was scared, he showed no signs of it as he inched his fingers closer to Izuku’s temple.

“You don’t scare me too much anymore, Kacchan. You see, if I released enough bolts to Midoriya’s temple, it’d come in contact with his brain and really mess him up. He wouldn’t even remember his first and last name.” Ren chuckled, immediately sending goosebumps down Izuku’s arms.

“W-wait, let’s not go that far…!” Midoriya panicked and flinched away from Ren’s hands, desperately trying to escape from his hold. Meanwhile, Bakugou stared at him with a nonchalant expression.

The blond stopped his approach, peering at Ren with a grin. “Oh, what a bunch of horseshit.” he scoffed. “And what’s stopping me from coming over there and knocking all of your teeth out before you can even lay a finger on him?”

Ren tightened his grip on Izuku’s uniform, pulling the boy closer. He had his own grin plastered on his face, but Izuku couldn’t help but notice the way his hands shook. He was scared of the possibility of getting hurt. *What a coward.* “I mean, this can be a warning for you.”

Before any of them could have reacted, he tapped his finger on Izuku’s temple, sending an electric shock through his system. The jolt was excruciating, seemingly traveling through every nerve in his body as his body locked in place. The low groan that came out of his mouth at the contact didn’t even sound human, and Ren laughed at the sight before shoving Midoriya forward onto the pavement. Bakugou fought back the urge to reach for him.

“Just keep that in mind, Bakugou. The day he decided to mess with me was the day that he signed up for misery. Don’t even think about intervening.” he stepped over Midoriya as if he was simply a crack in the sidewalk and kept his eyes on Bakugou. “I know a lot of people who want to kick you off of your high horse. Don’t make me do something that you won’t enjoy.”
Bakugou kept his teeth clenched even after Ren disappeared around the corner, and didn’t make a move to approach Midoriya until he tried to stand. After swaying on his feet for a couple of seconds, Bakugou pointedly looked at Midoriya. Izuku opened his mouth to apologize, but Bakugou beat him to it. “Why the fuck did you lie?”

This startled Izuku into more silence as shame flooded his senses. He chose a rock on the pavement to stare at while Bakugou began to pace. “You told me that he stopped! You...you piece of shit! I can’t believe you!”

“I’m sorry.” he whispered, but that fell on deaf ears.

“You never tell anyone shit, do you? Why can’t you trust someone in your goddamn life, you fucking idiot? First it was your... whatever shit in your notebooks, and now it’s this Ren bullshit? How long were you thinking of keeping that a secret, huh? By the time we graduated middle school?”

Tears burned the back of Izuku’s eyes, but he refused to cry. Bakugou was right, of course he was, and he felt so guilty that it crawled to his throat and squeezed. “I’m sorry.” he hiccuped, finally looking up at Bakugou. His face was contorted into rage as he glared at Izuku headon, and his fists clenched at his sides looked ready to punch someone.

One look at Izuku’s teary-eyed expression calmed him down, but he still huffed in anger. “You can’t keep doing this, Deku. I could understand why you wouldn’t talk to me about it, but your mom? A teacher? They’re there for you twenty-four seven. You have no excuse.”

Bakugou turned his back to the boy and walked out of the alleyway, pausing at the entranceway. Midoriya rubbed his eyes and looked up at the blond, desperately trying to stop him from walking away. Please don’t leave me behind. I’m sorry; so, so sorry!

“Are you fucking coming, or are you going to sit there like the dumbass that you are? We’re gonna be late for school.” he muttered, his hands clenched around his bag strap. He was waiting for Midoriya. Why?

Instead of saying anything, Midoriya just nodded and trudged towards Bakugou with his head bowed. His conscious ate at him for the entire walk to school, his eyes kept wide open in case he bumped into anyone else. Bakugou didn’t look at him once while they walked, his hands hanging loosely at his sides as he tapped his fingers together, deep in thought.

They didn’t talk until they got to school, standing awkwardly by the gate while looking everywhere but at each other. With a sigh, Bakugou pushed Midoriya forward, startling him out of his daze long enough for him to catch himself. “K-Kacchan?”

Bakugou rolled his eyes and waved him away with a scowl. “You go into class first. People would get pretty suspicious if they saw us walking in together, right? You’d never live it down.” he said. He dug his hands in his pockets. “I’ll be behind you.”

Midoriya nodded, walking into the entranceway slowly. He kept his eyes downcast and winced as he heard the whispers of his peers around him. “Isn’t that the quirkless kid that got pummeled by Ren yesterday?”

“Yeah. But I heard that he actually pushed Ren away with his quirk! Turns out he actually had a quirk the whole time.”

Izuku pulled off his shoes to replace them with his school loafers, blocking out the gossip like he’d
been doing for years. It wasn’t the first time that he had to ignore the stares of other people who had nothing better to do than to talk. He made his way through the hallways until he reached his class, pulling open the door gently. The immediate hush that swept the class unnerved him, but he walked to the center of the class to reach his desk with nothing but a quiet ‘good morning’ to the class.

“Didn’t he…?” A girl whispered to her friend, trying to be hush hush. Izuku could definitely still hear her, but he ignored it by resting his head in his arms. He heard footsteps approach his desk and Izuku willed them away, not in the mood for any sort of confrontation. Why can’t people just leave me alone?

Someone cleared their throat, clearly trying to get his attention. “Midoriya?” a feminine voice caught his attention, and he rose his head up to meet the noise. It sounded oddly familiar… “Hey, I just wanted to know if you were feeling better after yesterday.” She’s the girl that helped me after Ren beat me up! I never got her name, either.

His cheeks flushed as he flashed her a smile. “Yes, I’m feeling great! Thank you so much for helping me out.” She looked at him with a surprised gawk, peering at him with violet eyes. He seemed to get lost in them, they were so unique. She had short black hair that stopped at her shoulders, small waves pooling at her collar. How come I haven’t noticed her sooner? She’s someone that would definitely stand out.

“That’s good. I’m Matsuki Numei, the exchange student.” she said with a small smile, laughing at his surprised expression. “Sorry, you just looked like you didn’t recognize me. I seem to go unnoticed in this school because of my boring quirk.” Matsuki scratched the back of her head and sat on the corner of his desk.

“Oh, I don’t think your quirk is boring at all! It could totally be useful in the medical field, and I’m sure if you worked at it, you could prolong the effects of it and help a lot of people!” Izuku sat up straighter in his desk and pulled out his notebook in excitement. “If you don’t mind, could you show me how it works? I write down quirks that I think are interesting and study them.”

Matsuki smiled and nodded, offering her hand. “Sure thing! I excrete a numbing fluid from my hands that I can apply to any wound. As of right now, it can only last ten minutes before the pain returns.” She showed him her palms, an off-white cream beginning to form on her skin. Matsuki tapped her hand on his and Izuku could immediately feel it working, his hand going numb under her touch.

“So cool!” he fawned over it while he rapidly wrote down the details, mumbling to himself. Matsuki removed her hand and smiled down at him.

“You look better when you smile, Midoriya. You can’t let these people bring you down in the dirt!” she offered him a thumbs up, a blinding grin on her face. “We gotta get out of this school to get somewhere better than here, right?”

Izuku felt like crying. He finally met someone that understood what he was going through, but was invisible under everyone’s gaze for a quirk that they deemed unimportant. She was alone, just like him. “Yeah! Where are you planning on going after this?” he asked her, ignoring the stares that he got from him being a lot more vocal than he’d ever been in class.

She hummed, tapping her chin with her finger while she thought about it. “Hm, I don’t know. Probably just the high school by my house.”

“Not UA?” Izuku pressed and looked at her with a cocked head. She laughed and immediately shot down the idea.
“No! No, no. I could never get into UA with my quirk! Besides, being a hero never really appealed to me. Or my parents.” she averted her gaze and faced the window, lost in thought. “It would be nice, but I shouldn’t let my ideals cloud my reality.”

Midoriya shook his head rapidly, grabbing her arm to catch her attention. “I...I think that you could be a great hero! Your quirk could be enhanced so much, and you shouldn’t give up so quickly without trying!” he raised his voice at the last part, and he immediately released her arm and covered his face. “Sorry.” I just don’t want you giving up on your dreams like I did.

Matsuki looked at him with wide eyes before laughing quietly. In the background, the bell rang to signal the beginning of class, but she stayed there a moment longer. “Thanks Midoriya. It’d be an interesting change of pace, right? Getting into UA…” her voice trailed off in wonder, and she stood up, fists clenched. “Yeah! You’re right. I’ll give it everything I’ve got!”

He sat back in his seat, relief on his face. He knew what giving up on your dreams looked like, and seeing it on other people made his stomach hurt.

Was this what I looked like to other people? An empty shell of the person that I could be?

I refuse to stoop that low again. I’ll get stronger, and reach my goal. I’ll become a hero.

***

After school ended, the sun was still relatively high in the sky. It wasn’t evening yet, which was the perfect time to head home to avoid Ren and his lackeys from cornering him. He just had to find a place to hide for the time being. Izuku walked out of class, waving goodbye to Matsuki before he closed the door behind him. He didn’t even bother looking for Bakugou, knowing that he was still angry at him for lying.

He walked down the hall aimlessly, looking for the library so he could at least have some peace and quiet. He nearly turned the corner when he bumped into someone, quickly freezing up. Last time he bumped into someone, he nearly got hurt. He tentatively looked up, sighing in relief when he saw that it was just Bakugou.

The boy scoffed, looking down at him with a glare. “Where the hell are you going?” he asked, crossing his arms.

“Ah, the library! I wanted to check out a book before I left.” he tried to weasel his way around Bakugou, but a firm grip on his wrist kept him in place. Oh god, what did I do now? Was he really mad at me for lying? I did it to keep Bakugou on the right track to UA! Promise? Since when was Bakugou in contact with my mom? “Oh no you’re not. You’re coming with me, shitty Deku.” he began to drag Izuku toward the door, and Izuku planted his feet to put up a fight. He wasn’t going anywhere without knowing where and why. Bakugou looked surprised at the display and stopped pulling him.

“Where are you taking me? Why do I have to go?” Izuku said, trying to straighten his back to look less frightened. He promised himself that he’d become a hero, and heroes don’t let themselves be dragged around.

Bakugou sighed in exasperation, releasing his wrist. “You want do get beat up by Ren? Because if I’m not mistaken, you said that they came after you after school. Well, before you lied to me, but that’s besides the fucking point.” Wait, was he trying to help him? Even after Ren threatened to go after Bakugou? “Besides, I can’t keep my promise to your mom if I let you get beat up.”

Bakugou sighed in exasperation, releasing his wrist. “You want do get beat up by Ren? Because if I’m not mistaken, you said that they came after you after school. Well, before you lied to me, but that’s besides the fucking point.” Wait, was he trying to help him? Even after Ren threatened to go after Bakugou? “Besides, I can’t keep my promise to your mom if I let you get beat up.”

Promise? Since when was Bakugou in contact with my mom? “Well, where are we going?” he
asked, dropping his guard.

Bakugou looked uncomfortable now, fidgeting where he stood. “You’ll figure it out when we get there, idiot. Now hurry up, will you? I’m going to be late.” he grabbed his wrist again, tightening his hold but not painfully, and they walked out of the school in a brisk pace. Wherever they were going, it seemed that Bakugou really was going to be late for it. Was it some sort of meeting?

“Also, Deku, if you tell anyone about this place that I’m taking you, I will seriously kill you. Consider this whole ‘friend’ bullshit that you’re spouting done if you say something about it.” he turned to look at him with a murderous glare, not a hint of friendliness on his face. He meant business.

*Just where are you taking me, Kacchan?*

When they stopped in front of the building, Izuku was shocked into silence. He immediately turned to look at Bakugou, who looked away from Izuku’s gaze with a nervous shudder. At first, all he felt was confused, then it quickly turned into worry as he reread the sign glowing dimly in the setting sky.

_Yoku Therapy and Correction Facilities._

They were standing in front of a therapy center, and Izuku didn’t know why. He didn’t want to intrude on Bakugou’s personal business either, so he bit his tongue and went inside with him, trailing a few steps behind. He observed the waiting room, taking in every painting and decorative plant with surprise. He expected white walls and clean furniture, but there were couches and magazines scattered around the room. *Well, what did you expect, Izuku sarcastically thought to himself, this isn’t a hospital.*

“Bakugou! Good to see you. For a second, I thought you weren’t going to show!” A middle aged woman, her blond hair tied back in a ponytail, waved at him behind the reception desk. “And who’s this guy? A friend?”

Bakugou scoffed, but a friendly smile graced his face anyway. *Woah, he’s smiling? Just who is this boy standing next to me?* “Psh, I wouldn’t let this guy be anywhere near me. He’s just a lame nerd who trailed after me.” he nudged Izuku’s shoulder with his own. “Is it cool if he stays in here? Just until my session’s done?”

Izuku just stood there with a blank face, still trying to take everything in. Why was he here? Why was Bakugou here? Why did he have to take sessions? What was Bakugou going through? A small pinch drew him out of his questions. He looked up at Bakugou, a million questions still running through his head.

“And he might need a water.” he added, rolling his eyes at Izuku’s shocked expression. It was almost as if he was teasing him for being in the dark. He put his hands in his pockets and walked through a door, closing it behind him.

Izuku cleared his head and looked at the receptionist with a leveled stare before bowing. “Thank you for having me.” he breathed out, raising his head and taking a seat closest to the door. Izuku instantly began to bounce his leg on the ball of his foot, peering around the room aimlessly. The receptionist walked over to him with a cup of water, offering it to him.

“Here you go! If you need anything else, I’ll be here, okay?” she smiled at him and disappeared behind the desk, typing away at her computer. Izuku took a sip of the water and pulled out his
notebook, needing to properly channel his thoughts.

Why was Bakugou here? He took sessions, he just said that, but for what? Why would he need to go to therapy? Was it because of the villain attack? Or maybe something a little closer to home? Midoriya sat back in the couch until he felt like was being swallowed up by the cushions. *Mom told me that she accidently found out about something involving Bakugou, and how he couldn’t deal with emotions properly. That it wasn’t his fault.*

*Was that why he was here? For counseling?* Izuku rested his head in his hands, sighing as he rubbed his eyes. He was still tired, despite sleeping in that morning. He figured that he was going to be there for awhile, so he might as well take a nap until Bakugou’s session was done. He nestled further into the cushions, curling in on himself.

Izuku would ask his questions when he woke up in an hour.

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He heard the sound of a door opening, but it sounded so foggy that he nearly brushed it off as just another noise. However, when Izuku remembered where he was, he shot up straight on the couch, rubbing his eyes to get rid of the cloudiness. When he removed his hands, he saw Bakugou waving goodbye to someone behind him, his other hand in his pocket. He turned and saw Izuku, snorting loudly.

“Nice bedhead, nerd.” he teased, ruffling it a bit to prove his point. Izuku swatted his hand away, his cheeks ablaze. *It’s like he’s refreshed or something after the sessions. It must be helping, then.*

“Here, I grabbed some ‘pops on the way out.” He pulled a lollipop out of his pocket and tossed it to him. Izuku caught it and checked the flavor. It was cinnamon. Not his favorite, but he unraveled it anyway, popping it in his mouth.

“Thanks.” he gazed at Bakugou for a moment longer before he grabbed his bag and stood. Bakugou pulled out another lollipop--the same flavor--and sucked on it, humming in response. His hand returned to his pocket and upon further inspection, Izuku could see something round, almost like a ball...

“What are you lookin’ at?” Bakugou flicked him, drawing Izuku’s attention away from the front of Bakugou’s pants. Izuku raised his hands up in surrender and stared straight ahead as they walked out of the facility and into the warm night air. The street lights flickered around them as they walked side by side, none of them saying anything just yet.

Izuku was the first to break the silence, his curiosity burning the back of his tongue. “So, what else did they give you?” He gestured to his pocket, where Bakugou’s hand currently was. He faltered and his exposed hand twitched. *Caught him red-handed.*

Bakugou sighed and pulled out the mystery item, tossing it to him. Izuku fumbled with it for a moment, trying to figure it out. It was some sort of ball, but it was similar to tar. “It’s a stress ball, dumbass. It helps.” he said, extending his hand for Izuku to give it back. He clenched his hand around it and Izuku watched as the substance rose up to fill the spaces between Bakugou’s fingers. “It’s heat resistant. I burnt the last one a few days ago.”

Somehow, imagining Bakugou burning a stress ball brought a smile to his face. “That’s good that your counselor gives you them.” he hid his smile with the back of his hand.

Bakugou exhaled and tilted his head back, watching the stars. “I guess. He’s been my counselor for awhile now, so he knows me better than a lot of people. Sometimes I feel that he knows me better
than I know me.”

Izuku couldn’t help but think about how unfamiliar this Bakugou was compared to the angry, closed off version he’d known for years. He looked at peace, smiling and opening up about matters that would have crossed the line before. “May I ask you something?” he said, turning his head to face Bakugou more clearly.

Bakugou hummed in response, his eyes still glued to the starry night above. “Shoot.”

“Why do you go there?” Izuku asked. He saw the way Bakugou’s face fell slightly and he dropped his gaze to the buildings beside them. So there still was a line to be crossed.

Suddenly, Bakugou laughed and stuck out his tongue, the red from the lollipop staining it. It startled Izuku how quickly he hopped from being upset to happy. “Pass.” he replied. He clenched the stress ball tighter beside Izuku; the only thing that showed his true emotions. He played me good, damn it.

I guess I started that.

Izuku noticed the atmosphere and backed off of that topic, laughing it off. “Fine, fine. I walked into that, I guess.” he said, but he kept Bakugou in his peripheral view anyway. He was worried about him, not to mention a little upset that he was hiding it from him. And aren’t you doing the same thing? You hide everything from everyone, and make everyone upset. You--

But aren’t you doing the same thing? You hide everything from everyone, and make everyone upset. You--

The boy shook his head, kicking himself out of his head. He didn’t need to go into that. They walked for a bit more until the streets became familiar, which meant that they were getting close to Izuku’s house. Their private little moment was going to end soon, and Izuku felt disappointed. He wanted to see more of the vulnerable Bakugou.

They stopped in front of Midoriya’s apartment, a strange silence falling between them. It was both comfortable and awkward, and both had something that wanted to be said but didn’t want to say it just yet. Bakugou cleared his throat, peering up at Izuku’s balcony.

“I’ll tell you everything you want to know, Deku. Why I go to counseling, and why I’m like the way I am. Anything you want to know. But there’s a catch.” he told him, pocketing the ball. “You have to be honest with everyone. You have to open up too, because I sure as hell can’t be the only one, idiot.” He extended his hand for a handshake. Bakugou wanted to make a deal.

Izuku gulped, inwardly cowering from the truth. He hated to talk about himself. But if he wanted Bakugou to be open with him, he’d have to return the favor. Izuku reached out and shook his hand with a firm grip. “Deal.”

Bakugou smirked, linking his fingers and placing them at the back of his head. He looked nearly serene, apart from the cocky smile. “Well, I’ll be off then. Keep your phone on you, shitty nerd.”

Izuku waved at him and headed to his apartment. When he walked in, the smell of pork cutlet filled his nose and his mouth watered. “I’m home!” he called out, kicking off his shoes and moving his bag until there was only one strap around his shoulder.

His mother was still in the kitchen. “Welcome home, hon! I’m making your favorite, so why don’t you change into something comfortable and head back down?” she answered back. Izuku smiled to himself and climbed the stairs, throwing his bag into his room and taking a seat on his bed.

He fell backwards until his back was flush with his sheets, and Izuku stared at the ceiling with a smile. He felt like he was floating, he was so happy. Izuku was getting closer to Bakugou every day that they trained, but now that they’re walking to and from school with each other, they seemed to be
friends. His heart fluttered in his throat when he remembered the way Bakugou smiled at his counselor, his anger wiped from his face.

He looked so pretty like that.

Midoriya quickly stuttered and covered his face with his hands, waving away the idea from his brain. What was he talking about? He tried to calm down his heart by standing up and pacing, but he couldn’t get the images out of his head. Bakugou really did look pretty tonight, enveloped in the stars and smiling like that.

“Izu, the food’s ready! Come on down.” Inko called him, so he quickly threw on some loose clothing and hightailed it out of his room. He couldn’t afford to be alone with his thoughts right now. That plan went straight out the window when Inko decided to talk about Bakugou over dinner. And as he ate, he couldn’t help but think about how Bakugou would call him tonight.

What is wrong with me?

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! If you liked it, be sure to let me know by commenting and leaving a Kudos! Also, why do YOU think Bakugou goes to counseling? Feel free to comment your ideas below! Thanks again~
Is There Any Way to Control It?

Chapter Summary

When Izuku looks at the mirror, and Mama Inko is about ready to whoop Izuku's ass.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After dinner, Izuku mindlessly wandered to the bathroom to get changed and ready for ‘bed’. Truth be told, he was far from tired; today’s events filling his head to the brim. Bakugou was going to therapy for an issue that his mom told him about vaguely, and he noticeably changes after the sessions. Not only that, but he also made a deal with Izuku and confirmed it with a handshake. The Bakugou that Izuku had known since he was three despised being touched, but he didn’t shy away from the contact.

His friend was like a coin: flip it, and you’ll get one of two personalities, and Izuku didn’t know what to think about that.

He closed the bathroom door behind him, pressing the heels of his hands into the counter as he leaned over the sink, his head bowed in thought. The light flickered above him and Izuku raised his head to look at it, catching his reflection in the mirror. He sucked in a breath, waiting to see the hideous skeleton looking back at him, but he was surprised at the unfamiliar person in front of him. His face was fuller and his eyes were no longer sunken in; instead, they were bright and clear.

Izuku had avoided the mirror ever since the Sludge Villain incident, fearing what he’d see staring back at him. It wasn’t an image that he wanted to look at, because it just showed how low he got when he was feeling like dirt beneath the world’s boot. Midoriya couldn’t bear it. But, now he looked fuller around the edges, muscle replacing what once was just skin and bone. Izuku finally began to look healthy again, not to mention more lean and muscular due to training, and his eating habits were returning to normal.

He was finally happy with his progress.

With a happy little hum, he changed into his All Might pajamas and brushed his teeth, his eyes never leaving the mirror. He must still be in shock, but seeing himself like that was making his heart flutter against his ribs. I never thought that I’d ever see the day that looked so happy. How long had it been since he last smiled and was happy to be alive? Izuku lightly tapped his fingers against the counter as he spat out the toothpaste in his mouth, rinsing the rest with water. He felt his eyes water suddenly, his vision filled with red, and he rubbed it out of his eyes. He looked down, sucking in his breath when he saw it.

When he lifted his head, his reflection nearly scared him. His eyes were bleeding, crying dark red blood and he had no idea why. He hastily tried to wipe the tears away, crying for real as he started to panic. Why is this happening? I didn’t even use my quirk! But when he looked behind him in the reflection, he truly began to hyperventilate.

Everything in the small bathroom was floating. Towels hanging on the racks were now hovering, the shower curtain was lifted, and anything else that he could see. They circled around him, growing
faster in speed as he breathed harder, his back smacking against the wall. Glass shattered above him, the sound itself sounding distant. He slid to the floor in pants, cradling his head as he yelled for his mom. A second later, the door busted open.

It took Inko three seconds to look around the bathroom, and another two to finally notice her son huddled in the corner, rocking back and forth while his shoulders shook. She immediately rushed him, holding his shoulders frantically as she tried to figure out why he was acting like that. She saw the blood seeping through his fingers and began to panic as well, prying his fingers away from his eyes.

“Izuku! What happened to you?” she asked, her own hands shaking as she surveyed the damage. He was still crying blood, red smearing his cheeks and hands as he continued to try and rub them. “Release your quirk!”

He shook his head frantically, trying to calm his breathing enough to explain. “I-I can’t, Mom! I’m not doing this!” he cried out, looking at her with wide eyes. “Please make it stop, please make it stop! I can’t stop it, I can’t stop it, make it stop! I’m scared, I’m so scared!”

Inko looked around the bathroom quickly before clicking her tongue in frustration. “You need to calm down, okay? Panicking will make it worse.” she hushed him, grabbing the sides of his head and forcing him to look at her. “Breathe in for me, and then breathe out. Just like this.” Her chest rose for five seconds, then fell for another. She repeated the gesture, and eventually Izuku followed her lead. His breathing was still a bit rattled, but he stopped crying. Soon after, the objects that were floating fell to their feet.

He released a sigh, his head falling between his knees. His mother stood up and wet a washcloth, returning to wipe away the red from his face. She was gentle, but he could see how her fingers clenched the cloth and her hand shook slightly.

Was this how Bakugou reacted when he saw me like this? Did he panic like Mom?

“Mom, what just happened?” he couldn’t raise his voice past a whisper, and Inko sat beside her son, wrapping an arm around his shoulders. Izuku was still in shock from it all, his hands going numb from how hard he was clenching them. Was this how Bakugou reacted when he saw me like this? Did he panic like Mom?

“I thought I was finally getting more control. I was getting better!”

His mother sighed, rubbing her eyes. “I should have told you from the start. I was just so happy for you, and I didn’t want you to fear your quirk, but that was so, so selfish of me.” she sniffled, wiping at her eyes.

Izuku turned his body to face her, his hand resting on her arm to comfort her. “Mom...it’s okay. Please tell me: What were you hiding?” he kept his voice soft, but inside, his heart thumped loudly in his ears. Tell me, Mom. What’s wrong with me?

Inko lifted her head and looked at him with wet eyes. “Your quirk--mine too--revolves around emotion and immense control. When I started off, I was able to control it almost immediately, but my emotions were a bit scattered. I noticed that I was starting to lose control over my ability if I was angry, frustrated, even happy. It was stressful, which made it even worse.”

Izuku listened intently, trying to wrap his head around the new information. So his quirk circled around his feelings and would be harder to control if he was overwhelmed by a specific emotion. “Did you ever have these symptoms?”

She shook her head. “Not this severe. Nosebleeds, yes. But not from the eyes.” Inko sucked in a breath from her nose. “If you don’t learn to control your emotions and your quirk, I fear that you’ll
damage your brain. After all, telekinesis uses the mind as a concentration source.”

He nodded in understanding. “So I have to put a mental barrier on my emotions, right? Just make sure that I don’t get too angry or happy?”

“For now, I would. Eventually, you’ll be able to control your quirk like I have done, but we can’t risk any permanent damage. Especially not this early in your life.” she stood up again, leaving the room and returning with a broom and a dustpan. “Now, go to bed. You need to sleep it off.”

Midoriya gestured to the mess around them. “But what about--?”

Inko cut him off with a glare. “Go. To. Bed.”

Izuku locked up under her gaze, nodding excessively as he climbed to his feet. He walked out into the hallway, nearing his door when he turned back around to his mom. A whirl of questions were swimming in his brain at the moment, but he knew that it had to wait. “Thank you, Mom. I’ll see you in the morning.” he smiled tiredly at her before closing his bedroom door behind him.

His room was plagued in darkness, only being highlighted by the lights from his window. Izuku numbly walked to his bed, eyeing his phone which was charging on his desk. Could he still talk to Bakugou after all that happened? Would he even want to know? "No, he said that he wanted me to be honest about everything. I have to tell him.

It wouldn’t be lying if he never asked. Don’t ask, don’t tell, right?

Izuku groaned, falling back on the mattress and keeping his eyes glued to the ceiling. Why did everything always go south with him? He was so happy, and then his quirk backfired because of it. When would things finally settle for him? He felt his eyes water, but he choked them down by squeezing his eyes shut. He can’t cry. He can’t get emotional, or else he’ll hurt himself more. Izuku couldn’t even trust his emotions anymore, lest they turn on him.

He was startled out of his stupor when his phone began to vibrate and light up, illuminating the room in a pale white glow. Izuku sniffed and sat up, rubbing at his eyes before walking over to answer the call. He wouldn’t leave Bakugou standing, not after he showed a side of himself today. Izuku would have to get over his issues.

“Hello?” Izuku’s voice hitched, and he inwardly cursed. Way to sound casual!

Bakugou hummed on the other side of the line. “Yo. Everything good over there, nerd?” he asked, the sound of rustling sheets cutting his voice off at the end. After a few moments of readjusting, Bakugou let out a content sigh.

Izuku unplugged his phone and traveled to the bed, snuggling up in the sheets to seek comfort. How long ago was it that he felt truly comfortable, now that he was thinking about it? When Izuku slept with his mom some nights as a kid, he remembered the warmth that she gave him, and it immediately put him at ease. He genuinely felt safe with her, but now that he’s older and circumstances were different, he’d forgotten what it felt like. Remembering that Bakugou asked him a question, Izuku scrambled for an answer. “I had an issue with my quirk a few minutes ago.” he admitted quietly, deciding that the truth was the only thing Bakugou deserved.

The boy sucked in a breath in response. “What happened, idiot? You’re not dead or anything, yeah?” he didn’t sound panicked just yet, but he had a push in his tone that left nothing to be ignored. He wanted to know everything.
“Everything’s fine, no one got hurt or anything. I, uh, saw what it looked like when my eyes bleed. Not a fun sight,” he laughed bitterly. “I panicked, and I looked around and everything in my bathroom was floating. I had no control over it.”

Bakugou fell silent. He exhaled, the sound crackling through the speakers. “I can’t imagine that you took it well, huh?”

“One second I was standing over the counter; the next, I see my mom running in and I’m on the floor. I think I blacked out for a few seconds, to be completely honest. She calmed me down and the stuff came falling from the air, and eventually I stopped bleeding too.” Izuku further explained. “I found out that my emotions correspond with my quirk. If I’m too happy, it can activate. If I’m too upset, I can lose control.”

"Damn," he whistled lowly, his voice quiet. “Is there any way to control it?”

Izuku rolled over on his back. “Yeah, but I have to shut off my emotions after they get to a specific ‘intensity’. Which will be pretty hard to do.” he groaned. “I wish things went my way a little more, y’know?”

Bakugou simply hummed in response. “I get that, nerd. I feel like that sometimes, but then I remember how fucking cool I am, and I get over it.” he laughed, and it shocked Izuku into a chuckle. Typical.

“Ha. Well, enough about that. What did you want to talk about, Kacchan?” Izuku diverted the issue away from him, starting to feel uncomfortable with the attention. He wasn’t used to talking about himself just yet.

Bakugou made a small noise from the other side. “Nice diversion, Deku. But, yeah; I should get started as soon as possible, I guess.” he cleared his throat.

“I propose a new game of twenty questions. We can ask only one question a day per person, and if it’s totally personal, we can pass the question.” Bakugou paused. “Are you in, nerd?”

Izuku closed his eyes, remembering the past Izuku and Bakugou and how they played twenty questions. Bakugou would never pass a question, claiming that he wasn’t a sensitive person. Izuku would try and follow his example, but even some of the innocent questions made him tense up and pass. But things were different now. They were different now.

So Izuku smiled to himself and allowed himself to relax into the sheets. “I’m in.”

Bakugou was the first to ask a question. “We’ll start off easy, just to get the hang of it. Plus an idiot like you probably forgot how twenty questions worked.” Izumi scoffed at that but let it slide. “Okay, first question: How is your mom taking all of this? I know she confessed a lot this morning, but has she been acting differently?”

That certainly wasn’t the question Izuku expected. He knew that the two were closer than he thought, but Bakugou showing concern for his mother still surprised him. “She’s definitely worried about me. She’s trying to provide for me, but I can tell that it’s frustrating for her to watch her son go through this.”

“Hell, anyone would be frustrated, right? It’s fucking common sense.” he bit back. “You’ve given her a lot of grief, you shit.”

Izuku numbly nodded, saying nothing to counter that. I have, haven’t I? Sometimes I can’t help but
feel that she’d be better off without me. Though, I would hate to leave her alone in this house...

“I can hear the fucking gears turning in your head, dumbass Deku.” Bakugou sighed. “You’re fine; Inko loves you to the fucking moon and back. Get your head out of your ass.” It sounded like he was trying to comfort him, so Izuku chased away his cursed thoughts.

“I know.” he said, a soft smile on his lips. “My turn, right Kacchan? To ask a question, I mean.” Bakugou hummed an affirmative, and Izuku wracked his head for a question to ask. He didn’t want to go too far right off the bat, but he didn’t want his question to be wasted. He remembered how open Bakugou was when they exited the counseling building; he didn’t want to scare that version of him away.

“How long have you been going to counseling, Kacchan?” Izuku ended up asking, sucking in a bated breath when he realized that he may have jumped the gun. He decided to backpedal, stuttering completely as he tried to apologize.

Quiet laughter quickly shut Izuku up, the sound making his face flush and his heart throb. *Again with these feelings? Really?* “Deku, calm down. It’s not a horrible question, fuck.” he waited until his laughter settled before talking again. “God, it’s been a couple years since my first visit, but that was with a different business. Since I was nine, I think.”

“How long have you been going to counseling, Kacchan?” Izuku echoed, slightly confused. So he didn’t go to the same place before?

Bakugou was oddly silent until he cleared his throat. “There were a few misunderstandings, and my mom took me out of there because she was pissed at them. Then we found Yoku, and I’ve been there since.” he ended up saying, but it felt like there was more to that story. Maybe another day, Izuku would ask about it.

“Oh, I see. Are you happy at Yoku?” Izuku already knew the answer just by looking at how differently Bakugou acted once he came out, but he wanted confirmation. It would put his mind at ease, maybe.

Izuku could hear the smile through the phone. “Oh, hell yeah I am. They’re the only fuckers that put up with my shit, not to mention the free stuff that comes with it.” he laughed until a sharp knock quickly shut him up.

“Katsuki, people are trying to sleep! Get your ass to bed!” the familiar voice of Bakugou Mitsuki struck fear into Izuku, and he wasn’t even there. Bakugou yelled back at her until she retreated back to her room. After she left, Bakugou grumbled quietly about how annoying she was before being interrupted by a yawn.

*Cute*, Izuku thought to himself and immediately flushed red. *Oh god, what am I talking about? Kacchan isn’t cute! He’d kill me if he ever heard that come out of anyone’s mouth, especially mine!* “We should go to bed, Kacchan.” he said, because he really shouldn’t be on the phone with a potential crush--is that what he’d call it?--and possibly embarrass himself by saying the wrong thing.

Bakugou’s small yawn, terribly muffled by his hand, was his answer. “Okay, yeah. I’ll see you bright and early tomorrow, nerd. Take it easy tomorrow, or else.” he murmured tiredly before hanging up, not even waiting to hear Izuku’s goodbye. As soon as the phone turned off, Izuku set down his phone and rolled over until he was face down on the pillow, unleashing a frustrated groan.

*When the hell did I start thinking this way towards my childhood friend?*
The next morning came by painfully slow for Midoriya, who barely got a wink of sleep last night. He trudged behind Bakugou, who began to lose patience from having to wait for him to catch up. Finally, after he almost fell asleep while walking and tripped over a crack in the sidewalk, Bakugou snapped.

“Okay, you shitty nerd, what is wrong with you? You’re literally a walking zombie right now.” He whirled around and scowled, causing Izuku to nearly bump into him. He blinked away his exhaustion and looked up at him.

“Sorry Kacchan, I didn’t get a lot of sleep last night.” he said quietly, muffling a yawn behind his hand. Bakugou scoffed again and continued walking, albeit at a slower pace.

“Weren’t you the one that insisted that it was time for bed last night, idiot? Way to follow your own advice.” Bakugou flicked his arm and Izuku batted his hand away with a groan.

“Yeah, yeah. I didn’t mean to stay up late! I just had a lot on my mind.” He blushed at the last part, remembering the hours that he spent thinking about his unnerving new crush. Since he spent a long time thinking about it, Izuku finally realized that he’d been pining over him for years but disguised it as admiration. Don’t get him wrong; he admired Bakugou greatly as kids, but he also wanted something more from him. It just took him a few years to realize why.

The blond took interest and hummed. “When does your brain shut off? I don’t think I’ve ever seen your ass calm down for more than a minute.” Izuku blushed harder at that, covering his face with his sleeve.

“I calm down eventually! Maybe it’s just you that make me like this!” he retorted, turning his head away in a childish gesture. Bakugou chortled but said nothing else as they approached the school. They no longer waited for each other to enter first, having moved past that stage of awkwardness a couple months ago. However, the stares that they got walking through the gates were new. Everyone spoke in hushed whispers around them, causing Bakugou to get pissed.

“What the fuck are you all looking at? Piss off.” he spat, but they surprisingly stayed in place. Bakugou twitched, but Midoriya held him by his sleeve. He was confused too, but that didn’t mean they had to resort to violence.

“Midoriya! Bakugou!” a familiar voice shouted behind them, causing them both to turn around. Matsuki came running after them with panicked eyes, having just arrived at school as well. “You’re not going to like this…”

Bakugou had enough of the mystery. “What the fuck are you on about? What’s going on, shitty extra?” he snapped, glaring a hole into her. Midoriya clicked his tongue at his rudeness and stepped forward to greet his new friend.

“Matsuki, good morning. What’s happening over here? It’s kind of like we’re celebrities or something.” Izuku trailed off with a nervous laugh. The black-haired girl looked up at them with a pale face, pulling out her phone.

“My friend said she saw a couple posters about you guys being set up by Ren and a few of his friends, so I had to run over as fast as I could to see what the damage was. You haven’t seen it yet?” she seemed frantic, and Izuku felt dread creep up his throat. Bakugou slapped his head.

“Calm down, you fucking idiot. It can’t be that bad.” he growled, and in the back of his mind, Izuku appreciated the distraction. He wouldn’t want his emotions to get out of control this early in the morning, anyway. Matsuki grabbed them both by the wrists and dragged them--much to Bakugou’s
displeasure--to the bulletin board in the entranceway, her eyes set in a focused line. When they stopped in front of it, a couple snickers could be heard from all sides. Izuku gulped and raised his gaze, finding the page immediately.

A picture of Izuku and Bakugou together last night walking home stared back at them. They were smiling at each other with rosy cheeks from the cold, but the look they both shared were happy and intimate. In bright red letters across the poster was the word ‘Faggot’. The breath was knocked out of Izuku’s lungs then, and he suddenly felt the need to puke. He wanted to look away, but his eyes were glued to the damn sheet. Beside him, Bakugou was rigid and Matsuki let out a gasp.

“Oh my god. I’ll go grab a teacher!” she exclaimed. Matsuki took one last glance at the two with teary eyes before darting away, leaving Bakugou and Izuku alone with the cursed paper.

Oh god, how is Bakugou taking this? He hasn’t said a word, and he’s as still as a statue. With this, his reputation is trashed! This is my fault, I shouldn’t have fought back when I did, then Ren wouldn’t have gotten as involved with me...now Bakugou has to pay for my stupid mistakes! His eyes watered, and inwardly, he wondered how long it was since he last breathed.

A rough hand grabbing his shoulder finally shocked him into breathing. He inhaled with a sharp gasp, tearing his eyes away from the bulletin board. “Fucking breath, you idiot!” Bakugou yelled, shoving him slightly. He stepped forward and grabbed the poster, tearing it down with a huff. He promptly exploded it with his palm until it was mere ash in his grasp, and turned his attention to Izuku again. “You okay, Deku?” he asked, his voice rough.

For a moment, Izuku wanted to scream at him. Am I okay? What about you? I’m used to this by now, but you? You were the king of this school! “I’m going to class.” he instead said, keeping his voice level but his eyes downcast to avoid the expression that Bakugou was wearing. He didn’t want to look at him right now.

“Deku...Hey!” he tried to reach out to him, but a sharp laugh from the other hall stopped him. Izuku flinched at the sound of Ren’s voice, but he kept walking, trying to block out the noise.

“Let him go, Kacchan. You’ve got better things to worry about.” Ren teased, but by the time Bakugou would have responded, Izuku was already pressed against the door of his homeroom class.

This is all my fault. Izuku cried, holding back tears. Distantly, he could hear the bell rang above him. He went to his desk, resting his head in his arms. He ignored everyone coming in; even Matsuki, who laid a warm hand on his shoulder and tried to get him to lift his head.

He especially ignored the burning gaze of Bakugou, who hadn’t said a word but didn’t need to. The something between them was breaking apart, and Izuku couldn’t find it in him to fix it.

He was done.

***

A few months passed by in a blur. Izuku kept to himself mostly, talking to Bakugou only when he had to. They walked to and from school in silence, and Izuku cooperated enough in training to not be a bother. All Might sensed a change and pulled him off to the side, but Izuku diverted his attention away. He didn’t want to bother anybody.

In the time that passed, Ren got expelled and his parents got involved. He was forced to apologize to Izuku and his mother, not to mention the Bakugou’s for his involvement. It was a good feeling, watching his bully leave the school grounds for good. After his afterschool beatings and harassment
were discovered, the school decided that he wasn’t fit to attend their middle school. Bakugou returned to being the king, and Izuku was glad to see him on top again. That didn’t mean he was willing to go back to talking with him, however. He couldn’t help but feel partially responsible, even though his mother got it in his skull that it wasn’t.

He couldn’t help the depressing thoughts from coming back, either.

It didn’t take an idiot to know that Bakugou was suspecting something, but the blond either didn’t care—which even to Izuku sounded absurd—or respected his decision and waited for him to talk. Either way, the silence that Izuku received from him was comforting. He wasn’t ready to talk yet.

His quirk was easier to control now. Every now and then, he’d lose control, but the migraines were tolerable and he no longer bled from the eyes whenever he felt upset. Izuku was able to lift heavier objects and even lift more than one light object at a time. The progress that he was making was great, and he was excited for the UA entrance exams that were already two days away.

All Might never failed to show his pride in the two boys after they finished up their portion of the beach, offering them both a water bottle and a pat on the back. “Good job, boys! I truly believe that tomorrow, we’ll be able to see the beautiful horizon once more.”

Bakugou scoffed and gulped down the water. “Of course we will! Deku and I have been slaving our asses for months now, why the hell would we half-ass it?”

Izuku nodded to Bakugou’s words. “Tomorrow morning, we’ll be able to finish. Then it’s the UA exam.” he fought down the nervousness with a confident smile. “We’ll make you proud, sir!”

All Might looked down at him with his signature wide grin. “I have no doubt in my mind that you will, my boy! You both have shown tremendous amounts of capability, not to mention teamwork. You both will make great heroes one day!” The two looked at each other then, the words unspoken between them. Bakugou’s eyes glinted with the rising sun, which casted an orange glow on the side of his face. The curvature of his jaw caught Izuku’s eye, but he chased away his feelings.

* I don’t need to ogle my friend right now! Izuku thought to himself. He offered the boy a small smile and nodded. “Thank you, All Might. Without you…” his voice trailed off, and All Might got the idea. The rescue from the Sludge Villain went unsaid over the months, but Izuku’s gratitude would always be there. He looked up to All Might for years, Bakugou too, and to be in the presence of the Symbol of Peace was comforting. It no longer overwhelmed him to be with the pro hero; his nervousness replaced with a silent respect for the man.

Often, Izuku wondered how All Might was doing health-wise. He had told Izuku once that his quirk needed to be passed on since his body was degrading, but he hasn’t received any news on who his new successor was or if he had one at all. Izuku noticed how often the man had to switch forms now, and how much blood was being coughed up. He’d have to ask him about it when he had time.

All Might clasped both of their shoulders with a chuckle. “Now, I believe it is time you both headed back! Time is of the essence, you know!” he exclaimed. Bakugou cursed when he checked the time, grabbing Izuku by the wrist and dragging him away from the beach. They stopped to wave at the hero before they left, and immediately rushed home.

Izuku’s apartment was right in front of them, but Bakugou didn’t let go of his wrist just yet. “Hey, about my counseling tonight.” He paused, scratching at the back of his neck. “My mom’s picking me up from school, so you won’t be able to come with me.”

Izuku just simply smiled back at him. “That’s fine. I’ll be okay on my own now that Ren’s gone.” he
gently pried his wrist from Bakugou’s grip and began to head to the stairs. “I’ll see you in an hour or so?”

Bakugou waved him away. “Yeah, whatever.”

Izuku hurried up the stairs and got to the apartment, opening the door with practiced silence. He hid the key and slid off his shoes, carefully putting them in the same spot. He didn’t bother checking the house to see if the lights were on, since he knew Inko’s sleep schedule like the back of his hand. He crept up the stairs until he got to his room, blindly opening the door to slip in.

“Welcome home, Izuku.” his mother hissed, and Izuku froze.

Shit.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you again for reading! If you liked it, leave a comment and Kudos to show your support. Also, stop by my Tumblr account ‘eeriegrove’ for prompts of BakuDeku in all their glory. Love you all~
I'm Happy For Me, Too.

Chapter Summary

Where Izuku is happy, but then someone comes back into the equation and ruins it.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The initial shock of stumbling into his mother washed away quickly, replaced with shame and guilt. He wondered how long it would take for his mom to get suspicious. Izuku looked at his mother’s expression, nearly cowering beneath her vicious glare. Inko wasn’t going to let him go with a slap on the wrist; not this time.

“Midoriya Izuku, you have a lot of explaining to do” she stood up from where she was sitting on his bed, and came face to face with her son. “How long have you been sneaking out like this? You’ve been tired all the time, and don’t get me started on the scratches that you come home with!”

Izuku closed his eyes and lowered his head. “Mom, it’s not what you think.” he tried to diffuse the situation, but that just managed to make her angrier.

“Well, what am I supposed to think? You haven’t told me anything about your life, not after that damn doctor’s visit ten years ago, and now I catch you coming back home when you should be asleep!” she snapped, taking another step forward. Her finger jabbed into Izuku’s chest. “Tell me everything. No more lies.”

Izuku sighed and brought her to the bed, where they sat a certain distance apart. “All Might contacted me the night that I came home from the villain attack.” He heard a noise of surprise come from her, but he shook it off and continued. “He brought me to the beach and offered to train me for the UA entrance exams. Bakugou was there too.”

“She stood up then, towering over him even though she was short enough to reach his height while he sat. “All Might contacted me the night that I came home from the villain attack.” He heard a noise of surprise come from her, but he shook it off and continued. “He brought me to the beach and offered to train me for the UA entrance exams. Bakugou was there too.”

“Train? But there’s no room at Dagobah Municipal for training.” Inko protested, looking at him with suspicion. Does she think I’m lying?

Izuku quickly tried to clear it up. “That was the point! He tasked us both to clean the beach so that he could see the horizon. He wanted us to use our quirks for one half, and brute strength for the other.”

She looked at him and gestured for him to continue. “Bakugou and I had to work together to focus on our teamwork, and we’ve been doing it for ten months. Tomorrow would be the last day.”

She stood up then, towering over him even though she was short enough to reach his height while he sat. “No, today is your last day. You’re not sneaking out anymore, Izuku. I won’t allow you to damage your brain for your dream of becoming a hero!”

Izuku couldn’t help but feel angry, his pent up emotions boiling over. “And what have you done to support me, huh? At four, you told me that I couldn’t become a hero! You did nothing for me!” Wait, what are you saying? You don’t mean that! “You made me feel worse about my life! I wouldn’t have felt the way I had if I had you to support me, but even my own mother gave up on me.”

Inko stared back at him with shock, reeling back as if he burned her. “Years. I’ve spent years
regretting what I said to you. I worried about you 24/7, fearing what the world was moulding my baby into. But you didn’t say a word to me after that. You closed yourself off, and then I read that you wanted to end your own life? What kind of failure of a mother was I to ignore the signs?” she cried out, wiping her eyes furiously.

Izuku shakily stood up and enveloped her in a hug, his face burning as he too cried. “Mom, I’m so sorry. I didn’t mean it...any of it. I was just upset, okay? I’ll be honest from now on, I promise, so please don’t think like that.” What kind of failure of a son am I, to make my own mother feel like this?

Inko sniffled and wrapped her arms around him. “You were so happy the morning after the villain attack. You smiled that brilliant smile of yours for the first time in years, so I only assumed that it was because of your quirk. But it was because you were pursuing your dream, right?”

Izuku nodded in her neck, inhaling her familiar and warm scent of her hair. “Yeah. All Might and Bakugou being there, pushing me to be my best...it made me so happy, Mom. That’s why I can’t bear to leave the job unfinished. With UA entrance exams tomorrow, I’ll need all the practice I can get.”

His mother sighed and pulled away. “Okay. I get it. You can go tomorrow morning, but after the entrance exam, you’re grounded. I’ve been way too lenient with you, young man.” she smiled up at him, and Izuku wiped away his tears. Words couldn’t describe how much he loved his mom. She was on her own when it came to raising him and putting food on the table after his father left them in pursuit of work. When he never came back or contacted them, she immediately took the role of both a mother and a father. She was a hero in her own way.

“Thank you, Mom. I promise, once I’m done, I’ll do anything you ask me to do. And maybe once everything calms down, I can take you down to the beach. We can walk there again, for the first time in ages.” Izuku grinned. Inko looked at him with surprise before laughing out loud. She pat his head and walked towards the door.

“Sounds good to me, Izu. Now, go and take a shower, will you? You reek.” she smiled one last time before disappearing down the hall. As soon as she was out of sight, Izuku collapsed on the bed, releasing a long sigh. He was being more honest with his poor mom, but the emotions that came with it were hard to deal with. Izuku was torn between crying or screaming, but he had to stay calm because of his quirk.

All he knew, as he got ready for school, was that Bakugou was hearing the entire story by the time they meet up again.

***

They were walking in tandem, footsteps syncing up perfectly as they headed to school. The air was fresh that morning, and they stayed silent as they enjoyed the morning. Izuku hadn’t said a word yet, waiting for the perfect time to tell him. Would he care? Would it ruin our moment of peace?

“Quit your mumbling, nerd.” the blond grumbled, flicking Izuku’s temple. He winced and rubbed at the sore spot, glaring at Bakugou. “If you have something to say, spit it out and get it over with.”

“You didn’t have to flick me,” Izuku trailed off. “But, I do have something to tell you.”

Bakugou raised his brow. “Oh?”

“My mom knows. She caught me sneaking in earlier.” He side-eyed Bakugou to see his reaction.
The blonde gawked, his steps faltering just enough for Izuku to notice. Though, when it came to Bakugou, Izuku found that he noticed a lot of things. “She was so angry. I haven’t seen her that mad since she found out that Dad was gone for good.”

Bakugou sucked in a breath and looked at him. “What did she say to you? Did you get into deep shit?”

“Oh, I made it worse for a moment. She threatened to keep me from going to the last training session tomorrow, so I snapped at her and said some really messed up things.” he sighed and rubbed his eyes. “She confessed what she said in my room the last time and started crying.”

A beat of silence. Then, “Shit.”

Izuku laughed with that, startling Bakugou even more. “Yeah. I cleared it up right away, but I felt so guilty. I still feel bad. But, she and I talked about it. I’m definitely grounded, but at least I’ll be able to go to training one last time.”

The boy hummed, relief smoothing out the worried lines of his forehead. “Well, that’s good, I guess. Not that it bothered me, or anything.”

Izuku rolled his eyes, hiding his smile behind his hand. Bakugou always quickly tried to hide his care for others by saying that, but he was transparent enough for Izuku to see right through him. Spending the past ten months with him have made him realize that half the stuff that came from Bakugou’s mouth was false and just a way to guard himself.

“How are you feeling about it?” he pressed, still focused on the road ahead. After Ren’s little scare, he made sure that the coast was clear, just in case Ren decided that expulsion wasn’t enough to torment Izuku further. It seemed that he had an obsession with him, rumors circulating that after he was removed from their school, he threw fits and tried to sneak out of the house all the time. Izuku wasn’t too worried anymore. His quirk was stronger, not to mention the fact that he had a very angry Bakugou keeping watch.

Izuku kept the same pace, but he took some time in his head to think about it. “I’m definitely upset about my little outburst, but other than that, I’m relieved to know that my mom has my back.”

“Well, everyone says stuff that they regret, idiot. The old hag and I dish it out almost every day, but you don’t see me hating her guts. It’ll blow over.” Bakugou said.

The boy laughed, clearing away most of the negative feelings. “Yeah, you’re right. Thanks, Kacchan.”

Bakugou’s face was slightly tilted away from him, obscuring his expression from view. “Whatever, shitty nerd. C’mon, we’re going to be late to school if you don’t hurry your slow ass.”

Izuku sped up the pace, passing Bakugou as he briskly walked ahead. In a burst of confidence, he shouted behind his shoulder: “Now who’s slow, Kacchan?”

Needless to say, when Matsuki greeted them at the gate, they were both sweating through their uniforms and panting like no tomorrow, having ran the entire way in hopes of beating one another.

***

Lunch at school was typically lonely for Izuku. He sat alone most days, sitting under one of the trees in the courtyard while he ate. It didn’t bother him too much, since he enjoyed the weather, but now that he was friends with Bakugou and Matsuki, he felt more lonely than he’d felt in awhile. The
lunch that his mother made him suddenly tasted awfully bland to him, so he set it down on his lap and rested his head against the trunk of the tree. *I wonder what they’re doing, anyway. If they’re having fun.*

Hushed voices suddenly came to his attention, causing him to press against the tree to stay out of sight. “I heard that he’s no longer under house arrest starting today.” an oddly familiar voice whispered on the other side of the tree, sounding extremely close. It sounded a lot like one of Ren’s goons, who was a year younger than Izuku.

“Really? Damn, that was way too long. Four months of being confined at home would kill me for sure.” Someone else replied. “I wonder how he’s doing.”

Nervousness seeped into Izuku’s veins as he listened to their banter, only a few feet away from his hiding place. He wondered what they would do if they found him there eavesdropping. Without Ren to instigate it, the bullying had stopped, but Izuku was sure that those two would rough him up if they found that he was snooping around. He had to get out of there.

Carefully, Izuku shuffled to his feet, keeping the noise to a minimum while he peered out from the trunk. The two boys were slouched on the bench in front of him, back to Izuku. If he kept to the right, they should miss him entirely. Izuku tightened his grip on his bento box and walked forward, keeping his head high. He had his quirk if he needed to defend himself. He was fine.

Izuku ended up making it back to the cafeteria, quickly being overwhelmed by the sheer size of it. He’d only been in there a number of times, so the sight always intimidated him. There were so many kids bunched into it, so he felt somewhat anxious as he searched for an empty seat.

*I mean, it wouldn't be the first time I had to eat in the classroom...I might as well save me the time.*

He was turned to walk back when a finger tapped his shoulder. Izuku whirled around and came face-to-face with a grinning Matsuki. “Hey, Midoriya! Come on, sit with me.”

“Oh, I don’t think that’s…” he tried to decline, but she continued to drag him along anyway, weaving through the packed tables with ease. Izuku could feel the stares of everyone around him, his skin itching. But the smile that crept on his face overcame the gazes, and when he sat down at Matsuki’s table, he had the best lunch in years, even forgetting the news about Ren.

And when he looked out into the crowd and caught Bakugou staring at him, their eyes locked together. Bakugou shielded his face from the rest of the kids at his table and stuck his tongue out, flashing him a grin as if to say ‘I’m happy for you.’

Izuku smiled back. *I’m happy for me, too.*

The afternoons were lovely on the walk back, the cherry blossoms in full bloom. Izuku loosely gripped his bag with one hand, the other swinging at his side. He took in the air around him, relaxing as he walked alongside the river on his way home. Since Bakugou couldn’t take him to therapy today, he took the longer route, enjoying his walk without the fear of being jumped by Ren.

He was free.

Izuku stopped by the store, browsing the shelves for a drink. He was in the mood for something sweet, so he picked up a soda and payed for it, thanking the clerk before heading back out again. *It feels like I’m walking on air today,* he hummed quietly, scrolling through his phone.

He was nearly home when he felt a tingly feeling at the back of his neck. Almost like he was being watched. It felt just like the Sludge Incident, but this set Izuku further on edge. Izuku pocketed his
phone and turned around. There was nothing. He shook his head and continued walking, brushing it off as just his nerves.

However, when he felt it again, he knew that something was up. Izuku turned his head again, and could have sworn that he saw a foot before it vanished behind an alleyway. *Am I being followed? If so, by who?*

Izuku began to panic, his pace quickening as his hand clenched tighter around the bottle of soda. He was almost home. If he could just reach his apartment, Izuku would be safe. He approached his street when the hauntingly familiar feeling of being jerked backwards caused him to yelp, his back colliding with the ground. The air was completely wiped from his lungs, and he desperately tried to inhale—to *breathe*—but he couldn’t. Above him, a silhouette of a boy loomed over him, chuckling.

“Long time, no see, huh Midoriya?” Ren’s rough voice greeted him, and Izuku tensed up. *What was he doing here? Has he been following me? Ren was supposed to be far away from here!* He didn’t have enough time to recuperate as he was dragged by his backpack handle into an alley. Izuku cried out, fighting against his hold, but it wasn’t enough to shake him off.

He was finally able to breathe, let alone talk. “Why are you doing this? Haven’t you had enough?” Izuku exclaimed, scrambling into a sitting position. Ren scowled down at him, peeved at his words. “It’s *never* enough. You ruined my life, little Midoriya, and now I have all the time in the world to make you pay.” his voice dropped several octaves as he stepped forward, and Izuku moved backwards.

“I ruined your life? You’ve been bullying me for years! I’d say you’ve had it coming.” In a burst of confidence, Izuku spat out. Bakugou was clearly rubbing off on him, but that seemed to affect Ren. He was startled at his words, but he quickly covered his shock with a snarl.

“Bakugou really has made you his bitch, huh? You must really be together if you’re already actin’ like him!” Ren taunted, electricity sparkling from his palms. “Well, I’ll be sure to send him a picture of what I’m about to do to you. Oh, I’m going to *fuck you up*.”

Midoriya jumped to his feet, just managing to dodge the lunge directed his way. Izuku tested out his quirk, pushing Ren away by a couple of inches. Clenching his fists, Izuku stood up straighter. “I’ve had *enough* of this! You want to fight me, fine! But don’t you dare involve Kacchan like that.”

Ren laughed. “God, you two would make the perfect couple! Tell me, has he tried anything with you yet?”

Out of anger, Izuku pushed him away harder, shoving him into the wall. “Shut up!” He couldn’t help but flush at his words all the same, but it was a mixture of mortification and anger. “I’m giving you a chance to leave now, and never come after me again. If you don’t, I’ll have no choice but to defend myself!”

“Is that a threat?”

“It’s a fucking *promise*.” He spat, too angry to even realize that he just swore. Izuku got in his fighting stance, muscles tensed as he waited. Ren looked at Izuku as if he was prey, and before Izuku could blink, Ren was on him. His grip on his wrist was like iron as he sent electricity down his arm, searing the skin enough to burn. Izuku stood strong, concentrating on Ren as he swung his hand to the side, sending him flying into the wall. Ren collided with a strangled gasp, disoriented.

Izuku clenched his free hand around the wound, wincing as his hand came back with a thin coating
of blood. *He burnt through skin? Does he have no regard for my safety anymore?* Izuku didn’t let Ren stand, shoving him further into the bricks as he took a step forward. The boy looked up at Izuku with a mixture of shock and fear, his hands raising up to his throat. His face was paling. *What’s happening?*

A twisted thought burrowed into his head. *You’re suffocating him. You’re controlling the air in his lungs, and you’re enjoying it. You’re going to kill him, make him suffer the same way you had…*

Izuku released him with a gasp, his hand falling to his side. He looked at Ren with disgust for himself, but he didn’t want to show his weakness. “Get away from here. And never come back.” he said, his voice coming out in a hoarse whisper. Ren stood up quickly, running out of the alley with his tail between his legs. As soon as he was out of sight, Izuku shakily lifted his hand closer to his face.

*I could have killed him. And some part of me wanted to. How did I even do that? I was just trying to keep him still, but I started choking him instead…Oh God, what am I even capable of?* He straightened out his uniform, taking a few calming breaths to get him out of his head. Izuku needed to get out of there, before he lost his mind. But where? He couldn’t face his mom, not after what he just did.

An old memory resurfaced. *“Yeah, we always hide our key in the old pot on the porch! That way useless people like you, Deku, can come in anytime!”* Slowly, Izuku walked out into the street, passing his apartment without even looking up to see it, and found himself at the comfortable home of the Bakugou’s. He robotically went through the motions of fishing the key from the pot and turning it into the house, muttering a quick apology before shuffling off his shoes and stumbling into Bakugou’s room.

He took in the sight of his room, flicking on the light so he could see better. Bakugou’s sheets were black, his duvet a blood red and his pillow cases were white. A couple posters of All Might and a rock band hung on the walls, but apart from that, his room was organized. Izuku sighed and sat on the edge of the bed, holding his head in his hands.

“What am I doing in here? He’s going to think I’m a stalker or something.” he muttered to himself, laughing softly. His wrist throbbed, and he realized that it was still bleeding. It wasn’t anything too serious, but he should at least take care of it, right? He moved to stand, but he felt the familiar sensation of dizziness overwhelm him, so he stayed down. *At least my nose isn’t bleeding! That’s improvement, right?*

Izuku felt his eyelids droop with exhaustion, so he laid down on the mattress, keeping his arm off of the sheets so it didn’t stain them. If he couldn’t wrap it, the least he could do is keep it from the fabric. His eyes flickered shut as he felt his muscles relax, the pain in his wrist nulling into a dull throb.

*Sorry for the intrusion, Kacchan.*

Someone was shaking him awake. Izuku groaned and tried to swat them away, sleepily mumbling for a few more minutes. However, when he tried to move his hand, a sharp pain startled him awake with a cry of alarm. Suddenly, the memories from yesterday came flooding back, and Izuku sat up very quickly. *I’m in Kacchan’s house! Uninvited!*

“-uku? What the fuck, are you okay? Why they hell are you bleeding? What did you do?” Bakugou’s voice was panicked as he shook his shoulders. Izuku stared at him with shock for a few brief moments, his tongue stuck to the room of his mouth. Bakugou’s eyes were crazed as he grabbed his wrist, drawing out another wince of pain. “Answer me, fucker! What the hell did you do
“It was Ren,” he answered quietly, still in a daze. “He followed me home, and we got in a fight. I fought back and I lost control, but he won’t bother me anymore, so I guess that’s a plus? But really, it doesn’t hurt that much, and I’m pretty sure it was only the skin—”

“Deep breaths, idiot. Calm the hell down and explain.” Bakugou cut him off, dropping his wrist. He seemed to calm down after Izuku responded, but he still looked shaken. *I mean, anyone would, right? He just walked in and saw me lying there.*

“As I said before, he followed me on the way home. He pulled me into the alley and tried to lunge for me, but I dodged him and used my quirk. He started talking trash about you, so I snapped, and he ended up grabbing my arm and shocked me. I guess it was enough to bleed.”

Bakugou cursed and got up from kneeling on the floor, making his way to the dresser. He pulled out a first aid kit and settled back on the floor of the bed, taking his wrist in his hand and disinfecting it. Every time he dabbed at the wound, Izuku would muffle a cry. *It hurts a lot more now that he’s cleaning it!*

“Christ, Deku. He could have burned through more than just skin!” he argued, lifting his hand to his face. The area around his wrist was bright red and the skin was charred, which made Izuku pale. It looked pretty deep, as if it would scar.

Reading his thoughts, Bakugou wrapped up the wound with practiced grace and dropped it in the boy’s lap. “I’ll definitely scar, that’s for damn sure. He burnt most of the skin clean off. Maybe then you’ll be reminded of how utterly *stupid* you were to engage with him in the first place!”

Izuku looked down at him with a frown. “I finally fought back and won, though! I lost control over myself, but now he won’t bother me anymore! I’m free from him, and all you’re doing is lecturing me? I would think that you’d at least be a little happy for me.”

Bakugou rubbed the bridge of his nose and sighed. “I’m...happy for you, okay? But you could have gotten seriously hurt! And you didn’t contact anyone about it. You could have been dead for all I know, and then what?”

Izuku fell silent, holding his hands in his lap. *I guess he really was worried about me. That feels comforting.* “How was therapy today?” he said, hoping to change the subject. Below him, Bakugou snorted.

“It was going great until I walked into my room. You got blood on my damn floors, stupid.” he replied, pushing off of his knees to stand. “Let’s get you home, shitty Deku.” he scoffed, turning his back to Izuku and walking to the door.

Izuku smiled back at him. “Right.”

***

Izuku hauled the final piece of metal onto the pile, exhaling loudly as he heard the satisfying sound of it colliding with the rest of the trash. Bakugou was currently melting down another object, his forehead beading with sweat as he focused on concentrating his quirk. He had told Izuku that he was planning a new move, but it was still in its beginning stages. It would help him if he got his quirk’s blast range under control.

*I don’t have any doubts that he won’t be able to do it. He’s talented,* Izuku thought to himself as he observed him, resting his elbow on the pile. He needed a water.
Bakugou let out a loud laugh, releasing his quirk as he finished. His shoulders were heaving, and Izuku was certain that his hands were hurting, but the wide grin on his face was the highlight of Izuku’s very early morning. They had gotten up an hour earlier so they could surprise All Might when he got back, so they were hard at work while running on very little sleep.

It wasn’t like Izuku could sleep anyway: today was the day. UA entrance exams were just a few hours away, and the nervousness was gnawing on him. Bakugou looked confident as ever, but Izuku was just now getting a handle on his quirk. It would be a challenge.

Bakugou huffed out an exhausted breath and dropped on his rear, wiping his forehead with his forearm. He rested his head on the post behind him, and Izuku had half a mind to join him.

***

When All Might found them a few minutes later, he couldn’t help but smile at the sight. The sun rose and highlighted their faces as they slept side by side, Izuku resting his head on Bakugou’s broad shoulder. They both snored softly, covered with grime from the trash. He grinned at them, bursting with pride as he surveyed the beach around them. The sand was a beautiful white, and the sun reflected off of the waves perfectly.

It was a pretty sight.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading! If you liked this chapter, let me know with a comment and Kudos! How did you all feel about Izuku's actions against Ren? Was it justified, or did he go too far?

Also, please leave a prompt for KatsuDeku at my tumblr blog 'eeriegrove'! I'm running out of prompts to work on, and I'd appreciate it if you could give me some! Thanks~
Izuku slowly opened his eyes with a groan, the light from his shades overlapping his face and temporarily blinding him. He immediately closed his eyes again and rolled to his side, curling into the warmth of his blankets while slipping back into sleep. He shifted his legs to further wrap himself around the heat, sighing in content as he rested his head in the crook of his pillow. Only, the pillow slightly rose and fell, as if it was breathing…

With a start, Izuku jolted awake, eyes snapping open once more. He came face-to-face with the familiar sight of a black t-shirt, which was only worn by none other than Bakugou Katsuki himself. Izuku took in the sight before him, and nearly fainted. His arm was sprawled across Bakugou’s chest; and under the covers, he felt their legs interlocked. Izuku’s head was partially on his chest, his cheek pressed against Bakugou’s ribs while the rest of his head was on the bed.

*I totally forgot that Kacchan crashed at my place this morning...we were so tired from training, that we literally collapsed in my bed the second we came home. Since he was so tired, he just decided that my house was closer, and now we’re here.*

Putting aside his panic, Izuku lifted his head to look at Bakugou’s face, taking in the sight. His blond eyelashes rested against his cheeks and his lips parted every time he breathed, but what really made Izuku’s heart ache was the fact that he looked at ease. It was as if he just came out of a counseling session, and it made Izuku smile. It makes me feel happy, seeing him so calm.

But the peace ended relatively quick. The sound of Inko’s footsteps must have woken him up, as Bakugou’s eyelids began to flutter open. In a moment of intense dread, Izuku did what first came to mind.

He pretended to be asleep.

The sound of quiet surprise nearly made Izuku blow his cover, but what really shocked him was the fact that Bakugou didn’t move push him off at all. Since he couldn’t open his eyes, Izuku could only imagine his expression as he woke up to find Izuku tangled with him. The anticipation was killing him, waiting for him to do something, why isn’t he doing something?

Inko walked in, beginning to say her usual greeting before seeing the sight before her. “Good morning, Izu--oh my god.” she sputtered, and Izuku figured that now was a good time as any to ‘wake up’ again. *I’ve been faking sleep far too many times in my room now.*

“I’m sorry?” he croaked, feigning exhaustion as he lifted his head. Izuku pretended to just notice Bakugou and his predicament and scattered, untangling his limbs from his. Now that he could see Bakugou more clearly, his face still looked oddly calm and if Izuku squinted, his cheeks were slightly pinker than usual. Izuku took whatever he could get, and averted his eyes back to his mom.
“Pardon the intrusion, Auntie.” Bakugou said with a laugh, sitting up on the bed. “I was too tired to make it to my place, so I crashed here. Hope that’s fine.”

Inko tsked, but smiled regardless. “Not like you would have listened anyway, young man.”

Izuku watched their banter with an amused smile, his embarrassment ebbing away. If Bakugou wasn’t going to acknowledge their previous position, Izuku certainly wouldn’t.

His mom then cleared her throat. “Well, breakfast is ready downstairs when you both are ready. There are spare clothes in Izuku’s closet if you need them, Katsuki,” she told them, before closing the door and shuffling back down the steps.

Bakugou sat up in bed, rubbing his eyes. His shirt was mussed and disheveled, but he no longer looked as beat up as he did when they got home. To be fair, they both looked like they were ready to collapse, but the look on All Might’s face when he woke them up was worth everything.

“I can’t tell you how proud I am of you two. You both proved that teamwork was possible, not to mention the progress that you both made was astounding,” the man boomed. “Watching you push your limits inspired me every day! And, though we experienced some... bumps in the road, you still got through it. So, again, I’m so proud of you both.”

Izuku got up from bed first, shuffling through his closet for clothes. He heard Bakugou approach from behind him, and held his breath when the blond reached over him to grab a baggy pair of pants and a shirt. I hope that this crush doesn’t get out of control.

“Let me know if they fit,” Izuku hummed as he pulled his own clothes from their hangers. “You can get the bathroom first, if you want. I’ll change in here, so knock when you’re done.”

“Wasn’t going to let you get dibs on the bathroom, anyway, nerd.”

“Oh, just go and get dressed already.”

Izuku ignored how his heart clenched and his face reddened when Bakugou’s laugh reverberated across the small walls of his room.

***

They were running late to the entrance exams.

Izuku blamed it entirely on his mom. She insisted that they stayed for breakfast and even served them tea, which took so long because the stove took an hour to heat up. That was one of the many reasons why Izuku hated his tiny apartment: nothing ever turned on quickly. A lot of the times, his mom was forced to premake his lunches the night before, since the mornings were always pressed for time.

“I’m so sorry, Kacchan.” Izuku wailed for the third time. He truly felt bad that they were a few minutes late, the inauguration probably underway already. Bakugou was never late to anything and took it upon himself to keep track of time, but Inko’s insistence kept him rooted in the chair while they waited for the tea to brew.

Bakugou glared at him over his shoulder as they rushed through the bustling streets towards the school. “Will you shut up, idiot Deku? I’m seriously getting tired of hearing your useless apologies.”

He shut his mouth after that, too caught up in guilt and shame to notice that they arrived at the school. When Bakugou saw his demeanor, he sighed loudly and looked up at the sky. “Why do I even bother...?” he murmured, before nudging the boy roughly with his elbow. “We’re here,
He snapped out of his stupor and blinked rapidly, finally taking in the tall buildings with a shining glint in his eyes. Izuku gushed about the structures while he stepped forward, following behind Bakugou. Allowing him a few moments to look on, Bakugou slouched and shoved his hands deep into his pockets. *The gates were simply huge, so they must have some sort of security measure put into place, but I wonder if it’s a shield type or not...*

“Are you done yet, Deku?” Bakugou groaned, opening the door. He glared at him for a moment before walking inside, not even waiting for Izuku to catch up. Luckily, Izuku was already relatively close to the building, so he entered and found Bakugou quickly. They snuck through the seated students and found some chairs in the back, both immediately slumping over in the seats. They’d been rushing to get there, so the chance to rest their feet felt good.

The presentation was already underway, Present Mic explaining the rules of the exam while gesturing wildly to the projection. There were three robots with points below them, which Izuku assumed were the targets that had to be taken down. The largest one gave three points, and the rest gave two or one. With Izuku’s quirk, he should be able to pull a few down and score some points.

“However, this test isn’t only about taking down the robots and racking up points. You’ll also be tested on rescues!” he boomed, changing the slide to an image of a silhouette of a larger robot. “And, to filter out the points, we have the ‘zero-pointer’ here.”

*I wonder how big it is? And it must be worth no points, due to the nickname, but it surely can’t be too large, right? And what does he mean by ‘filter out the points?’ Could it be that there are a limited amount of robots in an arena? That would mean that it would be a rush to get your points, and—*

“‘You’re muttering, damn nerd,’” Bakugou hissed lowly, nudging his shoulder. His red eyes reflected the blue screen ahead, and the rest of his face was highlighted with a soft light. It definitely took Izuku’s breath away, seeing every curve of his jaw and cheek making his stomach turn. “Shut it.”

“Right…” Izuku breathed out, too distracted with the sight before him to even feel embarrassed about muttering in the first place.

Bakugou stared back at him, his brow raised in a silent challenge. “Something on my face, idiot?” he muttered, his voice low and alluring and *oh, I’m doing it again, dammit!*

He snapped out of his daze quickly, his face quickly flushing red. “Nope, nothing there!”

***

It turned out that the different middle schools were separated for the tests, which meant that Izuku was alone in the trial. Bakugou disappeared shortly after the presentation, announcing his departure with a brief touch to Izuku’s shoulder, and vanished in the crowd. Izuku made his way to the arena shortly after, tempering his nervousness so it didn’t overwhelm him. He had faith himself. He trained for *months* in order to be able to step foot on this campus, and Izuku would be a fool to let his self doubt take over.

Taking in the scene around him, Izuku was simply awestruck. The arena was huge and simulated a city, realistic buildings towering over the group of students. They were clustered together, talking to each other in nervous whispers. There were a few outcasts, like Izuku, who stood around and waited for the test to begin.
“Excuse me? Are you Midoriya Izuku?” a sweet voice asked behind him, drawing his attention away from his observations.

He turned around and came face-to-face with a rosy-cheeked girl with a bobbed haircut, who was slightly shorter than he, much to his dismay. Why am I so short compared to these kids? It wasn’t so bad in middle school, but now I’m the shortest boy here!

Remembering her question, Izuku brushed off his height issues and straightened his back. “Oh, that’s me!”

She smiled, brushing her brown hair behind her ear. ‘Nice to finally match the name to the face! Though, you’re much—what’s the word, softer?—than I thought you’d be. And short, but I’m short too! Us shorties have to stick together, huh?” she said bluntly, but her smile was infectious.

“I guess so?” Izuku decided to humor her, still curious as to how she knew his name. He had no idea who this bubbly girl was, but she knew him by name.

She reached her hand into her track pant pocket and pulled out a small photo. The girl reached out and showed him the picture, her thumb covering what Izuku assumed to be her own face due to the hairstyle around it. Next to her stood a very familiar face, slightly younger in the picture.

Matsuki Numei smiled back at Izuku, her hair longer and more wavy than it was now, but her violet eyes were still as sharp as ever. She looked happier there, and she was clearly friends with this girl if the tight hug that they shared was anything to go by. So, this is one of Matsuki’s friends?

“You know Numei, right? She’s told me all about you!” the girl said with a bright smile. “You made her middle school life better, according to her.”

A warm feeling spread through Izuku’s gut, and a nervous smile graced his lips. He felt proud, in a way, to have inspired and made her life better in the final few months of school. “Yeah, she’s a good friend. She helped me out with some stuff, I guess,” he said, scratching the back of his neck. This girl was a potential competitor, yet he was talking with her as if they had a coffee in between them.

I’d like to know her name, Izuku thought to himself, it sucks to be out of the loop.

“Oh! I just realized: you have no idea who I am! Gosh, sometimes I can be an airhead. My name’s Uraraka Ochako, nice to meet you! I hope to see you again!” she chirped, lowering her body in a bow. “May we both do well in the exams.”

Izuku was about to respond to her when the intercom beeped loudly, startling the crowd. “Attention, yeah! The exams will start in one minute! Remember, we’ll be watching for points in both rescue and attack. Plus Ultra!” Present Mic yelled into the microphone, the speaker squealing in protest.

“Jeez, that scared me! Anyway, I have to go and prepare. Good seeing you!” Ochako said with a wave before bouncing away, leaving Izuku slack jawed in the middle of the clearing.

“...you too,” Izuku said at last, at a loss for words. He snapped out of it quickly however, focusing instead on the task at hand. He’s worry about that later, when Izuku didn’t have his future dangling before him. Izuku ensured that everything was in place, stretching his arms to ward off the soreness. The final training day earlier in the morning was starting to kick in, so he hoped that he’d be able to last until the end of the exam.

An alarm sounded, amplified in Izuku’s ear, and his body jerked into motion. He sped forward alongside the rest of the crowd, his eyes scanning the area for any sign of the robots. He found one off to the side and concentrated on it, using his hand to pull it up into the air. Another robot, larger
than the one he had control over, also came into sight. So, using his quick thinking, Izuku yanked the robot into the larger one and immobilized them both with a crunch, gaining him a total of three points in the first few moments of the exam.

Confidence replaced his nervousness, and he grinned. *So far, so good!*

Another thought, further in the back of his mind, surfaced: *I wonder how Kacchan is doing?*

Izuku’s head began to ache after a while of constant quirk use, but his nose was surprisingly void of blood.

He had been going at it for what seemed like an hour, but he knew it was only around twenty minutes or so. Izuku had easily made it through the city landscape, pulling down the small robots with surprising ease. His control with his quirk had definitely improved in the last ten months, if the satisfying crunch of the metal was anything to go by. He left a lot of the bigger robots to the others, not wanting to risk tiring himself out for when the zero-pointer came.

Izuku spotted a two-pointer a few feet away, and rushed it. He reached his hand out and felt his concentration hone in on the body, lifting it a few feet off the ground, and sent it crashing to the ground. He kept moving onward, passing the heap of metal and smoke while keeping his pace. Time was running out and Izuku only had thirty-three villain points, so he was still very much behind. If he could only find more mock-villains!

He found his way back to the center of the city, where the majority of the students were. Izuku scanned the streets, his eyes catching on a few impressive students while he searched for more villains. There was a boy who could shoot lasers from his naval, which was oddly intriguing, and another who had engines on his calves like the pro-hero Ingenium. *Maybe it’s a relative, or something? He does look like the guy.*

Suddenly, the ground below Izuku began to tremble. He looked down in confusion, until the loud sound of metal grinding together came to his ears. He looked up slowly, disbelief sinking into his stomach. *That noise... it can’t be…*

A huge robot, taller than the buildings, slowly walked towards the crowd. The metal creaked with every step and the buildings around it crumbled as it pushed past them. Time was running out. Izuku cursed to himself and turned to follow the already-fleeing students, when he barely heard a quiet whine from behind him. He stopped in his tracks, turning his head quickly.

There, trapped under the rubble, was the girl he met earlier. Uraraka was desperately trying to free herself, but the robot was quickly advancing. Izuku felt himself move before he could think, fear for her safety immediately taking over his thoughts. His feet carried him forward and his head was pounding, but adrenaline rushed through his veins as he concentrated on the rubble crushing her. He lifted it off of her and skidded to a stop in front of her.

“Are you okay?” he asked, out of breath. She nodded wordlessly and tried to stand, but her legs buckled underneath herself. It looked as if her ankle was swollen, so Izuku knelt down and wrapped her arms around his neck, pulling her up as he stood. She wrapped her legs around his waist and he provided support by holding under her thighs.

“You won’t be able to get away fast enough with my dead weight!” she yelled over the sound of heavy footsteps. Izuku just simply grunted and started running, disregarding her comment.

Of course, Izuku knew that he wasn’t going to make it far. He just had to get Uraraka someplace
safe, then he’d try to hold off until the test officially ended. Points be damned, Izuku had to help her. What kind of hero would he be if he left her?

Izuku spotted an alcove up ahead, so he sped up and knelt down beside it. It had enough shelter above it to protect Uraraka, so he set her down there. She looked at him with wide eyes, her mouth agape.

She snapped out of it as soon as she saw him move towards the robot once more. “Woah, woah, wait! You can’t defeat that thing! It’s huge!” she exclaimed, scrambling to stop him. He held her shoulders, plastering a smile on his face that would rival All Might’s.

“It’s okay! I have some tricks up my sleeve,” he lied, moving from the alcove. “Now, stay here until help arrives! I’ll be back.”

Izuku darted out, planting himself directly in front of the robot’s path. He concentrated completely on the legs of the giant thing, reaching out and taking hold of them without overly exerting himself. The metal plates of its legs groaned with the force added against it, but it was still too heavy to stop completely. Izuku needed to add more force.

God, I hope this doesn’t hurt too much, Izuku thought to himself as he planted his feet further into the ground. He strained his mind to hold it in place, applying more and more power behind his control. Izuku felt the familiar pang of his head before his nose started to drip, pooling into his mouth through his gritted teeth. It tasted metallic.

It looked to be working, the robot’s legs stilling under the pressure of Izuku’s telekinesis. The footsteps stopped, but the sound of the metal straining still rang in his ears. His legs began to shake as his body started to crumble under the force that the robot was pushing back, but he refused to drop. Izuku couldn’t let himself drop.

He had someone to save.

So, mustering up the last of his strength, Izuku stopped concentrating on just the legs. He swept his gaze over the entire body and used both of his hands to hold it in place. His head throbbed in protest, but he continued his plan. Taking both of his hands, which were raised and stretched in front of his body, he began to pull them apart.

The robot’s metal frame began to screech, metal crunching as it was pulled apart. A crack formed in its center, growing and spreading before the entire wiring began to show. Izuku cried out as he clenched his fists, squeezing his eyes shut to fight off the piercing migraine that plagued him.

With a yell, he tore the zero-pointer apart—entirely in half.

Sparks flew down on him in waves, burning his skin as they descended. He released a shaky breath, dropping his hands to his sides. The robot fell to the ground, both sides twitching as the systems malfunctioned, but Izuku paid it no mind. He wavered slightly, his legs trembling under his weight, and he could have sworn that he saw double.

Izuku tried to take a step towards where Uraraka was hiding, but that movement was all it took to send him to the floor. He collapsed on his side, his eyes half-lidded as he fought to stay conscious. Something felt wrong. Pain was no longer just in his head, but his chest as well. Izuku tried to inhale, but to his horror, nothing went in. He tried again, opening his mouth to let the air flood his lungs. Nothing.

I can’t breathe, he determined, a hand lashing out to his throat.
He clawed at the ground, eyes locking on Uraraka’s. She stared at him with confusion at first, but seeing his panic quickly set her in motion. Despite her ankle, she stood up and waved some students over, yelling frantically for help.

Izuku’s vision began to swim, and his eyes fell closed. His lungs burned, and he felt so, so tired…

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The constant sound of beeping nearly drove Izuku insane as he drifted out of sleep. He was relieved to feel his chest rise and fall, a clear sign that he was finally able to breath again, but there was something around his face that made him want to itch. It felt kind of like plastic, and it made his mouth feel dry.

In fact, now that he was regaining consciousness, he felt something like a tube run down his nose. It was uncomfortable, and Izuku wanted it off.

He heard himself make a noise, it sounded like a groan but he couldn’t be sure. Izuku cracked open his eyes, noticing the pristine white walls of the room he was in. He could count the tiles if he wanted to, but he first wanted to know where he was.

Lifting a weak hand to his face, he noticed the oxygen mask attached to his face, surrounding his nose and mouth. Izuku grabbed and lifted it off of his face, inhaling his own air into his mouth. He set the mask down by his side and rested his head further into the pillow. Despite his head aching slightly, he felt better than before.

There was still something in his nose; a NC, he assumed. It caused him discomfort, but it wasn’t painful. There was an IV in his arm, which made him feel woozy, though he didn’t want to mess with it.

Izuku licked his lips to get rid of the dryness, and swept his gaze around the room. He wasn’t in a hospital, that much was certain, so he must be in the nurse’s office at UA. His bags were on the chair and he still wore his tracksuit, so he was almost positive that he was still on campus.

He was alone in the room, but there were a few more bags in the room with him, indicating that he had visitors before he woke up. Izuku smiled softly when he recognized one of the bags to be Bakugou’s. So, he visits me again in the nurse? For someone claiming not to like me, he sure does like to accompany me.

A light knock startled Izuku slightly, his body twitching. He calmed his nerves and sat up straighter in the bed, placing his hands neatly on his lap. An elderly lady, Izuku recognized her as Recovery Girl, stepped inside, closing the door softly behind her.

She looked up at him and smiled, her cane clicking against the tile as she approached him. “So, you finally wake up! How are you feeling, boy?”

Izuku smiled back at her and said, “I feel better. My head still hurts, but it’s definitely not as bad as before.”

The older woman nodded and wrote something down on the paper beside him. “I would expect that,” she chuckled, taking a seat in the chair by his side, “considering the fact that your brain nearly shut down.”

He stilled at that, shock evident on his face. “What do you mean by ‘shut down’?”
She sighed and leaned back against the chair. “That little stunt that you pulled put a lot of stress on your frontal lobe, which is responsible for concentration and cognitive thinking. Your mother told me that your quirk is dependent on concentration, yes?”

“That’s correct,” Izuku quietly confirmed, still very much in shock from the news. *I hope it isn’t serious...Mom did say something about permanently damaging my brain, but of course, I didn’t listen! Oh god, what if I lose my memory or something. Or I lose the ability to move properly! That’s possible, right?*

Sensing Izuku’s panic, Recovery Girl rested her hand on his. “You have no lasting damage to your brain, but it will be hard to concentrate for a few days. You managed to put so much stress on your brain that it completely shut off access to oxygen in your system, which explains why you couldn’t breathe after the move.”

“However, you luckily escaped permanent damage due to your brain being sturdy enough to take the hit. According to your mom, you had been training with a classmate for months, correct?”

Izuku could only nod.

“Those ten months provided enough time for a thin membrane to form around your lobe, which protected your brain from the brunt of the stress. Without that membrane, your frontal lobe would have been under so much strain that it would have completely shut off, rendering you unresponsive. You’d be in a coma, if the rest of your brain managed to stay intact. However, that would be the best possible outcome. I’m sure you know the worst,” she trailed off, looking him dead in the eye.

Izuku paled, a cold sweat forming on his nape. Goosebumps rose on his skin as he stared back at her in horror. *No, there’s no way...*

“Midoriya Izuku, you would be *dead* if not for those ten months.”

Chapter End Notes

Izuku really messed up this time! With his quirk comes a lot of precaution, yeah? Anyway, what lasting effects do you think could happen if Izuku were to overexert himself again? Let me know in the comments! I already have some ideas that I’ll be writing about in the future chapters, but it won’t hurt to have any more! Thanks for reading~
Chapter Summary

Where Izuku gets a surprising visitor, and the person in question decides to do a complete 180 in the span of only a week.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After hearing the news, Izuku stayed quiet for the remainder of the evening, his gaze locked on to the window. Even when his mother walked into the room and attempted to talk with him, Izuku just listened instead, humming or nodding to let her know that he was there but just didn't want to speak. He had a feeling that if he did, he'd crack under the pressure that currently coiled around his throat. Izuku was fighting back tears, knowing full well that if Inko ever found out that he could have died from his quirk today, she'd never let him be a hero.

He couldn't let that happen.

So Izuku stayed quiet after he begged Recovery Girl not to tell his mom, keeping to himself in fear of falling apart. Eventually, Inko had to leave for her night shift for work and left him alone with a comforting squeeze of his shoulder.

“I have to go, Izu. I'll be sure to check in on you once you get home, okay? Love you,” she whispered into his hair, rubbing his back in that comforting way that made him feel like he was a kid again. It just made him feel worse.

Izuku hummed and kissed her goodbye, not even watching her leave before he stared out the window again. The sun was descending into the horizon and the colors were breathtaking, but he couldn't see it in him to admire it. Izuku was too enamored with his thoughts to pay attention to anything else. I could have died. Hell, I almost did!

What would my mom do if I died, just like that? She'd be heartbroken...and Kacchan! He'd be upset, surely!

The door opened a second time, followed by the shuffling of someone’s footsteps. Izuku didn't turn to look at them, silently wishing them away so that he'd be alone with his thoughts. But the better part of him knew that if he was left alone, the negative part of him would rear its ugly head.

The sound of glass shattering startled Izuku out of his daze, his head instinctively swiveling to meet the noise. There, standing by the door with a awestruck expression, was Bakugou Katsuki.

Before Izuku could react properly, Bakugou lurched forward and tackled him further into the mattress. The boy’s arms wrapped around his chest and his face pressed into the crook of his neck as he hugged him in a death grip. Izuku immediately brought his hands up to his hair, clenching the soft strands between his fingers as he choked on a sob.

It was as if the dam broke, tears dripping down his cheeks as he muffled his cries into the blond’s shoulder. His breaths came out in short gasps, and he was sure that his grip on Bakugou’s jacket was
made of iron, but the boy made no move to correct it. It was definitely uncomfortable to cry with the NC down his nose and he had to position his arm in a way that wouldn't agitate the IV, but to Izuku, it was the best hug he’d received since the one he shared with his mom.

Bakugou stayed still as Izuku cried, his knees pressed into the side of the mattress while he was collapsed on Izuku. He was still wearing his uniform, which smelt like smoke and his sweet smell of sweat. Izuku supposed that it was because of his nitroglycerin.

After a few minutes of sniffling and wet coughs, they both separated. Bakugou’s eyes were rimmed red, but he was still presentable. As for Izuku, he was sure that his face was beet red and his eyes were puffy. Izuku wiped at his eyes with his sleeve, dabbing the snot away from his nose.

Bakugou broke the silence first. “What the hell happened out there, Izuku?” he asked softly, using his first name for the second time. It must have been serious if he was using his real name, but Izuku couldn't help but revel in the sound as it danced across his lips. In the back of his mind, he wondered if that meant something more.

“I couldn’t let her get hurt,” he responded, closing his eyes. He felt the descending rays of the sun fall against his eyelids, and he was oddly...calm. Izuku wasn't afraid, or panicking, just calm. He was absolute.

Bakugou sat back on his legs, still on the side of the bed. He stared at Izuku like he was insane, which even Izuku questioned himself, and Izuku could see past the red in his eyes that he was upset. “What the hell do you mean by that?”

He choked up, but continued, “The exam ended, and I waited outside for you for an hour. I had no idea where you were, whether or not you left me, but I waited. And then,” he aggressively wiped at his eyes, catching the stray tears, “I got a call from that Matsuki chick that you were in the infirmary. You weren’t breathing. You were unresponsive and they had you hooked up to so many wires, that when I came in, I couldn't see your face past the masks and tubes that they fed through you.”

“Kacchan…”

“I was terrified. I didn’t know what was going on, but seeing you like that killed me. Watching them try and resuscitate you, praying to God that you finally came back, it tore me apart…” his voice broke off, and Izuku felt his heart break. Seeing Bakugou like that was terrible, especially since it was entirely new territory to begin with. He wasn’t used to seeing this emotional side of him at all.

Bakugou leaned forward, grabbing the hem of his tracksuit and pulling him closer to his face. “You can’t do that to me again, you fucker. I can’t go through that much stress; I just can’t.”

Izuku nodded, his eyes welling with tears once more. “I’m sorry,” he wailed, covering his face with his hands out of shame. It burned his cheeks as he tried to hide away from Bakugou’s intense gaze, but it was futile. “I just...moved on my own. I had no idea what I was doing until I was already doing it, but at that point, it was already too late.”

Hands gripped Izuku’s wrists and pulled them away from his face, moving them to his sides. The warmth of his palms were comforting and safe, and Bakugou didn’t remove his hands. Instead, he squeezed them tighter. It didn’t hurt, but it made his presence known.

“Don’t do this shit anymore, Deku.” So, we’re back to the nicknames, huh? “You worried the hell out of your mom, and even that Matsuki girl was freaking out. They had been waiting for you to wake up for awhile now, but Matsuki had to go grab something to eat. I, uh, went with her.”
Izuku smiled at him, happy that he was getting along with his new friend. “That’s good that you’re making friends, Kacchan,” he said, attempting to change the subject. He didn’t want to talk about it anymore, not until he was dismissed to go home and was free to cry alone in his room, away from Bakugou and Matsuki and his mother.

Bakugou scoffed, dropping his wrists. He most likely knew that Izuku didn’t want to talk about the exam at the moment, but left it alone. “We’re not friends, dumbass. She practically forced me to go,” he bit out, but the pink tint on his cheeks gave him away.

“Right, right.”

“I’ll kill you if you say anything, I swear,” he threatened, but Izuku just laughed it off.

They sat in comfortable silence, Midoriya returning his gaze to the window while Bakugou went on his phone, scrolling aimlessly through news reports and the like. It was peaceful, and it set Izuku’s heart at ease. But a nagging question burned in the back of his mind, refusing to let up.

“Hey, Kacchan?” he said suddenly, breaking the silence. His voice was quiet, reserved, but Bakugou still looked up at him as if it was the most important thing he’d ever heard. It made Izuku’s heart clench. He had to get this out, as miniscule as it seemed. He wanted to be sure of something. Confirmation, of sorts.

“Were you worried about me?”

***

A week passed by in record time, nearly catching Izuku off guard when he saw the date. He had kept an eye out for the letter that he would receive in the mail which would decide his future. Did he make it to Yuuei, or did he fail the exams? He felt confident about the written portion of the exam, but the physical test made him break out in a cold sweat every time it came to mind. He only had thirty-three villain points, and he wasn’t sure how many rescue points he’d receive after saving Uraraka. It would be a close call, for sure.

Izuku sat on the couch, moping slightly at the thought of failing the practical test. It would be rare to get in with just the written test alone, which meant that he likely failed it. Izuku groaned and rested his head in his hands.

He hated waiting.

Though, he didn’t have to wait for long. As soon as his mother scrambled into the room, her face beet red, Izuku knew that the results were in. He shot straight off the couch and grabbed the paper from her hands, before running straight to his room and closing the door behind him. Izuku nearly shredded the letter into pieces as he tried to reach the projection within, quickly turning it on.

All Might’s upper body flickered to life on the screen, which surprised Izuku. What was he doing on a UA presentation? “Ah, Midoriya, my boy! Good to see that you’re well. I’m terribly sorry for not getting in touch with you sooner, but I’ve been busy with paperwork. You see, I’m becoming a teacher in UA! Very exciting, yes?”

Izuku hummed in interest, silently confirming the rumors that he’d read about a few days ago. That would also explain why he was in Japan in the first place. Though, Izuku wondered if that was also because of his search for a successor. According to the hero, his quirk was able to be passed along, and his days as a pro hero were coming to an end. He had told Izuku and Bakugou about it briefly at the beach one day, which deeply interested Izuku. A quirk that could be transferred by DNA was
simply unheard of, but that didn’t stop Izuku from writing it down in his hero notebook anyway.

“Anyway,” the man cleared his throat, “your results for the entrance exams! The writing exam score that you got was impeccable, the judges haven’t seen scores that high in awhile. As for your practical exam…”

Izuku tensed up, not liking the tone that All Might’s voice dropped down to. Oh god, I did fail it. I’m not going to get into UA, and then I really will be screwed! Tears welled up in Izuku’s eyes as he ducked his head, shielding his eyes from All Might’s face. He wouldn’t see the disappointment in his mentor’s face. He refused to see it.

“Well done, my boy! You tied in third place with Uraraka Ochako, that other student that you saved during the exam. You both got a total score of seventy-three!” he exclaimed, and Izuku’s head shot up with a sharp inhale of breath. What?

The moisture in his eyes gave way, tears dripping down his chin and onto his desk. A watery smile lifted his lips and he watched as All Might flashed him his signature grin.

“I’m very proud of you, my boy! You did well.”

“This is your Hero Academia.”

***

Inko couldn’t hold back her sobs as she squeezed her son tightly, expressing her pride while she shakily grasped at his shirt.

Her guilt in not doing enough eased up, relieving her of the weight on her shoulders.

***

The ocean draft blew through Izuku’s hair, tousling it into tangles. He didn’t mind too much, since he was in the company of two of his favorite people. Bakugou and All Might were waiting for him by the dock, both dressed in their casual clothing. All Might was in his normal form, yet he still towered over Bakugou’s height easily. It made Izuku laugh slightly, but the excitement and disbelief that still hummed in his veins prevented him from fully sharing his amusement.

“Kacchan! All Might!” he shouted, waving at them. He slowed to a stop in front of the two, smiling up at them.

“Young Midoriya! Good seeing you,” he coughed in his fist, showing him a shaky smile of his own.

“Deku,” Bakugou muttered in his version of a greeting.

Izuku straightened his back and grinned. “We did it! We actually did it!”

All Might and Bakugou look to each other for a brief moment, smiling softly before glancing back at the boy before them. Bakugou stepped forward and ran his fingers through Izuku’s curls, patting his head.

His lips were curled into a reserved smile when he looked down at him. “Nice job,” he said quietly, and Izuku’s heart fluttered in his chest. He felt his cheeks flush and his toes curl, but he refused to let Bakugou notice his reaction. Instead, he leans further into the touch and beams up at him.

“Thank you, Kacchan,” he whispered.
An hour after their meet-up, and All Might had to leave. After saying goodbye to the hero and seeing him off, both Izuku and Bakugou decided that they weren’t ready to leave just yet. They settled on the sand and laid back, watching the gray clouds blow past their heads. The sky was light gray, stuck between the day and night, which made them still visible by a faint light on the horizon.

The rushing waves lulled Izuku into a calming trance, and by the look of Bakugou’s face, he was at peace too. They were both laid side-by-side together, close enough to touch their fingers together. Bakugou would occasionally brush his pinky against Izuku’s, causing a flush of warmth to hit his cheeks. If Bakugou asked, it was because of the chill. It was still early spring, after all.

But what Bakugou said to break the silence was not a question of why his face was so red. No, it was far more blunt than that.

“Twenty questions, Deku,” he brought up, rolling on his side to face Izuku. He propped his body on his elbow and was angled down at him, but his eyes were everywhere but at Izuku’s face. He looked tentative. Nervous. “Can you tell me about the time before your quirk?”

Izuku laughed softly. “You’re going to have to be a bit more specific, Kacchan.”

“You weren’t feeling...great, before. Could you go into more detail?”

The boy hummed in thought, before responding, “Like, my depression? Or that.”

Bakugou looked uncomfortable, but he continued forward. “Both.”

Izuku sighed, rolling his body to face Bakugou’s. He didn’t want to be the only one who was on his back. “That’s technically two questions, Kacchan. I can answer the first part, but the second part can be saved for another question, if you don’t mind. Or better yet, I could just give you my journals for more detail on my, ah, suicidal thoughts.”

The blonde winced at the last two words as if they burned him. “Right. Yeah, okay,” he said, and fell silent for a bit while he thought of the words to say. Izuku nearly squirmed under the suspense. “You don’t have to answer if you don’t want to, Deku.”

A sigh blew softly through Izuku’s nose, gently fanning over Bakugou’s face. They were face-to-face, so close to each other that Izuku could claim Bakugou’s lips with his own without having to move an inch, but Izuku found solitude in staring into eyes as red as cinders. It soothed him, made the conversation easier by calming the nerves that threatened to close up his throat.

“I felt helpless, back when I went to the doctor’s. He said that my quirk would be dormant for the rest of my life,” Izuku paused, racking his brain for better words. “It would have been a little easier to deal with if I was told that I had no quirk, but hearing that I had one, but I would never be able to use it? That was devastating.”

He cleared his throat in hopes of ridding his throat of the knot that began to form. “I felt utterly useless. I couldn’t do anything. No matter how hard I tried, the doctor said that it would never surface. I guess, after that, I spiraled down into an emptiness that I couldn’t escape from.”

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“It's gotten easier, believe me. Now that I have a quirk, and I'm making new friends, it isn’t as lonely as it was. I had to deal with it alone, you know? I didn't want to bother anyone else,” Izuku recognized the telltale sign of crying when his eyes began to burn, but he fought it back. I'm happier now. I won't let this affect me anymore. I'm done with crying.
Bakugou stared back at him with an intense gaze, never breaking eye contact for the entire confession. He looked nonchalant, but his fingers that were curled to support his head against the sand was tapping slightly. He was thinking.

Before he had a chance to respond--to say what was on his mind--Izuku beat him to the punch. “What about you? Can you tell me about therapy?”

His eyes widened, fingers stilling against the sand. “Therapy?”

“Yeah, therapy.”

“It’s great. I like where I’m at, you know? Maybe one day, I’ll bring you in for one of my sessions, if you want.”

*That wasn’t what I wanted to hear, and I think he knows that,* Izuku inwardly sighed, but he didn’t press the issue. He offered to take him to one of the sessions, which would meant that he was ready to be open with Izuku. That was a major step forward.

At this point, he’ll take whatever he could get.

Middle school was officially over, and the sense of exhilaration that Izuku got from that fact made him smile from ear to ear. He was excited to finally move onto high school, leaving the toxic memories of Ren and the rest of his tormentors behind. Izuku was ready to train to become a hero.

Matsuki and him sat together for the middle school graduation ceremony, both anxious to get out of there. Izuku had tried looking for Bakugou in the midst of the crowd, but the spiky-haired male was nowhere to be found.

“Maybe he’s running a bit late, Midoriya! Don’t worry, he wouldn’t miss graduation day,” Matsuki assured him, noticing the worried crease of his brow as he scanned the sea of black-suited students.

It was a well-known fact that Bakugou hated being late. So, something must have happened for him to miss out on the beginning of speeches. He waited, even sent a text wondering where Bakugou had gone, but no response. Izuku began to worry, his mind wandering to all of the possibilities.

*Where was he?*

***

A few days passed by, and Bakugou still hadn’t responded to his texts. It caused a painful knot in Izuku’s chest to grow, worry creeping into his thoughts. *What if something happened to him? Was he okay?*

It was the first day of high school, and Izuku walked there alone. He tried waiting for the blonde in front of his house, tapping his foot while he counted the seconds that passed by, but he had to leave eventually. Izuku didn’t want to be late for school, not on the first day.

So he walked quietly through the morning streets of Musufasu, keeping his head down low while he watched his red sneakers cross every line in the sidewalk. It was disheartening to walk alone; the usual place where Bakugou walked beside him was empty, and Izuku had no idea why.

*He never responded to any of my texts after we talked on the beach...did I say anything wrong to him? God, I hope not. We worked hard to get to where we are right now, and if I ruined that by saying something stupid to upset him, there goes all of our effort. Ugh, I can already feel my eyes*
Izuku finally arrived at the campus, rubbing his eyes a few times to wipe away any evidence that he may have been crying. He didn't want his first impression on others to be a crybaby, so he sucked in a calming breath and stepped across the gateway. Izuku wanted a fresh start, one where he was brave and stood up for himself. And it would start now.

Almost immediately after he passed the gate, his foot got caught on the heel of his other foot, sending him lurching forward towards the ground. Izuku yelped in surprise, his hands moving by instinct to catch his fall or at least make it less painful. However, before he had to suffer the crippling embarrassment of falling face first into the pavement, a gentle hand tapped his forearm.

Izuku suddenly felt like he was floating, his body suspended in midair as he looked down at the place where he should be. He panicked for a moment, his arms waving wildly to try and break free, when a giggle broke him out of his fear. He stilled, allowing the mystery girl to set him back down on his feet. As soon as he came in contact with the ground, he felt the familiar weight of his body returning to its own mass. It felt strange, feeling so light one second and heavy another.

“Nice to see that you passed, Midoriya!” the girl exclaimed, and Izuku recognized her as Uraraka Ochako, the girl from the exam that he saved.

He smiled brightly at her, brushing away the invisible dirt from the front of his uniform jacket. Izuku didn't see any lasting injuries on her from when she was pinned, which he felt happy for. “Good seeing you, Uraraka! Thank you for helping me out there.”

Uraraka flashed him a thumbs up and gestured for him to follow. “Of course! It's the least I can do for you, after what you did for me,” she told him. “Anyways, where’s your homeroom? I can walk you there if it's on the way!”

“Oh, thank you! It's 1-A,” he told her, his hand resting on his backpack strap as he walked. Uraraka cheered, a bright grin on her face. It made Izuku hum in confusion, but a hesitant smile ended up on his face anyway. Her smile was too infectious.

She grabbed his hand in excitement. “We have the same class, Midoriya! Isn't that exciting?”

Izuku nearly sighed in relief. At least he would have one person that he knew in his classes. “That's awesome!” he cheered. “I'm looking forward to spending the year with you!”

She hummed in agreement, the sound sweet in Izuku’s ears. She’s so approachable and kind! Uraraka seems like a great friend to have, Izuku thought to himself. I'd be smart to get to know her better!

They walked together to class, stopping at the door. Izuku took a steadying breath and opened the door, letting Uraraka walk ahead of him. The second he walked in, Uraraka let out a thrilled cry, rushing forward. Izuku blankly watched as she tackled a very startled Matsuki, sending her stumbling into a nearby desk. The black haired girl hugged Uraraka back tightly, before pulling away.

“Ochako! I haven't seen you in forever!” Matsuki exclaimed, her violet eyes sparkling with glee. The friends are reunited! That's good. Now I have two friends that I know in this class.

Uraraka turned to Izuku and waved him over. Izuku smiled at Matsuki, and she returned it with a smile of her own. As Izuku looked across the room, his eyes fell on the boys that he saw in the practical exam, the one with the engines on his calves and the one with a naval laser.
But what really caught Izuku’s attention was the blonde sitting by the window, his firm scowl staring daggers into the glass. Bakugou Katsuki was sitting a few feet away from where Izuku was standing, yet he didn't offer a word in greeting. That hurt more than it should.

Bakugou’s hands were clenched on the desk, bright red. The skin looked raw, which only meant one thing: he overused his quirk. Izuku knew that his quirk would make the skin of his palms sensitive and raw, but Bakugou’s control of his quirk was impeccable. Something must have happened to make him lose control like that.

Where was his stress ball? Wasn't that supposed to help him get his anger out?

Just what happened to him over the course of a week?

Chapter End Notes

Ooh, something happened....I wonder what? Give me your ideas in the comments! Also, sorry for the late update, I ended up playing Angels of Death for the entire day (oops). Thank you for reading!
Something's Wrong With Kacchan.

Chapter Summary

Where Bakugou is still an angry bean, and Izuku really loves sand?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After a few minutes of settling in, everyone took to their seats. Just Izuku’s luck, he was sat directly behind Bakugou, but at least Matsuki sat behind him. It seemed like the middle school kids were together, if that was any comfort. Though, if Bakugou’s simmering glare out the window was anything to go by, then he wasn’t sharing the joy of being with people that he knew. In fact, it seemed as though Bakugou didn’t want to be there at all.

Despite getting into the dream school that he’d been striving for since the beginning of time, Bakugou didn’t act proud or smug--hell, he hadn’t reacted at all. He just kept his eyes fixated on the trees on campus, his fingers tapping on the desk in an irregular sequence.

Izuku desperately wanted to talk to Bakugou; to pull him off to the side and ask him what happened to make him act like this. Why was he so closed off, more so than usual?

But by the time Izuku mustered up the courage to tap Bakugou’s shoulder, the door slid open, and the idle chatter cut off immediately. The boy muffled a curse and sat up straight, facing the front of the room. There, slumped over by the podium, was a black-haired man dressed in dark clothing with a very long scarf. It piqued Izuku’s interest, but he held back his muttering and questions. It was a new year, and he’d try to keep his ‘creepy’ muttering to a minimum.

“Good morning, class,” the man croaked, blinking his red-rimmed eyes slowly. “I’m Aizawa, your homeroom teacher for this year. We have an exam in a few minutes, so get dressed in your gym uniforms and go.”

The wave of shocked whispers immediately washed over the room, but Izuku’s gaze was solely on his blonde friend in front of him. He was looking for any change in expression, but he found none. Instead, Bakugou was completely closed off. The only two things that showed how he was feeling were his fingers and his eyes, which burned red in the reflection of the glass window.

Izuku wordlessly stood with Matsuki as they were led into the locker rooms, keeping an eye on Bakugou while they changed out of their uniforms and into their blue gym uniforms. An angered look settled on his face as the seconds ticked by; which, if possible, made Izuku worry about him even more. It wasn’t unusual to see him get pumped up for a chance to show off, but being angry?

Izuku had a feeling that the exam wasn’t going to end too well...for him and for the rest of the class.

He sped up until he was side-by-side with the blond, trying to get him to notice that he was clearly worried for Bakugou. It wasn’t too unusual to see Bakugou switch back and forth between moods, but this was different. Izuku didn’t know why, but something was definitely wrong. And he wanted to know.
He deserved to know, after everything that Izuku told him.

“Kacchan? Everything okay?” he spoke softly, leaning into his shoulder to keep his voice as private as possible. Izuku knew that Bakugou wouldn’t want to publicize anything private, especially to people that he didn’t know. So he lowered his voice until it was but a whisper.

The blonde grunted and pushed him away, light enough not to hurt him but strong enough to show that he didn’t want him near him. “Peachy,” he bit out and walked further ahead, leaving Izuku behind to watch him as he got farther away. With a dejected sigh, Izuku found himself walking with Matsuki and Uraraka as they all went down to the training grounds.

Even as Uraraka tried to talk to him, his mind instantly went back to Bakugou; and why he was acting so hostile in the first place. What was happening to him?

***

Izuku had been watching Bakugou even closer than he was before, his eyes glued to the boy. The only time he focused on other things was when he had to partake in a quirk test. Which was, in Izuku’s honest opinion, going quite smooth. He was worried that his injury during the entrance exam was going to interfere with his performance today, but apart from a slight ache behind his eyes, he was ready to go. Matsuki had offered to help alleviate the ache, but Izuku politely declined.

It was my decision to go overboard, so I should live with the after effects, he thought to himself.

Besides, it looked like Bakugou needed Matsuki’s numbing quirk more than he did. His hands were beginning to blister with how much he was using his quirk, but he showed no signs of stopping. He was powering through the tests with no regard for his own wellbeing, which made Izuku grow more and more worried.

It wasn’t until the Pitch that Bakugou finally got called out on it. He was on the mound with the orange ball settled firmly in his hand and reared back his arm to pitch. Only, when his hands sparked to life as he released the ball from his fingers, the explosions died instantly and the ball fell a few feet away. A noise of surprise drew from Bakugou’s lips as he stared down at his hand, teeth grinding together in silent fury.

“Bakugou Katsuki, are you seriously planning on ruining your hands for this exam?” Aizawa droned, staring dully at where Bakugou was standing. “Because I’ll just keep erasing your quirk if you’re going to.”

Erasing? So Aizawa’s quirk was quirk-erasure? Wait a minute, something about him seems familiar...hmm, erasing. Eraserhead? No way! The Erasurehead is my teacher!

But Izuku didn’t have the time to get excited, for Bakugou hissed lowly and was geared to strike. Normally, Bakugou would never show aggression towards a teacher, but today? All cards were on the table for this one.

Izuku stepped in between them and faced Bakugou head on. “Kacchan, what is going on? You’ve been beating up your hands for the whole day today, and they’re starting to blister! You haven’t lost control of your quirk since you were five, so what gives?”

Bakugou squinted at him and bared his teeth in a grin. He snarled, “Butt out of my business, Deku. This doesn’t concern you.”

“What do you mean by ‘this doesn’t concern you?’ I thought we were supposed to be honest from now on?”
“Leave it be, Deku!”

“No!”

“*The fuck* did you just say?”

Aizawa groaned and used his scarf to bind them both, pulling them apart. Izuku blinked in shock as soon as he realized how close they both were, nearly face-to-face, as they argued. *Ugh, and it was in front of everyone, too. They must think we’re nutjobs.*

“You both need to stop. Midoriya, you have been showing promising results, so you can leave and clear your head. And you, Bakugou? I’ll let this go for just this once, but if you so much as overuse your quirk *once* like this again, I’ll expel you. Now go cool off, both of you. I expect to see you both back in class at the end of class today,” Aizawa said sternly, pointing away from the rest of the class and towards the buildings.

Izuku bowed his head in shame and muttered a quiet “yes” before grabbing Bakugou by his sleeve and pulling him away from the crowd of whispering kids. Matsuki stared at them as they walked, her concerned expression drawing more shame from Izuku. They didn’t need to worry their friend, either.

Bakugou let Izuku drag him off until they were out of sight, before he tore his arm away from Izuku’s fingers and stepped a few feet away from him. “What the hell was that for, Deku?”

A new wave of frustration came over Izuku. “Don’t even *try* me right now, *Bakugou*. You told me that night that we needed to be honest with each other, yet here you are: not telling me what’s bothering you! You haven’t answered my texts in days, your hands are a mess, and you’re absolutely volatile! So be honest with me, I’m *begging you*, and tell me what’s happening!” Izuku’s voice caught, and he hadn’t realized that he was beginning to cry until he felt warm tears fall down his jaw.

“Don’t call me Bakugou,” the boy muttered, his head lowered to the ground. “We’ve known each other for years.”

“Yeah, well. It feels like I don’t know you at all,” Izuku softly admitted, wiping away his tears with the back of his hand. “The Kacchan that I know wouldn’t act like this. But, then again: I had no idea that he went to therapy either. I guess I don’t know the person standing in front of me as well as I thought, do I?”

They stood like that for what felt like hours, not even looking at each other in the eyes. The air around them was tense and unwelcoming, and Izuku just wanted Bakugou to look at him.

“I’m going back to class,” Bakugou muttered, averting his eyes away from the crying boy. He walked past Izuku, their shoulders brushing together, before he rounded the corner and disappeared from sight. As soon as he was gone, Izuku sniffed and rubbed his eyes harder, cursing his damn tear ducts for crying so much.

*Something’s wrong with Kacchan*, he echoed in his brain, *and I can’t do anything about it.*

***

When Izuku finally got back to class, Uraraka had been waiting for him at his desk. Since Aizawa was out of the classroom, they were allowed free time to talk amongst themselves, and Uraraka had decided to wait for him instead of talk. Izuku walked past Bakugou’s desk with an impasive look, and smiled at Uraraka when he saw her.
“Uraraka! Sorry for leaving so soon, I didn’t mean to,” Izuku rubbed the back of his head nervously.

She waved off the idea. “No, don’t worry about that! It wasn’t your fault.” She glares at Bakugou for a moment, but returned to her cheery demeanor soon after. “Numei said that she’d talk to Bakugou after class today. She said that you both know each other?”

Izuku took his seat and rested his head on his desk. “Yeah, we’re childhood friends. Or at least, I thought we were,” he directed it at the back of Bakugou’s chair, but he didn’t expect to get a response back. “Matsuki probably won’t break through Kacchan so easily, though. Do you mind telling her to leave it alone, at least for now? I don’t want her being in the way of his wrath.”

Uraraka nodded. “Sure thing, Midoriya. But, are you sure that you’re okay? Your eyes are red.”

“I was crying, I’ll admit. But everything’s fine, I promise,” he swore to her, plastering on a smile to set her heart at ease. “Did Aizawa say anything while I was gone?”

“Well, we have a curriculum that he gave us. Here, I grabbed one for you,” she went to her desk and returned a few moments later holding a sheet of white paper. “That’s all, though. He said that he had to talk to some teachers for a second, so we’ve been waiting here for a bit.”

“Okay, sounds good. Where’s Matsuki now? She’s not in class.”

Uraraka looked at the door with a faraway glance. “I think she took Bakugou out for a bit to talk with him. She seemed pretty stern about getting him to move, so he went with only a few complaints.”

She sighed, running her hands through her hair. “I know I don’t know you as well, but are you sure that he’s good for you? He seems like a timebomb about to go off.”

Izuku nodded in his arms. “I know he looks that way, but he’s a good guy at heart. He’s just going through a lot right now, and even I need to give him space sometimes.”

Uraraka nodded, sitting on the edge of the desk. “Well, if you ever need anything, let me know. I’m a good listener, according to my friends!”

He smiled up at her and nodded once more. “Sure thing, Uraraka. I’ll let you know if I need to talk to you.”

They both got up and walked around then, beginning to get to know everyone in the class. Uraraka and Izuku bonded well with Tenya Iida, the boy with the engines on his calves, and both added him to what Uraraka joked to be the ‘Dekusquad’ due to Izuku’s nickname. He abashedly agreed to the ridiculous name and welcomed Tenya into the group since the peculiar man had trouble bonding with the rest. He just wasn’t that approachable, having looked like the living embodiment of a strict businessman in a high schooler’s body.

But he really wasn’t bad, when you got used to the sporadic hand motions and booming voice. It was like a professional version of Bakugou, so Izuku didn’t mind too much.

When Matsuki and Bakugou still hadn’t gotten back to the classroom, Izuku decided that he was going to brave the waters and attempt to find them. Uraraka had offered to go with him, Tenya too, but he politely declined the both of them.

Izuku wandered the halls until he heard their hushed whispers from around the corner. Izuku mentally psyched himself up for confrontation, but before he could turn the corner, Bakugou beat him to it. Izuku nearly ran right into him had it not been for the other’s fast reflexes, quickly side-
stepping in order to avoid contact.

“What the hell? Are you both tryin’ to double team me, or what?” he snarled, his hands clenched into fists. Izuku reached out, trying to apologize for how he acted, when Bakugou hissed and brought his hands up. In a split second, Izuku prepared to get hit, tucking his head in his shoulders and raising his arms up to protect his face.

Then, in another second, Izuku realized what exactly he had done. Bakugou has never tried to hurt him, not after that one incident when they were five, when Izuku stepped in front of a kid who was hurting by Bakugou’s hand. But he never once got hit after that. No, it wasn’t Bakugou that was the problem...

It was Ren. And in that instant, he had compared him to his childhood friend, someone that he’d known since they were in diapers.

“Kacchan…” Izuku trailed off, dropping his arms instantly. He looked up at Bakugou, and teared up as he saw the blank look that took over his face. His brilliant red eyes that Izuku had grown to love were so, so dull. And it was because of him.

Bakugou carefully stepped around him, keeping his head down, and Izuku was so ashamed with himself that he let him leave.

The remainder of the day went by slowly for Izuku as he watched the sun dip lower and lower into the horizon. Present Mic’s English class blurred together with math, and it wasn't until the final class that Izuku finally snapped out of his daze. Matsuki had been throwing erasers at the back of his head for awhile now, desperately trying to draw out a response, and Izuku finally decided to give in. He turned in his seat and stared at the black-haired girl with a raised brow.

“Are you okay?” she whispered, trying not to get caught by Midnight as she talked about history. Matsuki’s violet eyes peered knowingly into Izuku’s green ones, as if she already knew the answer and was just waiting for him to admit it. I wouldn’t be surprised if she did...she’s been nothing but observant ever since I met her.

Izuku scribbled down his response on a piece of paper, ‘ I’m worried about Kacchan. I did something that upsetted him, on top of the thing that was bothering him originally. ’ He stealthily handed the sheet behind him until it was grabbed by Matsuki, and then he waited for her reply.

The paper nudged his shoulder a few seconds later, and he took it. ‘ Yeah, I noticed that he’s acted worse. Maybe you could apologize? ’

‘ As if he’ll listen to me right now. ’

Izuku was in the middle of passing the paper back when the profound sound of a whip striking the ground visibly startled him. He quickly returned his gaze to the board after he saw the arched brow of Midnight as she tapped her foot impatiently against the floor.

“Midoriya, Matsuki. Have anything interesting in those notes?” Midnight inquired.

Izuku opened his mouth to stutter out a response when Matsuki beat him to it. She said, loudly, “No, nothing! We’re just talking about the fact that we’re being taught by the best female hero in history.”

“Kiss-ass,” Izuku coughed behind his hand, laughing quietly as Midnight’s face lit up. Matsuki kicked his desk in response.
“Oh. Well, thank you! But, please pay attention to the lesson! You can fawn about me later,” she said in a daze, turning her body back to the board to teach. Izuku held out a hand behind him, and Matsuki slapped it, dual smiles on their faces. *Nailed it*.

That helped Izuku get his mind off things, at least for a little while.

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Uraraka and Tenya--no, he insisted on being called Iida--walked Izuku to the school gates after the final class ended. They were engaged in small talk up until they reached the sidewalk, where they all waved and parted ways. Matsuki had left alongside Bakugou as soon as the bell rang, and he hadn’t seen them since. He’d have to text Matsuki about how the talk went as soon as it was over.

Izuku walked alone for the walk back, keeping his head raised instinctively. He wasn’t afraid of Ren anymore—their last confrontation was enough to scare the guy off, but it didn’t hurt to be more aware of his surroundings anyway. Izuku had been watching the news lately; there was a strange increase in villain activity recently, and the news reporters had said that they’d been targeting people who were alone.

It wasn’t very comforting, walking alone. But he knew how to run, and he knew a little bit about fighting, so it wasn’t the end of the world.

*He wouldn’t know how wrong he was until a few weeks later.*

Izuku walked past the beach when a sudden idea came over him. He and Bakugou had practiced on that very shore just a week ago, and it was still relatively empty. Maybe he could practice his quirk there for a bit, at least until the sun set?

So Izuku walked down the boarded path until he found a cove several meters away from prying eyes, and set down his bag and shoes. The ocean was calm right now, the quiet lull of the sea soothing the tension in Izuku’s shoulders; plus, the location of the small cave provided many things that Izuku could lift with his quirk.

He cracked his knuckles and went to work, concentrating on the miniscule grains of sand in front of him. He figured that if he increased his level of focus, he’d be able to control his quirk better and maybe even be able to lift a larger quantity of items at once. But he wouldn’t know unless he tried.

Izuku opened his palm and felt the familiar pull of his quirk as it raised the sand around him, forming an uneven halo around him. He moved his hand, watching as the sand swirled around his fingers like serpents. He turned his body, maneuvering his legs to accommodate, and spun in a circle. The sand moved with him like ribbons, so he manipulated it a little more.

He didn’t remember including the rocks in his little dance until he accidently hit himself with one, cutting his cheek enough to draw blood. His eyes had been closed for the duration, and Izuku supposed that he’d gotten too close with the rocks to notice that one was about to come in contact.

Izuku released his hold and watched as the rocks and sand collapsed to the cove’s floor, lifeless. It seemed as though he’d taken its soul as he retracted his quirk, leaving the sand still. He rose his hand to wipe at his cheek, and caught a glimpse of the outside. The sky was a brilliant blend of orange and red, the sun having dipped completely behind the ocean’s horizon. It was *beautiful*, and his heart squeezed tightly when he realized that Bakugou wasn’t experiencing with him.

He grabbed his bags and waited until he was back on the path before sliding his shoes back on, walking in solace back to his apartment and dropping his stuff off by the door. He called out to his
mother in an excited greeting, smiling as she responded with an equally joyous answer.

Today was complicated, sure. But nothing was better than returning home to the smell of his favorite food being cooked with his happy mother humming a tune that he’d heard countless times. He went into the kitchen and kissed her forehead, waving her away from the cutting board as he took her place. Izuku wanted to help tonight, in order to distract himself from the confusing thoughts of Bakugou. Those would be saved for the nighttime, where he had the moon and stars to keep him company.

And he did wait until it was dark until he could pour out his thoughts in his notebook, hunching over his desk as he scribbled every word that came to mind until his eyes saw double and he could no longer blink without his eyelids sticking together. Then he curled his body under the covers, surrounding himself in the warmth that it brought him.

*Maybe tomorrow will be better,* he thought to himself, sinking into a dream filled with red eyes and a blonde boy who did nothing but smile and laugh.

It was a good dream.

Chapter End Notes

So, here's the thing! I thought that I was a chapter ahead, but I was actually not (way to go me). To fix this, I'm going to work my ass off this weekend and work on the chapters until I'm ahead again, and I'm actually going to hold off on posting the next chapter on Monday! I know, it sucks :( But! I have some REALLY good stuff for you guys in two weeks, so stay with me! Next chapter is the Battle Trials, but it's not what you think!

Anyway, what do you all think about Bakugou's recklessness in this chapter? Do you have any theories on why he's acting this way? Leave a comment! Thank you~
Are You Always This Angry, Bakugou?

Chapter Summary

Where Izuku has a "great" time in the Battle Trials, and Todoroki is brutally honest to Bakugou.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Izuku walked into class the next day, he was not expecting to be greeted by the majority of the class. He had barely talked with them all, yet they were so kind as to nod at him or even verbally say ‘hello.’ It was such a stark contrast from middle school that he was nearly overwhelmed with happiness, barely being able to reply.

“Good morning,” he whispered, astonished. His class was so nice to him, or was that normal? Kids in middle school didn’t even bat an eye at a quirkless nobody like him, but now? Almost all of his twenty classmates addressed him like an equal.

Uraraka waved him over to where she and the rest of the group were sitting, and he slowly sat down in Sato’s original seat. “Midoriya! Hey, we were just talking about you!” she said with a smile.

Matsuki nodded in agreement. “Yeah, we were talking about our entrance exam scores, and how you tied with Ochako!”

Hiding his embarrassment behind the sleeve of his uniform, Izuku cowered in front of his friends. “Ah, I suppose I did? Though, how I got there was a bit foolish of me.”

“I heard that you split the zero-pointer in half! Man, if they hadn’t of separated the middle schools, I would have been able to see it!” Matsuki pouted. “But I saw what it did to you after, so I’ll kindly ask you to not try splitting giant robots in half anytime soon.”

Iida nodded in agreement. “I agree! It was very heroic, but there is a difference between bravery and foolishness! You did not look well after the move that you did.”

Yeah, that move could have costed me my life. But I can’t tell them that. “Yeah, I got chewed out for it by Recovery Girl. She wasn’t happy with having to heal someone that early in the school year.”

Uraraka butted in, “But you looked like a real hero, Midoriya! Seriously, I don’t know how things would have turned out if you hadn’t of jumped in.”

Izuoo smiled at her. “Well, I’m just glad that I got there when I did,” he said, his eyes scanning the classroom. Students were still filtering in, but the bell was soon going to ring. And when Izuku’s gaze stopped at Bakugou’s desk, he was surprised to find it empty. Bakugou always gets to school early! Why isn’t he here yet?

Matsuki caught his gaze and sighed. “He hasn’t returned any of my texts this morning. I have no idea where he is.”

Iida gestured wildly, seemingly cutting the air with his hand. “Bakugou better not be skipping
school! That’s very irresponsible, and it isn’t a good representation of how Yuuei students should act…”

“Where is he?” Izuku spoke softly, tilting his head in confusion. Yesterday was worrying, but at least he was at school. If this wasn’t a warning sign that something was wrong, he didn’t know what would.

The bell rang, disrupting Izuku’s train of thought. He got up from Sato’s seat and walked to his own, sinking further into the hard chair. In front of him, Hagakure settled into her own seat by the front, offering him a tentative wave. He waved back, but his focus returned to the empty seat in front of him. Bakugou was late to class, and he wasn’t answering his phone. Izuku’s worry skyrocketed, and he inwardly wondered if this was how his mother felt when he didn’t have his quirk. Really puts it in perspective, huh?

Aizawa shuffled in through the door, greeting the class with a nonchalant glance. Everyone settled down after seeing him, instantly remembering how he handled Izuku and Bakugou’s spat. He wasn’t someone to anger.

A few minutes passed by, and the door slid open once more. Izuku frantically turned his head to look at who was there, praying that Bakugou finally showed up. He sighed in relief when he saw the disheveled uniform, the trademark appearance of his friend. Only, his head wasn’t raised in the image of confidence like it usually was.

Instead, it was lowered, his spiky blonde hair shielding his face from view. He stalked to his desk, dropped his bag loudly against the ground, and turned his head to face out the window. From where Izuku was sitting, he could see how clammy Bakugou’s skin had gotten, and he could’ve sworn that he saw hints of purple from under the hem of his uniform. Izuku squinted at Bakugou’s face, trying to peek through the blonde strands to see his face clearer.

But he saw something that made his blood run cold.

There was a deep cut that ran across his eye, barely being held together by a butterfly bandage. His left eye was slightly swollen and turning an off-yellow, and his hand that held his head up was covered in gauze. It looked like Bakugou had just come out of a fight. Maybe he had.

Izuku was about to say something, Aizawa’s lesson be damned, when All Might stepped in with a bright grin. According to the man, they were expected to change into their hero costumes, with further instructions to be added once they got to Ground Beta.

Bakugou’s confrontation would have to come later.

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There were Battle Trials assigned to each of the students, who were paired in groups of two. Izuku was partnered with Uraraka, much to his relief, while Iida and Bakugou were reluctantly grouped together. Yaoyorozu and Matsuki were paired together, which was great for the violet-eyed girl. She had wanted to talk to the pretty girl in class ever since she walked in, according to her, so Izuku was happy for her.

They waited to find who they were fighting, which made Izuku’s anxiety increase. He didn’t want to battle anyone who he had no idea how their quirk worked, which was only a handful. He had memorized most of the quirks from yesterday’s activity, so Izuku was pretty confident in his ability to plan before the fight.
But when he was pitted against Shoji and Todoroki, the confidence that he had a moment ago vanished in an instant. Shoji had incredible hearing, so he’d be able to distinguish their positions with ease. Todoroki was a wildcard, only using the ice portion of quirk for some reason that was unknown to Izuku. But his control over his ice was impeccable, which was likely the main reason why he was recommended into UA. That, and his relation with the number two hero, Endeavor.

It wasn’t going to be an easy fight, if the pitying glances fired their way were anything to go by. Uraraka tried to be confident enough for the both of them while Izuku worked on a strategy that would at least give them a fighting chance. But he needed everything to go according to plan perfectly, or else it backfires completely. So he pulled Uraraka to the side and began telling her everything, answering her questions to the best of his ability.

And when it was their turn to go, Izuku squeezed her hand tightly in a way of showing his faith in her as they found which floor they were going to use for the nuclear core’s location. They were the villains in the exercise, while Todoroki and Shoji were the heroes.

As soon as they were given time to prepare, they got to work, rearranging everything to fit their plan. Izuku needed to clear the floor and ensure that the rest of the props weren’t going to get frozen if Todoroki decided to incapacitate the two with his ice. If Izuku was right, then Todoroki would cover the entire floor with ice and attempt to trap them so that he’d claim the bomb and win. The white and red-haired boy seemed like a lone wolf, so he’d probably use his hearing ability and send Shoji out of the building so he wouldn’t get caught in the crossfire or get in his way.

Izuku’s entire plan was depending on Todoroki’s actions after the initiating bell rang, so he kept his fingers crossed.

When the alarm sounded, he looked at Uraraka and nodded. They made enough noise to trigger Shoji’s hearing from where he could be eavesdropping, and waited a few moments until they both stood on a wooden crate, using Izuku’s quirk to keep them above the ground. Sure enough, after a few seconds, ice rushed through the corridor and into their room. Thanks to Izuku’s plan, they were safe from immobilization.

“All right, stage two,” Izuku whispered, lowering them both down to the ice. They kept their footing on the slippery surface and slowly moved around, preparing for the hero’s arrival. “Remember, keep it out of sight. I’ll signal you when you can release it.”

He gestured to the several floating boxes above him, all levitating due to Uraraka’s quirk. She was in charge of surprising Todoroki with a barrage so that Izuku could rush the boy and hopefully overwhelm him. All they had to do was last until the time ran out. Izuku could only hope that they could hold off until then.

While Uraraka was occupied with that, Izuku worked on breaking away the ice so he wouldn’t slip during the ambush. He focused on the surface of the pale blue ice and began cracking it, breaking it in smaller pieces so his boots could have traction. His quirk wasn’t powerful enough to remove the ice completely, but he could at least make it easier for Uraraka and him to move without fear of slipping.

As soon as Izuku heard footsteps down the hall, he signaled his partner and got into position beside the archway. He pressed his body as close to the wall as possible, hoping that Todoroki’s overconfidence would make him careless enough to forget checking his surroundings. Izuku held his breath as the boy walked past him and into the floor clearing, eyeing Uraraka’s location while praying that this plan worked.

Using the few seconds of Todoroki’s surprise to his advantage, Izuku pushes the ice-covered hero
forward until he was directly under the barrage’s contact point. Startled, the boy whirled around and
prepared to fight off the unknown attacker, but a sharp-sounding whistle blew past Izuku’s lips
before any more ice could come in contact with him.

All at once, the boxes levitating above Todoroki plummeted towards him, forcing him to defend
himself with his ice. While his attention was diverted away from Izuku, he leapt forward, keeping his
hand clenched around the capture tape. It was a slim chance of him being able to subdue him on the
first try, but Izuku wasn’t a quitter. He reached out and grabbed his left arm, pulling it towards his
outstretched right one, and attempted to tie the fabric around them. Todoroki grunted in surprise, and
his left side’s warmth spiked from under the ice surrounding it.

Izuku yelped in surprise as the ice on his costume began to melt, the soft blue smoldering into an
orange glow. He immediately released Todoroki’s arm, not wanting to get burnt, and retreated to a
safer distance. His hand was red and a bit tender from the heat, but it wasn’t anything that would
hinder him.

Meanwhile, Todoroki looked at his left side with distaste and covered the melted part of his ice with
another sheet of it. His attention immediately returned to Izuku, however, and sent a wave of ice
towards him. Izuku darted out of the way, eyeing Uraraka. She was still on the opposite side of the
room, so they could still double-team their opponent and avert his attention away from one person to
the other.

But Izuku wasn’t ready to hand the baton off to Uraraka...at least, not yet. He had a plan.

Todoroki seems to conceal his heat, so he must have some sort of personal vendetta against it. I can
only guess that it has something to do with his father? Maybe they had a bit of a falling out, and
that’s why he’s refusing to use his left side. So if I manage to provoke him enough to lose control, he
shouldn’t be focusing on anyone but me.

“Is there a reason why you can’t use your heat, Todoroki?” he taunted, hating how his voice
sounded. Izuku sounded exactly like one of the bullies in middle school, but he knew that this was
just for the exam. After the timer ran out, he’d apologize for his words. “Daddy issues, maybe?”

Todoroki’s face immediately darkened as his fists clenched at his sides. “Shut up,” he said lowly.
The boy shifted his foot, and Izuku watched as ice flew towards him from the floor. Izuku focused
on stopping the ice in its tracks, blocking it as it tried to advanced forward. Even as Todoroki pushed
more and more ice in Izuku’s direction, the other boy would push back with more force. They were
at a standstill.

“S-switch!” Izuku gritted out, sensing the beginnings of a headache developing. He’d have to stop
the use of his quirk soon, or else he’d be down for the count. He spotted Uraraka rushing Todoroki
while his back was turned, so he ceased his onslaught and sidestepped away from the incoming ice
that quickly rushed toward him. Since Todoroki was applying so much force to battle Izuku’s quirk,
the ice came much quicker and stronger.

As Izuku attempted to move away, a rather sharp end of a shard cut into his side, causing Izuku to
cry out in pain. His hand quickly flew to the cut, and it immediately came back with red splattered on
his glove. He didn’t have time to check how deep the cut was, though, so he tried to push the pain to
the back of his mind.

Uraraka tried to touch Todoroki’s back in order to levitate him, but he quickly whirled around and
froze her legs, trapping her. She let out a curse and tried to move, which proved to be futile. With her
captured, Izuku was the last one standing.
He wondered how much time was left on the clock, and whether or not they were close. “You’re really impressive, Todoroki,” he whispered with an awestruck smile. Izuku knew his plan had a small chance of success, but he wouldn’t give up now. “But your potential is lost on you.”

“Just who is winning right now, Midoriya?” he bit back, glaring at Izuku.

He smiled back at him, masking his inevitable defeat with confidence. “I don’t know: who is winning? You, or your hatred for your left? Because I don’t see a pro-hero standing in front of me.”

Izuku broke out in a shaky grin. “I see a coward.”

"You’re such an idiot,” Matsuki sighed as soon as Izuku walked into the monitoring room, arm slung in a cast while also being covered in gauze. His entire arm was covered with an array of burns from Todoroki’s flames, and when the taller boy moved to tackle him, he fell hard onto his arm, fracturing his elbow on the ice.

All in all, Team A had lost with only a minute left to spare. A second after Izuku called Todoroki “coward,” he was jumped and couldn’t use his quirk in time to push him away. Surprisingly, Todoroki was impressive in close quarters and he quickly subdued Izuku, pinning him to the ice. For a moment, Izuku could only look up at the boy in a daze before the pain of both the fire and the fall quickly kicked in. His entire right arm was caught in Todoroki’s fiery grip, and the burns only spread from there.

Izuku didn’t know he was screaming until he heard Uraraka desperately plead for Todoroki to stop. Then, with horror, Todoroki quickly released the boy and scrambled to his feet. He looked down at Izuku squirming below him, gripping his burnt arm with his other hand, and paled. Todoroki quietly melted the ice surrounding them and freed Uraraka. As soon as she was able to, she ran towards Izuku to check out the damage.

An hour later of chastising from both All Might and Recovery Girl, he was cleared to return to the observatory room and watch the rest of the matches. His eyes immediately fell on Todoroki from across the room, and they both stared at each other for a moment before the heterochromatic boy turned away to watch the matches on the screen.

With a sigh, Izuku turned back to his friend. “I know,” he said with a chuckle. “But we were close! If I had held out a little longer, then we would have won.”

Matsuki scoffed, but tapped his good shoulder with a smile anyway. “You worried us, you know? Especially our angry friend over there,” she gestured towards Bakugou, who was slumped against the wall next to a red-haired boy that Izuku remembered to be Kirishima, “since he nearly blew up the monitors after you got tackled. He started yelling at All Might for not stopping the match sooner, too.” The girl looked at Izuku with a soft smile. “At least he isn’t completely shutting you out.”

Izuku stared at Bakugou with disbelief. He fought with All Might about me? I mean, sure, we know him a lot more than the rest of the students, but I never thought that he’d yell at his idol for me.

The blond’s eye was blossoming into shades of purple now, but the cut looked worse for wear. It looked as if he wasn’t caring for it properly, which worried Izuku. It made him wonder if there were other injuries, hidden under layers of clothing, that weren’t receiving enough attention. Izuku was tempted to pull him away and give him proper first aid, but he knew that the reaction he’d get would be disastrous.

Izuku averted his attention back to the monitors. “Who’s next up?”
Matsuki hummed in thought before responding with, “Ojiro and Hagakure versus Bakugou and Iida.”

He looked back at where Iida stood next to Uraraka, then turned to Bakugou. They didn’t seem like the type to cooperate as partners, but Izuku still prayed that they’d get along.

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Bakugou blew up most of the floor with an explosion stored in his grenade-shaped gauntlet, which created a smoke screen large enough to expose Hagakure’s movements and blind Ojiro. However, it also blinded Iida, which caused some difficulties.

Regardless, Bakugou subdued the two and won the round quickly, leaving them for Iida to untie while he left the building.

His signature grin was absent for the entire battle.

***

As soon as the four returned to the room, Izuku prepared to approach Bakugou and force him to go to the infirmary to get the cut checked out. But before he could, the boy in question walked up to Todoroki and spoke in a low voice, tilting his head towards the door and scowling at him. Soon after, they both snuck away, much to Izuku’s confusion.

What was he planning? Izuku thought to himself, looking around the room to see if anyone else noticed. But everyone was focused on the screens for the next match. So, hoping that nobody noticed, Izuku walked out too, trying to find wherever they walked off to.

“Please don’t pick a fight, please don’t pick a fight” Izuku whispered the mantra as he peeked around corners, hoping that he got there before things got out of hand. Bakugou was volatile right now, and Izuku wouldn’t be surprised if he tried to start anything with Todoroki. He didn’t know the whole story, so Bakugou would act on impulse, which was something Izuku did not want to happen. It was his fault that Todoroki went too far. He provoked him, and he deserved everything that happened to him because of that.

After frantically searching the area for a few minutes, Izuku was prepared to give up when he heard it: hushed voices from around the corner. Nearly sighing in relief, Izuku slowly tiptoed to the edge of the wall and listened into the conversation, ensuring that the two remained civil.

He arrived halfway through Bakugou’s sentence. “--on him again, and I’ll figure out ways to make you pay, Half-n-Half.”

“Are you always this angry, Bakugou?”

“Shut it, or I’ll fuck you up,” Bakugou growled out. Izuku sucked in a breath, preparing to jump in and break through the tension.

Todoroki scoffed, “I doubt you could. Judging by your eye and the bruises, you don’t look like you’re capable of fighting.”

“Shut up!” he spat, and the familiar sound of popping came to Izuku’s ears. Bakugou’s quirk was going off in his palms, small enough to be a warning. Izuku decided that enough was enough and intervene, but when he was about to step out of hiding, Todoroki laughed.

It wasn’t a good laugh, like one that came from a funny joke. No, it was cold and cruel. “You’re
almost as bad as me, huh? According to your friend, I’m a coward. But what does that make you? You choose not to fight with words, but with fists. It’s not any of my business, but I truly don’t see what he sees in you. I can hardly see you as a friend to anyone but a delinquent like yourself.”

Izuku expected Bakugou to snap back at him, or at least throw punches, but he was oddly quiet. “You think I don’t already ask myself that? If that was supposed to make me angry, then you’re delusional.”

“Then why the hell are you here in a hero course, Bakugou? Personally, I wouldn’t be surprised to see you amongst villains,” Todoroki jeered.

Bakugou went silent, so Todoroki continued. “You must give Midoriya hell, huh? You probably make his life miserable, but he stays with you anyway. Because he’s a good guy, I can tell by the way he looks at you. So why don’t you grow the fuck up and clean up your act. He doesn’t deserve your shitty attitude.”

“No, he really doesn’t. But you don’t know anything about me, so I’d shut your mouth,” Bakugou hissed, shoving Todoroki against the wall. “I’ve gone through so much shit in my life, and so has Deku. So don’t be speakin’ for him, because he’s fully capable of talking himself.” Quieter, he added, “All his life, he had other people putting words in his mouth, controllin’ what he says and does. He’s had his fair share of demons, Half-n-Half, so don’t automatically assume that you’re the only person who’s gone through some shit.”

He paused and took a deep breath. “Get your head out of your ass, pretty boy. You think your scar is bad? Izuku and I have plenty. Some are just harder to find.”

It was Todoroki’s turn to be shocked into silence. “You don’t know my story either, Bakugou.”

Bakugou scoffed, “Yeah, well that makes two of us. Don’t you think it’s a bit childish of us to fight over who’s suffered the worst? Yeah, it sucks that you have a giant-ass scar on your face for whatever reason, but you can’t just dismiss other people’s problems either. So why don’t we both just back up for a second and see how we can change, eh?”

Todoroki made a surprised sound from deep in his throat. “I’ll be damned, you can actually be reasonable. That’s surprising.”

Bakugou groaned loudly, and judging by the sound of footsteps, he backed away from Todoroki and the wall. “Don’t ruin the moment, Icy-Hot.”

The other boy chuckled. “Sorry. But Bakugou? You should really get that cut checked out. It’s pretty ugly.”

“And the moment is ruined. Congrats,” he drawled, and they both shared a moment of laughter before they eventually realized that there was no point of them being there anymore.

Meanwhile, Izuku was holding back tears from behind his hand, shaking slightly from his spot against the wall. He couldn’t put into words on how proud he was of Bakugou then, having diffused a situation that he initially caused while also trying to clear up any issues that Todoroki might’ve had. All while fighting back the urge to fight.

He felt confident in them both enough to walk away, satisfied and relieved that no blood was shed. And, deep down, Izuku thanked the defensive part of Bakugou that immediately defended their friendship by addressing that both of them had issues and scars that served as the backbone of their friendship.
All that Izuku needed now was time to talk about whatever was happening with Bakugou, and what he could do to help.

Chapter End Notes

Hey everyone! It's great to be back~ I'll hit you guys with a double update as an apology for taking a week off, so the next chapter will be up in a few! Also, this dumbass just figured out how to embed a link in the notes, so here's my Tumblr for BakuDeku prompts and chapter reminders :) See you again in a bit!
Also, what did you think of this chapter? Any ideas on what's going to happen next? Let me know in the comments~
Well, I'm Blaming This On Ochako.

Chapter Summary

Where the Dekusquad decide to go to a festival, and Izuku watches the city lights.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Izuku returned to the monitoring room, he immediately found comfort in talking with the “Dekusquad.” Matsuki and Uraraka tried to ask where he went, but Izuku simply lied and said that he had to use the bathroom. Both girls looked at each other with doubtful expressions on their faces, but they dropped the issue and humored the boy.

“When you were gone,” Uraraka said, “we came up with a plan! Why don’t we all grab something to eat after school?”

Izuku wondered if he was free, especially if Bakugou was going to therapy after. He wanted to catch him before he left, maybe even offer to go with the boy, but it all depended on how he felt. If Bakugou wasn’t ready to talk, Izuku wasn’t going to force him; but, it would be nice if they could talk soon. Izuku was getting awfully lonely without his friend to walk to and from school with.

Deciding to double check, Izuku palmed his phone from his pocket and began typing out a text to Bakugou. He was about to send it when Todoroki and the boy in question walked in the room and went to the opposite sides of the room. Oh, I can just ask him in person now!

Izuku moved towards Bakugou, keen on finally talking to the boy properly, when Kirishima beat him to it. The redhead nudged his shoulder and flashed a smile at him, telling him something that made Bakugou snort. Izuku immediately froze in place, watching as they interacted. It made Izuku happy, seeing that Bakugou was feeling better and getting along with other classmates.

But there was always going to be the negatives. He’s happier without you, Useless. He doesn’t even take you to therapy anymore! He only took you out of pity, that’s all.

Izuku’s smile dropped from his face, and suddenly, the room seemed so big. He shakily sent the text and watched Bakugou for any sign that he received it. After a few seconds, he saw him pull his phone from his pocket with a curious glance. Izuku prayed that he would respond, tell him yes, anything other than the silence that he’d been getting for a week.

But when Bakugou’s eyes scanned the words, his lips tilted into a frown. He looked at the phone screen for a moment, before turning it off and pocketing the device without a response.

Izuku felt his chest ache as he lowered his head to the floor, the rest of the crowd’s noises blurring together to become white noise. It was distracting, Izuku couldn’t concentrate…

A soft tap on his shoulder drew him away from his impending thoughts. Izuku’s head jerked towards the motion, coming face-to-face with Uraraka. She looked at him with a frown.
“Are you okay, Deku?” she asked him, keeping her voice low. Izuku was grateful for that: he didn’t want anyone else around them to overhear.

“Yeah! I was just lost in thought for a moment, thanks for asking!” he feigned a cheerful smile, gesturing to his phone in the process. “I’m clear for the dinner after, by the way! I’m free after school.” *As much as it hurts to admit.*

She smiled with him, leading him back to the group. “He’s good to go, guys! I guess we’ll see each other after school?”

Everyone nodded in unison, but Izuku was the only one who dropped his gaze after. He just wasn’t interested in talking right now. Maybe in a little while, he’d feel up for it, but right now as he stood in the room surrounded by students, he felt oddly silenced.

Little did Izuku know, while his head was downcasted at his feet, Bakugou’s eyes were locked onto him from across the room, curious and searching.

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Izuku couldn’t remember what led to where he was now, but judging by the happy faces of his friends, it didn't matter to him.

They had grabbed dinner at a yakisoba stall in the downtown district a few hours ago. Izuku was eating slowly, still hung up on how Bakugou blatantly ignored his text, when Uraraka finally decided that enough was enough and dragged them all away to a festival further south of the city. Iida and Izuku both tried to convince her to stay close to home, but there was nothing that they could say to convince her.

The train ride to Kyoto was a gruelling two hours long, but Izuku found that he didn’t mind it too much. Iida managed to start a conversation that lasted for the majority of the time, and the final thirty minutes were filled with a comfortable silence as Izuku glanced out the window. He saw the buildings blur together from the speed of the bullet train, but the evening sky stayed still for him, displaying beautiful shades of red and orange. Much like the sunset he saw yesterday, today’s was as breathtaking. And he still wished that he could view it with a certain someone.

But that certain someone *doesn't want to see it with you, now does he?* Squeezing his eyes shut, Izuku could only block out his thoughts and hope that they returned to the dark part of his mind.

When they got off the train, Uraraka dragged them through the city until she finally found what she was looking for. “We, my friends, are going to have the *best* time at the Cherry Blossom Festival. And if I see anyone moping,” she glared at Izuku specifically, “then I’ll never forgive them!”

Izuku scratched the back of his head and flashed the group with an abashed smile. “Yes, ma’am.”

Timeskip to a few hours, and here he was now, stuck on top of a ferris wheel with a panicked Iida and two laughing girls. They were on the highest peak when the ride came to a sudden stop, accompanied by a sad whine from the metal bars. Having been the only *sane* person of the group, Izuku peeked through the glass in order to figure out what happened.

There were already a few technicians at the bottom, or at least, Izuku *thought* they were technicians. It was hard to see from all the way up at the top. Izuku sat back down on the bench and decided to get comfortable. He had a feeling that this would take awhile.

“Well, I’m blaming this on Ochako,” Matsuki joked, nudging the side of her still-laughing friend. “We wouldn’t be in this mess if she hadn’t of taken us all the way here.”
Uraraka tried to conceal her laughter, but failed. “It’s, pfft, not my fault that the wheel broke down!”

Iida looked worse for wear, holding his head in his hands while his eyes were wide with panic. “What do you mean? We’re stuck here for God-knows-how-long until someone fixes it for us!”

Seeing his face, Uraraka began to laugh once more, thinking that the situation was priceless. Izuku sighed and propped his elbow on the windowsill, gazing outside. The view was still great: since they were so high up, the city’s lights seemed to go on forever. It was peaceful, even if the other passengers didn’t think so.

Izuku decided to break the ice with, “So, now that we’re stuck here--sorry, Iida--what do you all want to do?”

Uraraka opened her mouth to respond, but before any words could come out, the entire car trembled. Izuku’s hands immediately shot out to stabilize himself, but that didn’t stop his head from hitting the side of the car anyway and his cast to bump against the seat. He gritted his teeth from the throbbing pain, but it wasn’t as important as the others’ safety.

“What the hell?” Izuku muttered, looking around the box to ensure that his friends were alright. They were dazed, but otherwise unharmed. “That’s good.”

Iida immediately took initiative. He looked outside the window and cursed. “Those weren’t technicians,” he groaned, settling back into his seat.

Izuku made a noise of surprise from deep in his throat and looked outside, too. At the bottom, where he originally saw the “technicians,” there was a group of masked people holding up guns to the crowd. Smoke wafted from the control box below them, and Izuku assumed that the perpetrators had blown it up, which caused the tremor.

“And I thought this was going to be a fun night,” Uraraka sighed, and Matsuki snorted.

“Can we all just agree that this is Ochako’s fault now? Like, come on, this is perfect timing. I’d be home right now.”

“I suggest we split up; two can stay up here, while two go down there. Who’ll stay?”

Uraraka and Matsuki both nodded at each other. “We’ll stay on the ferris wheel,” Uraraka said, “while you guys handle the villains. Your quirks are better geared for fighting than ours, plus my numbing quirk can help people that got hurt from the blast.”

Izuku nodded. “Alright, sounds good. We’ll make our way down, then. Holler if you need anything, okay? One of us will head back up.”

After everyone was ready to go their separate ways, Izuku and Iida had to figure out a way to get down from the top. There wasn’t a ladder or anything to help their descent, but Izuku figured that he could easily lower Iida with his quirk. It was just the question of how he was going to get down after that. It wasn’t like he could just lift himself down.

Wait.

Izuku laughed abruptly, startling poor Iida out of his own thoughts. He never thought about using his
quirk to move himself. Izuku just thought that telekinesis applied to outside forces. But it wouldn’t hurt to try. All Izuku hoped was that he wouldn’t lose concentration and plummet to the ground. *That’s...not something that I should be thinking about.*

“I have a great idea, Iida! I’ll lower you down to the ground first, then I’ll follow behind. I’m going to try using my quirk on myself.”

Iida just sighed, rubbing the bridge of his nose from under his glasses. “I don’t think I can talk you out of it, so be my guest.”

Izuku smiled and lifted Iida up, ignoring the noise of surprise that came from the boy and instead focusing on lowering him safely. It was relieving to see that holding Iida didn’t tire him out like it would have in the past, which showed that his quirk was steadily improving without the development of a migraine or nosebleeds. In time, he wondered if his quirk would be as easy as breathing once he got the hang of it.

As soon as Iida’s feet hit the ground, Izuku knew it was his turn. He couldn’t just leave his friend alone down there with armed villains, so he had to hurry. Izuku had no idea how to start—moving things with his mind had come to him naturally—so concentrating on holding himself and altering his position seemed alien to him. He supposed that simply focusing on his entire body and imagining himself move was the best bet.

So he did. Izuku blocked off the outside noises from down below and breathed, imagining an invisible force washing over every part of his body until he felt submerged. He felt oddly cold, the hair on his skin raising as a chill overcame him, but it also felt comforting. It was as if he took a cool bath on a hot summer day.

After he got used to the strange feeling, Izuku then focused on moving. He usually used hand motions to guide where the object would go, but he wouldn’t be able to do that this time. Instead, he’d have to solely rely on his mind, which he’d never done before.

*Well, now’s a good time to try! It’s not like my life depends on it, or anything,* Izuku thought to himself bitterly, but he emptied himself of any negative thoughts as he concentrated on moving. At first, nothing happened. He stayed in one place while his brain strained to get him to move by at least an inch, but Izuku didn’t budge.

It wasn’t until his second try that he was able to shakily float above the support beam that he’d been standing on. When Izuku no longer felt the sturdy metal underneath his sneakers, he glanced down and nearly panicked if not for the last second where he realized that, if he broke his focus, he’d be nothing but a pile of broken limbs on the pavement. Izuku gulped and steadied his breathing, finding himself lowering slightly by his own will.

*This is good! Everything’s fine, I’m still in control.*

He found that the longer he held himself with his quirk, the better his control got, so his descent was quicker than he imagined. Izuku felt his feet brush the floor and immediately released his hold, relishing in the feeling of being in control of his own body once more. It was strange, almost as if he was a prisoner within his own brain while it controlled his movements.

Iida silently praised him from behind his hiding spot, and Izuku quickly took his place by his side. “Okay, what’s happening out there?” Izuku asked him in hushed whispers.

Iida glanced at him from the corner of his eye, then returned to watching the villains. “There’s a standoff right now. The police managed to get here already, so now it’s just whether or not they
surrender or go down fighting.”

“That’s good, then. Any hostages?”

Iida hummed in confirmation. “A little girl. The leader has her by the arm, and is probably holding her at gunpoint. I can’t see the gun though, since all I’m seeing are the backs of these guys.”

“Shit.” Izuku muttered, peeking his head out from their hiding place. He squinted past the blinding light of the police cars’ headlights, and eventually saw the silhouettes of the four villains. All of them appeared to have ski masks on to conceal their identity, and Iida was right to assume that the hostage was indeed threatened with a gun. It was hard to see clearly, but Izuku could make out the butt of the gun sticking out from where the two were standing.

They needed to get that hostage away from the scene before it was too late, but how? They would be throwing their safety out the window if that happened. Not to mention the fact that neither Iida nor Izuku had their provisional licenses yet. Their quirks weren’t allowed in public, even if it was used to help.

Even then, Izuku couldn’t just stand around and watch. He had to do something. Looking at Iida, they both seemed to plot out their next move. Since they had the element of surprise, they could easily knock out the leader without setting them off.

So, preparing themselves for their ambush, Izuku and Iida counted to three.

“All four of them were asleep on their feet by the time they were cleared to leave, having received a light-hearted reprimand from the police for interfering and endangering their safety. However, thanks to their efforts, everyone was able to get home safely. Uraraka had said when they finally met up that there were a few people who needed Matsuki’s numbing quirk, so they were busy helping the stranded passengers.

Izuku was pretty tired himself, his head feeling foggy and his vision was unfocused. He figured that he was nearing his limit with his quirk for today, so he took it easy on the train ride back. Izuku rested his head against the glass and closed his eyes, hoping to get a bit of sleep before he had to get off and head home.

Kacchan won’t call you tonight, you know. The thoughts returned, reminding him that he had nothing to come back to. Apart from his mom, he wasn’t going to be greeted and asked how his day was every night by his friend. No, ever since that night on the beach, Izuku hadn’t been called once. He’s moved on. Now that you’ve made other friends, he feels better about himself and left.

Izuku gulped and squeezed his eyes tighter, curling in on himself. Last he saw, the rest of the gang were asleep, so he was in the clear to show some sort of vulnerability. The last few days were rough for Izuku, but he also gained two new friends who seemed like great people. He already fought with
one, and the other noticed his distress and dragged him to a festival that was two hours away.

He truly didn’t deserve them.

“Don’t say that,” Matsuki intervened, which abruptly startled the boy out of his deprecating thoughts. *Was I speaking aloud?*

He frantically tried to backpedal, even going as far as to throw on a smile to reassure her that everything was fine in his head. “Oh, it’s--”

Matsuki rose up a hand to silence him, a tired expression on her face. “Don’t even try to recover from that. You were muttering up a storm, plus you aren’t very secretive with that transparent face.”

Izuku’s smile dropped, as did his head. “I didn’t mean to be rude. Don’t get me wrong, I love the company! And I thought I was past this, but the thoughts just keep coming back.”

The girl hummed to show that she was listening. “Sorry in advance, Midoriya, but you’ve progressively looked worse ever since graduation. I saw you in class before the Sludge Villain attack, and you looked miserable. Then, after you got back in touch with Bakugou, you came back to life! You looked so much brighter, and it made me so happy to see that you were better.”

“Before I knew you, I was still worried about whether or not you’d show up to class anymore. You looked like you didn’t care where you were, or what happened to you when you got bullied,” she explained. “Bakugou told me--well, more like he let it slip--that you felt like dying. I was devastated, you know? We haven’t been friends for long, but it still hurts to hear.”

Izuku’s eyes began to water as he heard her words, but he choked them down. “I used to, yeah. But not anymore! I haven’t felt that bad in awhile.”

“It looks like you’re heading down that path, to be completely honest,” Matsuki sighed and glanced out the window. “You have that look in your eyes, just like in middle school. And damn does it scare me.”

Izuku reached out and took her hand, tightening his grip slightly. “Matsuki, I promise you: that won’t happen. I’ve made friends! And my mom would be heartbroken. I don’t...I don’t want to leave her alone, either.”

*But you didn’t care about that back then, did you? So selfish.* Izuku blocked out the thoughts, focusing on his friend instead.

Matsuki squeezed back, a wobbly smile on her face. “You have to talk to Bakugou. He made you so happy when you both started talking again, and seeing you decline because of him is worrying.”

Izuku nodded and smiled softly. “I’ll try, Matsuki. But it’s up to him if he wants to listen.”

She looked at him straight in the eye, a determined glint making her irises shine bright purple. “If he doesn’t listen to you, I’ll make him.”

The boy laughed, surprised at the strength behind those words. He really appreciated her talking with him and breaking him away from his mind, even for a little while. Eventually, he’d find a way to pay her back for her kindness.

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Izuku parted ways from Matsuki, Iida and Uraraka a little after eleven at night, the moon high in the
sky. He was dead tired and just wanted to go home; judging by the drooping eyes of his companions, he was relieved to see that he wasn’t the only one.

He made sure to thank Uraraka for bringing them to the festival, even if the original plan went to ruin. After that, though, he headed straight home. He had no doubt that his mother was anxiously waiting his return, and he’d hate to worry her further. He made sure to text her about the situation beforehand, but he knew that she’d be worrying her head off regardless.

Arriving at his complex, he sleepily fumbled with the key and let himself in, whispering, “I’m home,” into the dark apartment. The lights were all off, but what surprised Izuku the most was the absence of his mother’s shoes. *Did she not get home from work yet? It’s nearly midnight!*

Izuku sighed and made his way to his room, tossing his bag to the other corner of the room and burying his face in his sheets with a groan. He was just so tired, yet every time he closed his eyes, he couldn’t for the life of him fall asleep. There were just too many things running through his head, and he couldn’t stop it.

Matsuki’s words kept replaying in his mind. He *did* need to talk to Bakugou, but he didn’t want to force him into anything, either. And no matter what Izuku told himself to make him feel better, he still felt as though it was his fault. Should he apologize? Or should he just put it all out there and ask?

It felt like he was walking on eggshells, and Izuku hated that. Izuku just wanted everything to be normal again, but Bakugou was making everything seem so difficult. Maybe it would be best if he just sent him an apology text and see what he does about it tomorrow?

Izuku pulled out his phone and began typing.

**Izuku 11:43 PM: I’m sorry.**

He closed the app for a minute, thinking about what he was going to say next. Should he try and guess what he did wrong? Would that make it worse? Izuku felt like pulling his hair, he was so frustrated. He’d never dealt with this kind of stuff before, and it was unnerving.

Izuku decided to get dressed for bed and think about it a little more. He finished pulling his sleep shirt on when he began to feel stuffy, which was strange. Maybe it was the AC? It wouldn’t be the first time it broke during the nighttime. Izuku wiped away beads of sweat that formed on his forehead, and decided that going outside would be better than enduring the heat. Grabbing his phone and a blanket just in case, Izuku began heading for the roof, humming a tune to keep him occupied.

When Izuku pushed open the door to the roof, he immediately took his spot by the edge. It was a familiar spot to him, accommodating him when he needed to be alone and just look out into the city lights of Musuufasu. Sometimes, if it was a troubling night, he’d sit there for hours and just think. The roof was calming for him, even when his mom told him how dangerous it was.

That didn’t stop him from sitting at the very edge and dangling his feet. Izuku let out a breath of relief as he took in the cityscape, watching as the soft blues and reds blurred together. This was his escape.

Izuku ended up staying up there for about an hour, relishing in the cool breeze that brushed past his ankles. His blanket was draped over his shoulders to keep him warm, and he felt tired enough to head back down and try sleeping again. Strangely enough, he felt as if he was forgetting something important, but he blamed his forgetfulness on his exhaustion and prepared to leave. He bunched up his blanket and stood, peering out into the sea of lights one more time.

Suddenly, the sound of the door slamming open scared him, sending him lurching forward and over
the edge. He cried out, his arms swinging wildly to stabilize himself before he plummeted down his seven-story apartment. But he felt slow and dizzy-like, which made his limbs much heavier than he thought. *No, not like this! I won’t be able to stop my fall at this rate!*

“Izuku!”

And before he knew it, Izuku was sent over the edge, towards the empty street below.

Chapter End Notes

OK, one of the reasons why I wanted to post two chapters was so that I'd leave this cliffhanger with you guys :D Sorry, I just had to. Anyway, I'm curious: what do you guys think of Matsuki so far? I promise, she's pretty important to the storyline, but I wonder why? Any predictions? Anyway, here's my Tumblr for updates, BakuDeku prompts (please give me some, I'm running terribly low!) and maybe some fanart of this AU??

See you all next week~
Izuku went from seeing the luminescent lights of the city to the dark street below as he pitched forward. His stomach lurched as panic set in, Izuku already envisioning the pain of impact. The startled cry that had pushed past his lips was drowned out by the wind, which was sad when Izuku thought about it. *No one would hear me from up here. They’ll find my broken body on the road, mangled and bloody…*

Several loud bangs quickly followed his descent, louder than gunshots, before Izuku felt a scalding hand wrap around his wrist and suspend him in the air. He felt his arm strain as his body weight dangled by his wrist, but his savior pulled him up and over the edge so he could slump against the floor. Izuku panted heavily with tears in his eyes, still panicked about nearly splattering on the sidewalk. He was so close to his life being over. Just like that.

*Don’t you want that to happen? It’d save you the trouble,* the damned voice in the back of his head whispered, and Izuku felt sick to his stomach. He didn’t want that! He had a good life now!

While his body was curled on his side in a sad attempt at the fetal position--cheek pressed firmly against the cement--the mystery person was leaning against the edge of the roof. Only his black boots were visible from where Izuku was lying, but the boy had a feeling that he knew who the boy responsible for saving his life was.

“What,” the boy in question breathed out, disbelief causing his voice to hitch, “were you thinking ?”

Izuku couldn’t respond, not yet at least, but Bakugou misinterpreted the lack of words as guilt. As Izuku lifted himself up until his legs were folded under him, he could see the blond clearer; his red eyes were blown wide in shock, mouth parted as his breaths pushed past his lips. He looked like he had rolled right out of bed, since his skull shirt was disheveled and he wore sweatpants that hung low on his hips. Not to mention his hair, which was partially flat on one side as if he’d been sleeping on it recently.

Bakugou lurched forward and took Izuku by the shoulders, seething with rage. “You--! You’re such an idiot! I thought you were past this! Look, I get that I was being evasive over the past week, but you can’t just do that because of it! What the hell?” he yelled, Bakugou’s voice filling with raw emotion as tears filled his eyes.

Izuku gazed at him dumbly, confused. *What is he talking about?*

“First, you send that vague-ass text. Then, Inko’s freaking out, blowing up my phone with messages, wondering why her son wasn’t answering his phone, and asked if I could check up on you! Did you even think for a second how your mom would react if she found you dead? What...how the hell would I have told her that you’d decided to jump?” his voice cracked at the end, a single tear slipping
past his eyelashes.

Oh. Oh. Does he think that I purposely jumped? Izuku scrambled to clear up the misunderstanding, his fingers finding purchase on the ends of Bakugou’s black shirt as he shakily tried to calm him down. He understood now how scary that must have been, opening the door to see your friend standing precariously close to the edge before he fell.

More of a reason to comfort him. “Kacchan, it’s really not what you think…”

Bakugou cut him off, sniffling slightly. “How the hell is it not? I check my phone, read your apology text, and immediately get this f*cked up feeling in my stomach that made me want to puke! Then, just when I’m beginning to panic, your mom texts me out of the blue and tells me that you aren’t answering your texts, and I knew. So I get out of bed, fucking run over here, and you’re not in the house…”

“Kacchan--”

“But I have this sick feeling that’s all the way in my throat, so I think about where you’d be, and I remembered that you always went up to the roof. And--and I prayed to God that you hadn’t jumped yet, so that when I peer over the ledge, I don’t see my fucking childhood friend broken on the pavement!” he blurted, his breaths coming out faster and faster. Bakugou was hyperventilating, and was no longer focusing on the way Izuku gently tried to coax him out of it. He had to take a different approach.

“Katsuki!” Izuku shouted, pulling the boy into a tight embrace. He hoped that the strong grip around Bakugou’s torso was enough to steady him, and Izuku nearly wept in relief when he felt Bakugou slump into the smaller boy. His head dropped into Izuku’s neck, warm tears dropping on the exposed skin there, while Izuku rubbed reassuring circles on his back. “It’s okay, it’s okay…” he repeated, shuffling closer to the blond.

Izuku waited until Bakugou’s sobs calmed into soft sniffles before he decided to say something, “I wasn’t trying to do anything, Kacchan. I was just looking out into the lights, and you scared me when you opened the door.”

Bakugou was quiet, but he knew that he was listening. “I was just trying to cool off, I promise. I was about to leave to go back to my apartment, and you scared me. That’s all, I swear.”

“Christ, Izuku. Do you know how scary that was?” he murmured, pulling back from Izuku’s hug to look at him.

“I’m sorry, Kacchan,” he murmured, taking in the starlit face before him. Izuku noticed that the cut over his eye looked a lot better, but there was a new bruise blossoming under his jaw. Unconsciously, Izuku raised his hand and grazed gentle fingers over the yellowing skin, wondering how he got that one.

Bakugou winced slightly, but didn’t pull away. Instead, he leaned into his palm and closed his eyes; humming in the back of his throat when Izuku bravely ran his fingers through his sleep-ridden hair. The boy wanted to ask why the other had come to school with bruises and cuts, but he’d wait until Bakugou was calmer before bringing it up.

“I’m the one who should be sorry,” the blond spoke up suddenly, his voice scratchy. Izuku opened his mouth to rebuke that statement, but Bakugou beat him to it. “I’ve been ignoring your texts for a week, and you don’t deserve that at all. I gave you so much shit for not being honest with me, yet I’ve been a hypocrite.”
Izuku sighed softly, shaking his head. “No, it’s alright. You must’ve had an important reason why you’re acting like this, so it’s okay.”

Bakugou slowly nodded, before he said, “Yoku’s closing down.”

Izuku froze and stared at the boy with shock. “What? Why?”

Bakugou shrugged, slowly folding in on himself. Izuku took it upon himself to hold him tighter, silently encouraging him to continue. “There was apparently another business that bought it out, and all the previous employees were booted. I’ve been with them since I was fucking nine, and now they’re gone.”

Izuku felt like crying. He wasn’t there as long as Bakugou was, but the nights that he went really showed how happy the sessions made him. For that to be taken away so suddenly must have been terrible. “Oh my God, I’m so sorry. Was that the reason why you never showed up to graduation? You heard the news?”

The boy dropped his gaze and slowly shook his head. “No,” he said carefully, “it wasn’t because of that. I heard the news a day before the first day of school.”

Izuku cocked his head to the side, curious. “Then why were you gone?”

“Pass.”

“Oh, come on.”

Bakugou attempted to smile, but his chin wobbled and betrayed him. “Deku, I really can’t tell you. I would if I could, but it’s...complicated.”

The boy narrowed his eyes and glared at him. “I’ve said some pretty complicated stuff to you, even though I was uncomfortable to say it out loud. What’s stopping you?” he jabbed at him.

Bakugou looked up at him, his eyes pleading with him to drop the subject. “They--I mean it--has nothing to do with you. Really.”

Izuku pried deeper, “Who’s they? Are they the ones that are hurting you like this?” He gestured to the cut and bruise, anger beginning to fester beneath his skin. Whoever was fighting Bakugou was going to get their asses beat.

Red eyes widened in panic, and he quickly shook his head. “Drop it, Deku. Please drop it. I’m doing this to protect you.”

“I mean it--has nothing to do with you. Really.”

Izuku stood up then, hating how shaky his knees were. “Kacchan, if they’re hurting you, then I need to know about it. Who is it? Is it Ren?”

He looked around with wide eyes, before standing and taking Izuku’s hand. “Not here, idiot,” he said in a hushed tone, before he dragged Izuku away from the roof and down the stairs. Izuku numbly followed behind him, too worried to even voice his concerns. It wasn’t until they were safely in his apartment that Izuku pulled his hand out of Bakugou’s grip and said something.

“I’m pretty sure they’re villains.
Deku. They aren’t our age, and their faces are always covered.”

A cold feeling of dread washed over Izuku, and suddenly it was his turn to grab Bakugou’s hand and drag him into his room, shutting the door behind him in a hurry. “Why haven’t you reported this, Kacchan? Are you hiding other injuries? How badly are they beating you?” He remembered the bruises that he saw below his neck the other day. “Actually, take off your shirt, I want to see for myself.”

He rose his hands up in defense, a shaky smile forming on his face. “Calm down, Deku. If you wanted to see me without a shirt so bad, you could have just asked.”

“Not funny,” he bit out, but the miniscule blush that formed on his cheeks was still bright as day. Not now, hormones. This is serious. I don’t have time to ogle.

Bakugou did what he was asked, and pulled the black tank top over his head. Izuku tried not to notice how the muscles in his arms flexed, and nearly blacked out when he saw the rest of his toned body. He wasn’t overly muscular, but instead leaned towards a lean figure. However, when Izuku got over the fact that his crush was shirtless, he finally noticed the purple and yellow bruises that littered his stomach like a canvas.

Izuku found that it was hard to breathe as he surveyed the damage, his fingers reaching out and skimming over the blemished skin. Ignoring the small tremor coming from the blonde, he continued to observe Bakugou’s bruises. There were a few small cuts but most of the skin was covered with purple.

“What happened?” his voice came out soft as he walked around to view his back. It looked worse there, nearly all of the skin covered in purple or yellow, and Izuku felt his eyes begin to water.

Bakugou sighed and turned back around, wiping away the tears from his cheeks with his thumbs. “It doesn’t hurt, if that’s what you’re worried about. Painkiller gave me some type of ointment to put on, so that’s helping.”

“Painkiller?”

“You know who I’m talking about. Numb-for-Hands? Matsuki,” he explained. “She gave me something to help the pain. It’s a topical that wears off after ten minutes, but it works immediately.”

Izuku shook his head in disbelief. “I just can’t believe that you call her Painkiller.”

The boy smirked and sat down on the edge of Izuku’s bed, pulling out his phone. “Yeah, yeah. Anyways, I’m staying the night tonight, so I’ll text Auntie and tell her you’re fine and that she needs to make breakfast for two.”

Izuku sighed, but didn’t hide the smile that broke out on his face. “Sure thing. Want me to pull out a futon?”

He shook his head. “Nah, we can share. Wouldn’t be the first time.”

Izuku blushed when he remembered that one morning when he woke up cuddled next to Bakugou, and he suddenly felt really warm. “Right. Yeah. Sounds good,” he squeaked, which caught the attention of a very diligent Bakugou.

He immediately pried. “What? Does little Deku have a problem with sleeping with another person? Or is it just with me?” he slyly said with a grin.
Izuku quickly waved away the thought, his face reddening even more. “What?” he stuttered out. “No! It’s not a problem!”

But Bakugou was never the type to back down from an opportunity to tease. He leaned forward, hooking his finger under the hem of Izuku’s sleep shirt, and pulled him to the bed, maneuvering his body in the very last second so that he was on top of the poor boy. Bakugou was practically straddling the teen, his legs wrapping around Izuku’s waist and promptly trapping him underneath his weight.

“Your red face begs to differ, Deku ~” he seemed to purr, using his fingers to lightly scrape against Izuku’s sides.

Below him, Izuku was having both the best and worst time of his life. He was especially ticklish, that Bakugou knew, so he had a firm understanding that what would happen next would suck. However, the fact that Bakugou was straddling him gave way to some imaginative thoughts, which was worth it.

Then the torture started. Bakugou’s fingers dug into his sides, and a tremor immediately wracked Izuku. He immediately began laughing hysterically, shakily trying to push Bakugou off with no avail. But the onslaught continued, which sent wave after wave of laughter that burst from Izuku’s lips.

It wasn’t until he could no longer breath that Bakugou decided to let up, removing his fingers but staying perched on top of his waist. As Izuku eased off of his laughter, he realized that Bakugou tried to distract him from crying, which brought a smile to his lips. The blond above him peered down with a similar smile, his face blotched with pink from laughing too.

So pretty, Izuku thought to himself as he gazed up at his face, his own reflection getting caught in the seemingly endless red. Wouldn’t it be great if I could just kiss him already?

What’s stopping you?

Izuku’s face flushed, but for once, he didn’t immediately ignore the secondary thought. He doubted that Bakugou would hate him if he decided to give him a small peck on his cheek, so he could at least test the waters and see if his feelings were returned. Izuku could already imagine it; his lips brushing up against the soft skin of Bakugou’s cheek, and the wandering hands that would travel up Izuku’s waist and to his shoulders when the boy would kiss him back.

If he kissed him back.

Bakugou, satisfied with his actions, rolled off of the boy and sat on the bed, busying himself on his phone once again. Izuku sat up and crossed his legs, his shoulder firmly pressed against Bakugou’s as he leaned into his personal space. He didn’t even question it, even going as far as angling his phone so that Izuku could see what he was looking at.

Mustering up the courage, Izuku lifted his head from Bakugou’s shoulder and hesitated near his cheek, second guessing on whether he should try to kiss him or not. He felt how warm Bakugou’s skin was from the mere closeness, which made his gut twist uncomfortably. Bakugou continued scrolling on his phone, oblivious to the inner conflict that was happening a few inches from him.

At least, it seemed like he was oblivious. “You know, if you’re going to kiss me, you’re gonna have to actually commit to it, you idiot.”

Izuku could have sworn that his heart stopped.
He stared at the blond with an opened mouth, his green eyes as wide as saucers. Izuku was frozen a few centimeters away from Bakugou’s face, yet despite the words of encouragement, he couldn't lean forward and press his lips against the others’. Now that he knew his friend’s feelings about him, Izuku couldn’t fight the nervous feeling in his stomach. He didn’t want his first kiss to be mediocre; which he knew that if he was the one that initiated it, it would be.

“What, too scared to do it?” Bakugou taunted, a snarky grin plastered on his face.

Izuku scoffed, “N-no! I’m just thinking!”

Bakugou rolled his eyes and twisted his body until he was facing Izuku head-on, holding his arms out in a gesture that screamed ‘come at me’. He looked smug, but behind that smirk, Izuku could see the nervous twitch of Bakugou’s eyelid and a flush begin to spread along his cheeks, painting his smooth skin pink.

It was comforting to know that his crush was still as nervous about the possibility of a kiss as Izuku was.

So, taking a deep breath in hopes of steadying his nerves, Izuku shakily raised his hands to tangle in the spiky blond strands and leaned forward. His eyes instinctively squeezed shut before his lips brushed against Katsuki’s, catching near the corner of his mouth instead of near the center where he originally aimed. It made his heart flutter against his ribs and his stomach twist, but the way Katsuki’s lips felt against his own was a feeling that Izuku wanted to burn into his brain.

Katsuki’s lips were soft and warm and perfect.

It was a chaste kiss, merely lasting a few seconds; but to Izuku, it felt like time was at standstill. When he finally pulled away, a blissful smile gracing his face, Izuku noticed the blank face of Katsuki sitting in front of him. Self-doubt began to creep in, and he wondered what he did wrong to warrant such a melancholic expression.

“Kacchan…?” he trailed off, feeling as though he was doused in cold water. The glee that he felt seemed to seep out then, and he began to lean away to try and give the boy some space. He held up his hands and stuttered, “I’m sorry, I’ve made you uncomfort--mmph!”

Katsuki pushed forward and kissed him, nudging Izuku back against the mattress until his arms buckled under him and he laid prone against the sheets. The blond was immediately on top of him, using his hands to hold himself up as he continued to press his lips against Izuku’s. The warmth of his body urged Izuku to move his lips with more force, matching Katsuki’s insistent pace.

Izuku hummed as Katsuki began to delve deeper, nibbling slightly on his bottom lip. His hands rose up and cupped the boy’s face, fingers tangling in blond strands as the feeling in his stomach increased tenfold. It felt good to be in sync with Katsuki, finally being able to show the boy how much he cared about him, so he took what he could get.

They both broke away to stare at each other, their breaths intertwining in the small space that they’d made for themselves. Katsuki’s eyes were lidded and blood-red, while Izuku was certain that his entire face was flushed.

“Kacchan,” he breathed, the urge to kiss him again taking over his common sense as he pulled him down to capture his lips in a searing exchange. Izuku wanted to lose himself tonight—to distract Katsuki from the troubles that he undoubtedly faced alone--so he was glad that he was staying the night. Even if all they were doing was kissing, it would at least be enough to divert their attention away from their problems.
Using one arm to support his weight, Katsuki lowered his hand and grazed his fingers over the exposed skin of his waist. The feather-like touches made his back arch and his breath hitch, which caused Katsuki to chuckle against Izuku’s swollen lips. “Sorry,” he whispered, removing his fingers from his sensitive waist. He pressed a chaste kiss on Izuku’s lips before trailing lower, peppering his jaw with light touches.

Izuku squirmed and felt the hair on his arms raise from the attention. Katsuki nipped and sucked on the pulse on his neck, which made Izuku tilt his head back and moan into the empty room. Since Izuku’s skin was so sensitive, any touch from the blonde sent his mind into overdrive. He already felt dizzy, his face beet red.

Katsuki continued to pay attention to his neck, reveling in the soft breaths that he drew out. While the boy continued to nip at him, Izuku tangled his fingers in his hair, biting his lip in hopes of staying quiet.

Finally, after a ridiculously pornographic moan that tumbled out of Izuku’s mouth, Katsuki decided to stop. He drew back, his face flushed, and began to laugh at the embarrassed boy beneath him.

“You sound like a porn star,” he joked, lowering to press a kiss on the corner of his lips before he rolled beside Izuku, curling up against the boy’s side. Katsuki’s head was pressed in the crook of Izuku’s arm, which served as his pillow, while his arm draped over Izuku’s midsection. He practically served as a secondary heater with how hot he was, yet Izuku didn’t mind. Sure, the AC was broken, and it was hot as hell, but having the boy of his dreams beside him was worth it.

Izuku smiled up at the ceiling, unable to contain his glee. He had just kissed Kacchan. It was like a dream-come-true, but as much as Izuku wanted to pinch himself to see if it was real, the solid warmth beside him was a telltale sign that it was.

Katsuki pinched Izuku’s side lightly, scoffing, “What are you smilin’ about, shitty nerd.”

He could only shake his head slightly and smile. “I’m just thinking about us. I’ve been wanting to do that for awhile, I think.”

“Kiss me?”

“Yeah.”

The blond nestled further into Izuku’s shirt, sighing in content. “Mm, I guess I have too. Kept thinkin’ that you wouldn’t want me to, though.”

Izuku made a confused sound from deep in his throat, turning his head to look at Katsuki. He was looking up at him, red eyes searching, while the moonlight shone brilliantly across his skin. “Why wouldn’t I? You’re amazing, Kacchan.”

Katsuki blinked slowly and snuggled further into the shirt until his next words were muffled by the fabric, “I wasn’t back then. I was a dick to you, and I still am to other people.”

It was Izuku’s turn to pinch him. “What the heck are you even talking about, Kacchan? That was in the past...you’re way better now than back then.”

He scoffed. “I don’t feel better. And now that I don’t have a therapist, how else am I going to manage? I can’t just vent my shit to anyone.”

Izuku combed his fingers through blonde hair. “We’ll figure something out. In the meantime, maybe you could talk to me? I’d like to return the favor, Kacchan.”
He nodded once, keeping relatively quiet. They laid there for a few minutes in the dark, pensive and quiet. Izuku waited for him to speak, but as the seconds ticked by, he wondered if the boy had fallen asleep. However, the tapping of his fingers on his ribs clued him in. He was thinking.

“I’ll tell you about me. I’ll tell you everything. All you have to do is ask,” Katsuki finally muttered, yawning softly. “But, tonight, I think we should sleep.”

Izuku nodded, brushing a few stray strands of hair from Katsuki’s brow. “Good night, Kacchan.”

“Night, nerd,” he whispered, his voice edged with exhaustion. Within a minute, Katsuki was fast asleep, his chest rising and falling with every breath. He was at peace then, not a wrinkle in sight as Izuku watched with half-lidded eyes. Soon, he would follow suit and fall under the blanket of sleep, but for now?

He’d take in this sight, and burn it into his memory.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading! I hope you enjoyed! I wanted to give you all some happiness, since the last few chapters have been pretty sad lately. So, I finally included some romance! Stay tuned for more fluff between the two. Also, what do you think about Katsuki’s unsettling news? Any predictions? And, how did you like the make-out session?
I Don't Even Want To Know.

Chapter Summary

When a breakfast goes wrong, and an unwanted visitor appears to ruin everyone's day.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The next morning felt surreal.

Izuku didn’t open his eyes when he felt his consciousness seep back into his skin, clouding his mind with a drowsy, almost foggy, feeling. He wanted to stay enveloped in the sensation, knowing full well that the warmth next to him was coming from a boy that he cherished immensely. He could feel how tightly Katsuki was holding him, his entire body pressed flush against Izuku’s smaller form.

With a small sigh, Izuku shifted to his side, wrapping his arms around the sleeping figure before burrowing into the warmth of his chest. It seemed that overnight, Katsuki had move up so that Izuku was being enveloped in his grip instead of himself, which he didn’t mind. Katsuki probably got too warm and no longer wanted to be held. Izuku took in the sweet smell that clung to Bakugou's shirt, breathing in deeply before softly releasing it. He wanted the blonde to get some rest, so Izuku didn't want to wake him up just yet.

Judging by the soft yellow light that filtered through the window shades, it was sunrise. That gave the boys an hour or two until they had to get ready for school. Izuku pressed his lips against Katsuki’s collarbone and weaseled out of his grip, pausing every time he felt the blonde shift beside him. He just needed to change into his uniform and make breakfast for everyone, and then he’d come back and wake Katsuki up.

Izuku opened his closet and pulled out his UA uniform, draping it over his desk chair while he worked on pulling his shirt over his head. When his arms reached over his head, shirt still tangled with his limbs, Izuku felt a slight pinch in between his shoulder blades followed by warm hands settling on his waist.

“Did I wake you?” he asked quietly, leaning against the body pressed up against him.

Katsuki hummed groggily behind him, exhaling through his nose. The breath tickled the back of Izuku's neck, causing goosebumps to rise on his arms. “S’fine. Always wake up early anyway.”

“What are you doing up, Deku?” he countered, dropping his head on the crook of Izuku's neck and nestling into the bare skin there.

Izuku sighed and turned around in his grip, wrapping his arms around Katsuki’s midsection. “Gotta make breakfast,” he replied before separating and pressing a chaste kiss to the corner of the blonde’s mouth. “What do you want to eat? I’ve got eggs, toast…”

Katsuki stretched with a yawn, his back cracking as he linked his fingers together and raised them high over his head. Bruises--various shades of yellows and purples--peeked out from under his shirt, the black fabric rising to expose a sliver of his stomach, and Izuku wondered if they hurt. After all,
they were everywhere on the boy’s body, spreading like a plague along the smooth skin of his back and stomach. It wasn’t just bruises, either: small cuts littered his hands and face, though those seemed miniscule.

Catching Izuku’s gaze, Katsuki sighed and pulled his shirt down. “It’s fine, Deku. You’re worrying too damn much,” he chastised him slightly, a small smile settling on his lips. “They don’t hurt or anything.”

“They don’t hurt now, but when Matsuki’s anesthetic wears off, what then? We have hero courses, Kacchan! Those require us to use our quirks and constantly keep us on our feet. If you continue to get more injuries like these ones, your performance will decrease,” Izuku dropped his shoulders and head. “Please don’t blame me for worrying about you.”

A warm hand combed through his curls, patting his head a few times. “I’ll figure something out, Deku. You think that I’ll let these bastards fuck up my perfect face? They’re gonna get what’s comin’ to them,” he joked, drawing out a chuckle from Izuku. “Now, let’s go make a bomb ass breakfast that even Auntie Inko would be jealous of.”

Izuku noticed how Katsuki changed the subject, but decided to drop it for now. They’d address this issue later, but this morning was reserved for them.

“Right!” he cheered, before leading the boy to the kitchen by the hand.

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They ended up burning the eggs due to Izuku forgetting them on the stove, the smell eventually causing Inko to wake up and investigate. She walked in on Izuku and Katsuki arguing over whose fault it was, rubbing her eyes tiredly. Inko had gotten home a few hours ago from a late night shift, expecting to be able to sleep in for at least a few more minutes.

“What in the world is going on here?” she grumbled, rubbing at her eyes. The pan was on fire, the miserable eggs sizzling into ashes on the stove. Before she could yell at the kids, she had to turn off the stove first. Waving away the smoke, she turned the knob and watched the flames as they died out.

Katsuki coughed, before glaring directly at Izuku. “This is totally your fault. I told you to watch the damn eggs!”

Izuku bristled at that, gritting his teeth. “You were distracting me! S’not my fault that you insisted on pulling me to the couch!”

Inko turned on the air filter and turned to the two boys, crossing her arms. “Good morning?” she said with an arched brow.

Izuku and Katsuki both ducked away from her icy tone. “Morning,” they both said unanimously.

At this point, the smoke had thinned out and the offending skillet of eggs were thrown out. Inko was working on a new batch while she forced the two boys to help her cut up the peppers and prepare the toast. The kitchen was filled with awkward silence for a few minutes while the boys were thinking of ways to apologize, until Inko began to chuckle.

“This wasn’t the most egg-ccelent way to wake up, I’ll admit,” she joked. Katsuki dropped the knife on the cutting board and stared at the woman.

“Did you just…?” he trailed off in disbelief, while Izuku just smacked his forehead.
“Now you know who I live with every day,” he protested with a whine.

Inko swatted her son with a wooden spoon from the counter. “Oh hush, you.”

***

If the morning wasn’t... *interesting* enough, school was even better. The second Izuku and Katsuki stepped into their classroom, snickers and murmurs filled the room. Izuku cocked his head to the side when even Uraraka and Matsuki laughed at them, though Uraraka’s face had a hint of a blush.

“Had fun last night, Midoriya?” Matsuki pressed with a knowing grin. Immediately, the class began to laugh, leaving Katsuki and Izuku frozen at the doorway. *How did they know? Were they watching us? What is happening?*

Yaoyorozu hesitantly walked up to Izuku and took his arm, leading him to where the girls were chuckling. “Midoriya, you should probably check your neck,” she said quietly, pointing to one of the girls’ handheld mirrors. He took it with a curious glance directed at the girls, before peering into the mirror.

Purple and red marks covered one side of his neck, and Izuku realized that they were all in the area where Katsuki focused on when they had kissed. *No way…*

“K-Kacchan! Why didn’t you tell me?” he cried out, slapping a hand over his neck. The girls began to giggle once more, which caused Izuku’s face to redden. “What do I do? I don’t want Aizawa to see this! Or *All Might*! Please help me out here!” he pleaded with the girls.

Yaoyorozu smiled kindly at him and sat him down, pulling out makeup from her bag. Aishido and Hagakure lingered at her side, peering over to watch her handiwork while Izuku nervously tapped his foot and wished for this whole situation to be over. *I should've known that it'd leave a mark!*

*Wait, did my mom see?* Stiffening in realization, Izuku slowly turned to glare at Katsuki. He was currently being bombarded with questions from the guys, but Katsuki still managed to find an opening to lock eyes with him. The blonde's cheeks were flushed, but apart from that, he had a passive and almost *smug* expression that just infuriated Izuku more. *I'll get you back, I swear,* Izuku promised to himself as a makeup brush tickled his neck.

“Aright, alright, settle down. To your seats,” Aizawa grumbled, making his way to the pedestal at the front of the room. His eyes fell on Yaoyorozu and Izuku's position, her body leaning entirely over the desk so she could focus on covering the various hickeys spread across his throat. “I don’t even want to know.”

Flustered, Izuku got up and returned to his actual seat, ducking his head and cradling it in his arms. “Sorry, sir.”

Aizawa sighed and directed his attention to the board. “Okay, all distractions aside, let's get started…”

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A week after that whole embarrassment, the class was scheduled to go to a center for rescue training. Details were a bit vague, the only thing that the students were aware of was the fact that it was with the Pro Hero Thirteen and that it was going to be first hand experience. Knowing that, Izuku couldn't help but feel excited; after all, he'd be meeting another hero *and* working on a vital lesson on becoming a hero.

He just hoped that he'd do alright.
Izuku almost felt bad for talking Uraraka's ear off on the way, his nerves getting the best of him and forcing his mouth to move a mile a minute. He gave up on keeping quiet after Katsuki told him to stop fidgeting in his seat, so Izuku prayed that his friend didn't mind before starting to talk.

“Does he always talk that fast when he's passionate about something?” Matsuki asked Bakugou while she snuck a hand in his bag of snacks, warranting a slap in the wrist. She narrowed her eyes at the blonde and quickly grabbed a pretzel, popping it in her mouth before he could hit it out of her hands.

“I swear, I'm going to switch seats if you don't stop stealing my shit,” Bakugou hissed, guarding the opening of the bag. “And yeah, he's always talked like that. Shitty Deku's gotten better at talking slower though, thank God.”

Jirou butted in, a sly grin on her face as she leaned forward and cupped her mouth in a mock whisper, “I'm sure you find ways to shut him up though, right?”

That comment drew Izuku away from his conversation with a sputter, his hands waving frantically while his face sported a bright flush of red. “Jirou!” he stuttered, staring slack-jawed at her.

She simply shrugged and returned to her phone, scrolling through her feed with a low chuckle. In response to that, Katsuki eyed Izuku with a dangerous grin, nearly predatory as he stuck out his tongue. “It's not a bad idea,” he trailed off, his smile widening as Izuku's face was set aflame. Izuku covered his face with his hands and slunk away, Uraraka patting his head in consolation.

“But hey! Good for you, Midoriya! And Bakugou, too. You guys seemed really tense in the first week, so it's good that you both are blowing off steam,” Kirishima butted in, flashing them with a grin. Did they think we had sex last week? Oh God, that's even worse than a make out session!

“Blowing off steam?” Izuku exclaimed, waving his arms wildly. “We've done no such thing!”

Katsuki snickered, munching on his chips with mirth. “Yeah, no. Izuku's a virgin through and through.”

Izuku reeled back in his seat and stared at Katsuki with dismay and a small increment of hurt; after all, he didn't expect him of all people to join in. It would've been nice if Katsuki defended him, not made it worse. So, folding his arms across his chest and putting his earbuds in, he tuned out their laughs while staring--more like glaring--out the window. Again, he felt the comforting pat of Uraraka's hand against his thigh. At least she's on my side.

Faintly, he could hear her scold the others with a firm voice, only hearing a few words. “You should...I expected more...he's had enough,” her words were choppy in Izuku's ears, but judging by the sudden silence that swept across the bus, they worked in their favor.

The rest of the bus ride was uneventful and peaceful, leaving Izuku more than enough time to brood by the window. He was embarrassed and fed up with everyone, his earlier excitement gone like the wind. Instead, Izuku wished he was anywhere but here. Instead, he turned his head further and ignored him. Izuku was giving Katsuki the silent treatment.

The bus pulled up at the U.S.J. building, parking in front of the large stadium-like arena. Izuku spent a few moments just looking at it, slack-jawed and awed at the sheer size of it. He heard that there were multiple environments within the arena, which is an incredible feat on its own, but seeing the building with his own eyes confirmed it.
“Woah, it’s huge!” Uraraka exclaimed next to him, leaning over his shoulder with her hand resting gently on his forearm. Izuku understood the hidden meaning: she wanted to know if he was okay. Patting her hand with his own, he turned and smiled at her. “Excited?” he asked, his own voice hitched in an excited tone. No matter what happened on the bus, hero duty would always come first. His personal feelings and emotions would not ruin his fun.

Before she could respond, Aizawa stood and urged everyone off of the bus. “Enough staring, come on. I’m not teaching you how to sit around, am I?” he drawled, his eyes glaring holes into anyone who lagged behind.

After everyone scrambled off the bus, Aizawa directed them inside, allowing the students a few moments to gawk at the space that U.S.J. provided for their rescue unit. There were condensed cities and ocean stages, both looking scarily realistic; it made Izuku's heart drop to his stomach in a very, very good way. This was it. This was real.

“Ah, here they are! Hm, not bad, Eraserhead,” a familiar voice exclaimed, drawing the attention of Izuku, who could swear that he'd heard it before. Turning his head, he saw the symbolic spacesuit of the Pro Hero Thirteen, who stood in the opening of the building with their arms crossed.

Aizawa scoffed beside him, having settled between where Izuku and Uraraka stood. “What did you expect, Thirteen? My kids are nothing to frown at,” he said with a Stern glare. Thirteen did nothing to react to his words; instead, they gestured to the rest of the students and laughed.

“Welcome, 1-A, to your rescue unit! Eraserhead and I will be showing you the ropes for today by helping you through simulations that cover a wide variety of situations, such as water recovery and close quarter rescues,” Thirteen explained. “I'm looking forward to working with all of you! Though, I was expecting one more…”

Aizawa answered, “All Might was running late this morning, so he won't be joining us.”

_All Might was supposed to be here? What made him cancel? Was he alright? Was it his quirk?_ Thoughts ran rampant in Izuku's head, only settling sightly when Uraraka rested a cool hand on his arm. “Are you alright, Deku? They didn't really bother you, did they? They were just joking around, but you should tell them if it bothered you like this,” Uraraka whispered lowly in his ear.

Izuku shook his head, putting a damper on his thoughts as he did so. “No! I'm not thinking about that, just...thinking. I get like this sometimes, don't worry! Thank you for the concern.”

Uraraka flashed a grin his way and said, “Of course! I'm your friend, it's what I'm supposed to do.”

“Ochako, c'mere! Tsuyu wanted to partner with you,” Matsuki said and waved her over, leaving Izuku alone with Aizawa. However, he wasn't feeling... right. There was something off.

Peering around Aizawa’s black figure, Izuku scanned the area for any sign of a surprise. Maybe there was a twist to the lesson? A faux villain? Whatever it was, it was setting Izuku on edge. “Um, Aizawa…?” Izuku began, still searching for something.

Aizawa hummed and glanced at him. “Yes, Midoriya?” he answered, staring blankly at the boy.

As soon as Aizawa responded, a black and purple mass began to form behind him, still small enough for anyone who wasn't paying attention to see. It spiraled--twisted and gnarled--while gaining mass by the second. It looked like some sort of portal. A hand reached out, calloused and pale, which caused Izuku to grab a hold of Aizawa with his quirk and pull him away from harm--drill or no drill.
A boy stepped out of the portal, covered in hands. His blue hair fell in waves that framed his face, which was concealed by a white palm. Izuku released Aizawa as soon as he was a safe distance away and kept his eye on the mysterious figure, stifling the fear behind a face of determination. A warm hand brushed against his own, tightening its grip. He would recognize that calloused hand anywhere. *Kacchan...*

“Hm, I was expecting to see All Might here. Looks like my source was wrong,” the boy mused and scratched his neck.

Aizawa was immediately on the defensive, unfurling his scarf and holding the cloth tightly beneath his fists. “Who are you,” he asked, “and why are you asking for All Might?”

The boy laughed, throwing his head back while he did so. His hand rose to his face, and his fingers peeled away the hand to reveal a manic grin. Lips were dried and cracked, but what creeped Izuku out the most was his blood-red eyes, which seemed to glow with such malice that it made goosebumps rise on his arms. Katsuki’s hand tightened around Izuku’s, warming up as his quirk sizzled beneath his skin.


Chapter End Notes

I am so, SO sorry that this took so damn long. A lot of stuff has been going on lately, and I couldn't write without either crying or screaming (yeah, it was NOT a good time). So, I tried to get a chapter out for you all, because I hate not being able to post anything. I'm going to desperately try and provide content that is worthy of posting, so I may have to change my posting schedule to every week and a half? Or whenever I can, at this point.

Anyway, what did you think? Any predictions on how the USJ fight would be different? Thank you for reading~
Chapter Summary

Where the students get cornered, and Izuku tries to be a hero. *GRAPHIC CONTENT*

Chapter Notes

Just a forewarning! The violence in this chapter is pretty graphic. It's descriptive, but not too much.

To say that Izuku was afraid was an understatement. No, he was terrified. His limbs locked up and his hand clung to Katsuki's like a lifeline, using the heat from his palm to keep him grounded. This wasn't a drill--this was a real villain who was here to kill someone.

Someone who wasn't even here. What did that mean for us? Would he leave us alone, or would he try to send a message? Why would he be after All Might anyway?

Aizawa shot a glance at Thirteen, who protectively placed themself in front of the students. “He isn't here; though, even if he was, I doubt you'd be able ‘kill him’ like you want to,” Aizawa trailed off. “Planning this alone was suicide, don't you think?”

“Who said I was alone?”

The villain laughed once more, gesturing behind him. More portals formed behind him, covering the entire arena with purple. More and more people stepped out of those portals, surrounding the small class from all sides but the one near the exit. We need to get out of here! We’re outnumbered!

Aizawa and Thirteen had the same idea. “Thirteen,” he called out, “get the students out of here! I’ll hold them off until more Pros show up.”

Thirteen was already moving as soon as he called their name, ushering 1-A to the doors. Izuku and Katsuki stayed rooted by Aizawa’s side, both hellbent on helping the pro out. “What can we do, sensei?” Katsuki asked with a bloodthirsty grin, his hand nearly searing Izuku’s from where they touched. He could sense the other’s adrenaline, which fueled his own.

Aizawa glared at them both, a sneer forming on his lips. “What you can do is go with the rest of the class and get out of here. I got this,” he answered.

“It’s a hundred to one, sir. I don’t doubt your capabilities, but even you have to know that your chances are slim,” Izuku protested, letting go of Katsuki’s hand to gesture wildly. “We can fight! Or at least keep them off you.”
Before Aizawa could even think about responding, the villain interrupted, “Don’t let them escape, Kurogiri!”

The three of them turned around just in time to see the entire class get enveloped in purple smog. Izuku tried to grab at the substance to pull it away, but he found that his mental grip faltered every time he tried. “Shit,” Izuku swore, bolting towards the smog, “Uraraka? Iida?” But none of them responded.

Until, very faintly, he heard the familiar shout of the class president. “Midoriya! I’m getting help, so don’t worry!” he heard Iida yell. He must have gotten away before this ‘Kurogiri’ could catch him.

Oh, thank God.

“Hurry, Iida!” Izuku called back. He steadied his nerves and faced the mass of villains once more, taking his place next to his teacher and boyfriend. He wasn’t going to let anything bad happen today; not if he could help it.

“Someone got away?” the villain hissed, scratching his neck in obvious aggravation. “Kurogiri, I told you not to let anyone escape!”

A hazy figure manifested next to the boy, purple and black tendrils flickering around his body like flames. Assuming that it was Kurogiri, Izuku took a defensive stance and prepared for a warp gate to appear at any time. It seemed like the portals could develop at random times, which could seriously catch them off guard if they weren’t cautious.

“My apologies, one student was able to outrun me,” he bowed his head. That was definitely Iida, then.

“Heroes will be coming soon, then. We’ll have to make this quick,” he said, gesturing to the crowd behind him. They immediately rushed forward and attempted to ambush the three, but with a quick hand, Izuku managed to push away the front of the line. He’d been practicing with heavier objects, so pushing the minor villains wouldn’t be taxing for him.

Propelling himself over the prone villains, Katsuki launched himself forward with powerful explosions and blew away anyone who was unfortunate enough to cross his path. His slew of “Die!” and “Go to hell!” filled the arena, but what impressed Izuku the most was the fact that Katsuki was tactfully avoiding the villains that were capable of crippling his quirk. He steered clear of the water quirks and those with hardened skin; instead, he went for those that he could attack quickly and moved on after that. He was like a meteor: quick and fleeting, but causing collateral damage once he hits.

Aizawa tilted his head back and sighed. He muttered to the ceiling, “God, I should have expelled you two,” before using his scarf to bind his own fair share of villains.

Their goal was to get to the center where the leading villain warped to and subdue him before he caused more damage. Katsuki and Izuku stayed together for the most part, covering each other’s weak spots while they inched forward. They’d flash each other grins while they sent a villain flying; which, if Aizawa saw, would get them in a shit ton of trouble.

Izuku had pushed away his target when he noticed something: Katsuki’s blast radius was wild and untamed. Instead of a concentrated explosion, it was everywhere and nowhere at the same time. If the blast was more concentrated, he could pack more of a punch. So, to test a theory, Izuku focused on one of his explosions, controlling the air around it until it was in the shape of a small ball.

“Taking my quirk, Deku?” Katsuki jeered, setting off another explosion to replace the one Izuku
stole.

“Have an idea, Kacchan!” was his only response as he took the small ball of condensed explosion and flung it into a group of villains, cheering as the ball exploded with much more force. Almost like a bomb, the ball reacted on impact—which was just what Izuku planned.

“The hell did you do?” Katsuki gawked, ducking under a villain’s swing and sending a quick uppercut into his chin.

Izuku dodged someone’s grab and lifted him in the air, before throwing him to the ground. “My grenade theory! You see, if you conceal a force that was meant to cover a large area, the force when released will be significantly more powerful since the force has nowhere to go. So I basically kept it in one spot and released it on impact, causing the force to push out at the slightest pressure.”

Katsuki stopped and stared at Izuku with an impressed grin, his eyes glinting with mischief. “Keep that up, Deku, and you might not be a virgin anymore.”

Izuku’s face burned with embarrassment as he fought back the urge to cover his face. “K-Kacchan! We’re fifteen!” he stuttered while he sent a man flying into the crowd with a flick of his fingers.

“Couldn’t you at least wait until we’re not fighting a bunch of wanna-be villains?”

Katsuki cackled, which was soon followed by a large explosion. Izuku found a break and checked over Katsuki to ensure that he was okay; after all, he was still injured from being beat up by his assailants. Sweat dripped freely from the blonde’s forehead and the grin that he wore was carefree, but Izuku could still see the faint tremble of his arms and legs as he moved across the clearing. It may not have been obvious to anyone else, but Katsuki was struggling past the pain: which caused Izuku to worry if he’d last any longer. He needed to get out of the fight somehow.

“Kacchan, you should find out if the others are okay!” Izuku called out to him, having found himself separated from his companion. There seemed to be an endless amount of villains that they had to take down, and the mass of people slowly overwhelmed them both. Eventually, Izuku was forced to move forward and hope that Katsuki had heard him.

Finally, after fighting his way through countless villains, Izuku saw Aizawa in the center of the clearing. There, standing in front of the teacher, was the blue-haired villain and Kurogiri. The two villains did nothing to initiate an attack; instead, the blue-haired one simply smiled at Aizawa.

“So, what do you plan on doing now, Eraserhead? Your kids are scattered and surrounded by my men,” he taunted, trying to get a reaction from the man. Izuku was worried for his friends and classmates, but he knew that they were capable of defending themselves; plus, they had Katsuki to help—that is, if he heard Izuku call out to him at all.

“You’re a fool to think that my students would let some minor villains beat them. You don’t know my kids,” Aizawa calmly answered.

Izuku, who was still a few yards away from the three, could only see the back of Aizawa due to positioning; however, he didn’t need to see his face to know that he wore a determined expression on his face. The pro hero was a force to be reckoned with, because what he lacked in physical strength, he made up in strategy and diligence. So, if a fight did break out between them, Izuku knew that Aizawa would come out on top. He had to.

The mystery villain only chuckled and motioned to Kurogiri. “And you don’t know me, Eraserhead. Your first and final mistake,” he told him.
Behind Aizawa, a warp gate began to form, which went unnoticed by the man. Izuku rushed forward, stumbling over his feet as he tried to get closer. “Behind you, Aiza--!”

His breath hitched in his throat when he saw who--no, what -- stepped out of the portal. It was monstrous; with thick black skin pulled taut over bulging muscles and a bird-like facial structure, the creature towered over Aizawa and the other villains. It looked to have the same muscle mass as All Might and maybe even his height. Though, the most unsettling part of it to Izuku was the exposed brain that covered most of his head.

Aizawa turned around just in time to notice it and used his scarf to try and bind the creature. It squealed and snapped its jaw shut before tearing through the fabric and charging at him, grabbing Aizawa by the arm and squeezing. The man grunted in pain and tried to twist its arm in order to free himself, but the creature didn’t even budge.

“This, Eraserhead, is Nomu,” the boy spoke, smiling to himself as he approached them. He pat the “Nomu” on his arm and stared at Aizawa. “He was...repurposed to become something more. He became something more powerful than you and me, and maybe even All Might. He has no thoughts, cannot speak, and feels no pain; I call him the Anti-Symbol of Peace.”

He looked up at the Nomu, his grin suddenly absent from his face. “Break his arm. Make the student behind him watch,” he ordered coldly.

Izuku froze in place, not expecting the villain to address him at all. From the way Aizawa flinched, it seemed like he didn’t expect it either. The Nomu angled his body so that Izuku could clearly see the arm that was clenched in the creature’s fist, and no matter how hard Izuku tried to look away, his eyes were wide open in fear.

Aizawa tried once more to break free, but the second attempt had the same result as the first. Refusing to let himself just stand by and watch, Izuku rushed forward and outstretched his hand. He felt his mind grab hold of the Nomu and tried to pull it away, but it fought against his telekinesis and broke free of it with ease. The grip on Aizawa’s arm tightened more and more, and Izuku watched as the limb snapped under the pressure.

The sound of the bone breaking echoed in his head, but the sight of it was far worse.

The arm was clearly broken and deformed, with one side angled differently than the other. Bruising already formed where the Nomu’s hand was, and the pain-filled grimace that passed through Aizawa’s face was enough to haunt Izuku’s nights for weeks.

The villain laughed, staring directly at Izuku. His smile was horrifying, and Izuku felt his legs begin to tremble. He wasn’t prepared for this; no one was. There was no way that he could’ve mentally prepared to see his teacher’s arm break, or to see his friends warp to unknown areas around him. For all he knew, they could be hurt somewhere--God forbid. They could seriously die here if things didn’t go their way.

Izuku began to tear up, fear settling into his skin. He didn’t want to die here. He had a dream to become a hero: how could he become one if he died today?

*I refuse to die here, not without a fight!*

Izuku rushed forward, blinded by the will to survive. He grabbed hold of the Nomu with his mind again, only this time, Izuku refused to let him break free. Applying more and more pressure, Izuku began to compress the Nomu until he released Aizawa. He fought against the hold by using his
superhuman strength, but Izuku pushed past his boundaries and kept himself rooted in place. You’re not getting past me. Not until you let my teacher go!

Sudden movement—a blur of blue—caught Izuku’s eye, and Izuku had a few seconds to dodge the blue-haired villain’s grasp. That sudden change broke Izuku’s concentration for a moment, which was more than enough time for Nomu to break free with a snarl.

Izuku felt it before he could see it, which made it ten times more painful. The Nomu had dropped Aizawa and went after him instead, and ended up smacking into his back with enough force to draw out a yelp from the unsuspecting boy. He was sent stumbling to the ground and even rolled a few times before skidding to a stop on his stomach.

Gasping for the breath that he lost on impact, Izuku tried to apply pressure to his palms and stand, but the Nomu quickly put a heavy foot on the center of his back. He was pinned.

“Let…me…go!” he wheezed as he fought against the force on his back, but he wasn’t anywhere close to matching the Nomu’s strength. The beast clicked his tongue and turned to face his “master” to figure out what to do next.

“Do you see now, Eraserhead? Your failure has costed you the life of a student! How will you fix this?” the villain taunted.

Aizawa looked at Izuku with gritted teeth, likely trying to figure out his next plan. He had his visor over his eyes, so Izuku could only see the red glare that passed through the gaps as he stared back at him through the green curls that fell across his eyes, but he found that he couldn’t say anything. Izuku couldn’t focus with a heavy weight pinning him down, but he knew of one way to help. It could kill him, but it would work.

“Entrance…exam,” Izuku started to say. “Buy me…time!”

Aizawa stared at the boy with shock, wanting to immediately reject the idea. Izuku knew why: it nearly killed him when he split the robot in two, but if he applied that force from that day to the Nomu, he could level the playing field. Hell, they could win. So, when Aizawa gave him a small nod, Izuku knew that he understood.

“I’m expelling you after this, you damn boy,” Aizawa groaned, but he heard the slight waver in his voice. Izuku could hear the words that were left unsaid: You better survive this.

There was no time to dwell, they both knew that. So Aizawa rushed forward and bound the blue-haired villain, catching the boy by surprise. Kurogiri tried to step in as well, but Aizawa used his quirk to dispel his quirk with a flash of red. When it seemed that the two villains were distracted completely, Izuku put his plan in motion.

Squeezing his eyes shut, Izuku grabbed onto the creature’s leg with his quirk and willed it to twist. It took some effort, but Izuku finally felt the foot on his back shift until various popping noises were heard. It was repulsive to listen to, especially when he knew that it was him that was twisting the Nomu’s ankle, but he had to be able to stand in order to face the Nomu head-on.

Izuku lifted the foot, battling the pressure that the Nomu was still applying on his back, and quickly rolled out from under it. He scrambled to his feet and gained some distance before he could be grabbed again. As soon as he was a few paces away, Izuku turned to face the beast.

He was looking down at his foot with quiet curiosity, but to Izuku’s horror, the Nomu’s ankle simply twisted back to its normal position. Regeneration? Seriously? What can’t this thing do?
But Izuku couldn’t give up. Aizawa had given him time, so he was going to use it wisely. He planted his feet, just like in the entrance exam, and grabbed the Nomu from both sides. Izuku didn’t want to kill the Nomu—a hero always tried to spare the lives of villains, no matter what—so instead of pulling the creature apart, he fought to keep it contained. It would likely require the same amount of force as the robot, since the Nomu was actively trying to fight against the force binding it, but Izuku was prepared.

And boy, did the Nomu fight back. He clicked and squealed as his muscles spasmed from the effort, but as the Nomu pushed forward, Izuku doubled the force as he pushed back. All he had to do was hold him back until the pros arrived. Aizawa would stop the two lead villains, and everything would be fine.

Yeah, Izuku thought to himself as blood trickled past his lips, everything is fine.

His surroundings blurred until it was just him and the Nomu as he concentrated fully on his task. His legs trembled, so did his arms, but as long as he kept his legs planted on the cement, he would not budge.

Izuku was the only thing standing between the Nomu and everyone else, and he’d be a fool to let Nomu break past.

“-ku! Izuku! Dammit Izuku, behind you!” he heard Katsuki shout. Nomu screeched loudly, breaking through Izuku’s hold while he was distracted. The boy quickly glanced behind him and found that Kurogiri had managed to warp a minor villain behind him.

A flash of silver caught his eye, and Izuku reflexively pushed the man away before he could stab him with the knife that he held in his hand. Turning back around to try and bind Nomu again, Izuku was stunned to find that the creature was faster than he thought. Before Izuku could even think about raising his hands to try and block the hit, Nomu’s fist collided with his stomach and sent him flying to the other side of the small clearing.

This time, he landed on his back with white noise ringing in his ears. His cheek was scraped from sliding across the cement, as was the rest of his body, and Izuku found it hard to keep his eyes open. He felt blood coat his face starting from his nose, which bled from the use of his quirk, to the cut on his head from hitting it. Everything ached, especially his back and stomach, but he was relieved to see his chest rising and falling with no problem. As long as his quirk wasn’t interfering with his brain like last time, he was fine. It hurt like hell, but he was alive.

But for how long? The voice returned, taunting him. You failed. You let the Nomu break through. Aizawa’s in danger now because you let him down. Maybe you should just stay down and just let it happen.

No, I need to get up! I can’t fail, not now! I can try it again!

Stay down!

Get up!

Get up, Izuku!

“Get up!” Katsuki screamed, cutting through his thoughts and white noise like he always did. Izuku’s eyes snapped open then, just in time to see Nomu looming over him with his fists raised. He quickly rolled out of the way and nearly wept in relief when the fist crashed into the cement instead of him.
Izuku shakily got to his feet, wiping away the blood that dripped down his chin. He spat out the coppery taste and grounded his feet once more, preparing to start all over again. The Nomu cocked his head to the side and clicked, but he did not look at Izuku directly. Instead, his gaze was set on something behind him.

He turned his head to see what Nomu was looking at, and he nearly threw up when he did. Aizawa was laying prone on the ground, nearly motionless if it wasn’t for the faint breaths that Izuku saw him take. Various burn marks covered his skin, coating the usually pale man in shades of red. His skin was charred in some places; other places, Izuku could swear he saw bone.

**Just what is that blue-haired boy’s quirk?**

“Aizawa!” Izuku called out, stumbling to where his teacher was. The villain watched with an amused glance as Izuku struggled to stand and fought the vertigo that wanted to send him crashing to the floor.

“You’re relentless, I’ll give you that,” he laughed. The villain approached him and blocked Izuku from reaching Aizawa. “Nomu, make sure Aizawa doesn’t get up anytime soon.”

The large creature grunted in response and did what he was asked, picking up Aizawa's head by the hair and immediately slamming it into the concrete. Izuku wheezed in protest as he tried to get his legs to move in a miserable attempt at saving him.

“S-Stop it!” he tried to yell, but his voice only came out as a whisper. *Come on, legs, move faster!*

The man laughed again when Izuku tried to take a swing at him and easily dodged it. “You'll have to do better than that.”

Izuku tried to push him with his quirk, but he was hit with such a strong wave of nausea that he physically couldn't. The man tilted his head at him and mocked curiosity.

“You have telekinesis, don't you? Wow, your burnout is intense, isn't it? I could help, if you want.”

“F-fuck you,” he slurred in response, swaying on his feet. His vision was blurry and doubled, but he refused to back down. So again, he swung. He knew that it wouldn't do anything, but he had to try. Annoyed, the man simply shoved him to the ground and sneered. “You failed, boy. Give up.”

“Never.”

He tsked, reeled back his leg, and kicked Izuku's side with enough force to knock the breath from his lungs. Faintly, he remembered the hallway incident with Ren when he was beaten black and blue, but Katsuki was able to step in before things got too serious.

Would he come for him now? Would Izuku want him to risk his life?

The man knelt down and tilted Izuku's head up to meet his eyes. His scarring and chapped lips set Izuku on edge, but he was too weak and sore to move.

“Remember my face, boy, and what I do to little heroes like you. The age of heroes is over, and villains are ready to take a stand. My name is Shigaraki; remember that name,” he whispered, his breath fanning warmly across Izuku's cheek. He tried to pull away, but Shigaraki’s fingers—all but his pinky, strangely enough—prevented him from moving. *He caused those burns on Aizawa, right? Why wasn't he burning me?*
His hand hovered over Izuku's forearm, ghosting the skin there. His thumb came in contact first, then his index, until his entire hand except for his pinky touched. Then, with a haunting smile, he dropped the remaining finger...

And Izuku began screaming.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! What did you think about this chapter? What was your favorite part? Let me know in the comments!

Anyway, hope you don't mind the cliffhanger! Izuku definitely got the beating of a lifetime, but I wonder if anyone's going to step in and help? We'll have to see ;)
Chapter Summary

Where Katsuki tries at revenge, and Izuku wakes up in a familiar place.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Izuku felt his skin flake like ash, slowly cracking away before falling to the ground in the form of black powder. It felt as if Shigaraki was peeling off his skin, and the searing pain that came with it nearly blinded him. To make matters worse, Izuku was pinned by his nausea and unable to do anything but squirm and howl.

"Izuku!" he faintly heard Katsuki scream, but he was too occupied with trying to push the blue-haired villain away.

Before Katsuki could jump in to save him, the U.S.J. doors busted open with a gust of wind. It startled Shigaraki, who released Izuku's arm in order to stand up and address the new visitor. Izuku immediately recoiled and held his mutilated arm to his chest, nearly gagging when his hand came in contact with the bloody appendage.

He didn't need to see it to know that it was bad. Blood dripped through his fingers and onto the floor, and it seemed like the bleeding would never stop. Besides the blood, the area that was dissolved was rough to the touch and went deep into his forearm; it likely breached muscle.

Izuku gritted his teeth and willed his body to last for a few more minutes at least, so he could get to somewhere safe. He was in no condition to fight, not with the pain of his arm clouding his mind and blocking his concentration. If he could get to where he saw the other students gathering, he'd be set.

But how could he get there when he couldn't even stand?

An explosion, surprisingly faint to his ears, came to his attention. He couldn't see past the blurriness in his eyes, but Izuku could make out the faint outline of Katsuki as he rushed to his side. That explosion must have been from him, then.

The blond dropped to his knees and immediately evaluated the boy on the ground, sucking in a breath when he saw the gaping wound that Izuku held with a shaky hand.

"Fuck, Izuku," he whispered hoarsely, gathering him up in his arms and attempting to stand. As he got to his feet, legs slightly trembling due to exertion, Izuku yelped and squeezed his eyes shut.

"Sorry, nerd, but I have to get you somewhere safe. It's going to hurt, I know, but you're going to be fine."

Why do you sound so doubtful, Kacchan?

"Okay," Izuku said instead, his voice muffled into Katsuki's shirt. At that point, Izuku was in too much pain to care about anything else; he just wanted it to end. His back—no, his whole body—ached and throbbed, and his arm burned immensely. The bleeding arm was draped across his midsection while his other arm held it in place, but he could feel exhaustion tempt his limbs.
Wouldn't it be easier to just sleep? He'd escape the pain, at least for a little while. It's what his mind wanted, anyway. He felt his eyelids droop heavily, and Izuku didn't know why he was even fighting to stay awake.

Katsuki, who was rushing to his other classmates, noticed Izuku's inner conflict and cursed. “Deku, you need to stay awake. Stay with me,” he ordered, but Izuku found that it was hard to listen to him while the black dots in his vision seemed to multiply by every second.

He gripped tightly to the last strands of consciousness, but as every drop of blood dripped down to the cement below, he grew more and more drowsy and unfocused.

“C'mon, Deku, stay here. Don't you want to see All Might beat the shit out of the villains? 'Cause he's here right now, looking pissed, and I know that you'd want to see it,” Katsuki tried to keep Izuku engaged, but even the blond knew that Izuku was fighting a losing battle.

The last thing Izuku saw before his eyes fell closed was the single tear that slid down Katsuki's cheek, and then the world went black.

***

Katsuki's day seemed to get shittier and shittier, much to the boy's displeasure.

It started this morning, when he had his routine meet-up with the group of villains that wanted to make his life hell. He made sure to send most of them back with burns and seared eyebrows, but there was always that one masked villain that countered him with ridiculously hot flames.

After that shitshow, Katsuki had teased Izuku to the point where he began ignoring him, which made the blonde feel like an asshole. He hadn't meant to make his boyfriend--is that what he'd call him?--upset, but Katsuki should have paid attention to how Izuku was reacting before he said anything.

And now? Katsuki wasn't sure that he'd be able to apologise for this morning; not while Izuku laid limp in his arms.

He carried Izuku with shaky arms while his bruises screamed in protest, but he refused to drop him. Katsuki had to get him somewhere safe, then he could jump in and help All Might with the fight.

He wanted revenge on the fuckers that messed with Izuku.

But Izuku's safety was a priority. Katsuki finally made it to where Matsuki and the others huddled around the fallen Thirteen and Aizawa, and everyone looked scared out of their minds. He didn’t blame them; this was the first time they’ve ever seen villains up close. If Katsuki hadn’t of ran into the Sludge Villain in middle school, he’d likely be scared too; but the few weeks of therapy after that incident resolved his fear of villains.

Besides, Katsuki already saw villains every morning, so what did he have to be afraid of anymore?

“Matsuki!” he called out to his friend, honing in on the girl who was numbing some of the others that had gotten injured during the attack. The black-haired girl looked worse-for-wear--a deep cut was slashed across her cheek, and her face was pale from overexerting her quirk.

Matsuki’s head shot up from hearing her name, and her eyes instantly caught on the body in his arms. Her eyes widened in shock, and she quickly rose to her feet in order to rush to Katsuki’s side. “I saw what happened,” she said in a hurry, helping the blonde lower Izuku to the ground. “I couldn’t do anything but watch, damn it, but I can at least help with his injury. Maybe stop the blood.”
Katsuki was grateful for the weight lifted from his arms, and he knelt by Izuku’s unconscious form. He wanted to make sure that he’d be alright before he went out to fight again. “Do whatever you need to do,” he whispered, glancing down at Izuku’s face.

His brow was slightly pinched, showing that even in a state of unconsciousness, Izuku was in pain. Katsuki brushed past his curls and kissed his forehead, squeezing his eyes and praying to whoever would listen that Izuku would make it out of here alive. \textit{Die, nerd, and I’ll never forgive you.}

He moved to stand, but a firm grip on his wrist stopped him. Matsuki glared at him, her mouth set in a firm line. “Where are you going?” she asked him, knowing full well that he was planning to go back to the clearing.

“I have to help,” he said with gritted teeth.

“You’re in no condition to fight!” Matsuki argued. Quieter, she murmured, “Your injuries will slow you down; hell, they’re already slowing you down, aren’t they? Your arms are shaking.”

Katsuki hated when she was right. “It’s better than not doing anything. All Might… is weaker than you think. He needs my help.” But Katsuki couldn’t say that, or else the man’s secret would be revealed. He was sworn into secrecy.

“All Might can handle it. He’s a pro hero, Bakugou.”

“Still, it’s three to one. Don’t you think he needs one more person to help even the odds?” Katsuki said, gently removing her fingers from his arm. “I’ll back out if it gets too much. But I hate sitting around doing nothing while the fuckers that did this to Deku are still standing.”

Matsuki sighed and shook her head. “No you won’t,” she said. The girl smiled softly and began tearing off a piece of her jacket to wrap around Izuku’s arm. “Just...try not to get killed, alright? God, you both are going to be the death of me.”

Katsuki laughed, a grin breaking out on his face. “I’m gonna win, just you watch. No need to worry, Pain Killer.”

And with that, he rushed to the clearing, using his explosions to launch himself forward. All Might was still locked in a fight with the Nomu, which left the blue-haired villain and the warp gate villain. They stood to the side, watching their handiwork. Shigaraki had a malicious grin on his face, while Kurogiri stood tall beside him with a neutral expression.

\textit{I’ll wipe that sick grin off his face}, Katsuki thought to himself, reeling back his hand to prepare a large-scaled explosion.

“Quit standin’ around, you creepy piece of shit!” he hollered, feeling the heat in his palm blister and burn until it ignited. The explosion blinded Katsuki for a moment, the smoke immediately filling his nostrils like secondary air. \textit{This was a familiar feeling: the choking feeling of smoke as it entered his lungs. It was nearly comforting.}

By the time it cleared, Katsuki could see that his attack didn’t hit as much as he wanted it to. He had taken them by surprise, but Kurogiri had warped them away to avoid the brunt of the hit. Still, seeing Shigaraki’s singed clothing made Katsuki pleased.

“How annoying,” the villain drawled, brushing off the cinders from his clothes. “I already dealt with your classmate; are you really this desperate to die?”

Katsuki scoffed, “Who said I was dying? I refuse to let myself lose to a man that doesn’t know what
the hell chapstick is.”

Shigaraki gritted his teeth and glared at him. “You’re a nuisance. Kurogiri, get rid of him!”

The familiar sound of ice coating the floor made Katsuki groan. “Oh, come on, Icy-Hot! You had to ruin my moment?”

The boy simply grunted in response. They stood back-to-back, with Todoroki facing Shigaraki while Katsuki was pitted against Kurogiri. As much as it pained him to admit, it was actually a smart pairing. If Katsuki got rid of the warp villain, it would block the other villains’ escape. As Katsuki was fighting Kurogiri, Todoroki could keep Shigaraki at bay with his ice.

“Just stay out of my way,” Katsuki muttered.

“Ditto,” Todoroki responded, before they both seperated and charged at their opponents. Todoroki froze the ground beneath Shigaraki’s feet, adding more and more layers to avoid it being dissolved by his quirk.

Meanwhile, Katsuki already had the upper hand, pushing Kurogiri further away from the others. With every explosion that he directed at the metal plates around the villain’s neck, the weaker Kurogiri got. Finally, after a rather powerful explosion was fired at him, Kurogiri finally went down.

“C’mon, is that all you’ve got?” Katsuki growled, small explosions setting off in his palms. “I’m gettin’ bored here!”

Todoroki simply sighed at his words, sending another sheet of ice towards the leading villain. It was frustrating, especially when the man could simply dissolve the ice with his quirk. “Bakugou, you take over! I’m going to see if I can help with that Nomu,” he said, nodding once at the blonde.

Katsuki grinned, his eyes lighting up in malice as he faced the blue-haired villain. “I’m gonna make you pay,” he growled, launching himself forward so he could smokescreen him. If he could blind Shigaraki, even for a moment, he could get a good hit in that would incapacitate the villain.

Bakugou set off the explosion a few feet away from Shigaraki’s face and immediately darted to the side in order to get behind him. He was ready to set off another explosion, but Shigaraki had other plans.

“Nomu!” he called out, which caused Katsuki to curse. Of course he would call his dog on me.

Katsuki redirected his attack and got some distance between Shigaraki and himself so he could strategize. Fighting Shigaraki while the Nomu was still up and running was nearly impossible, since he could just call the Nomu’s name and he’d come running. He had to deal with the mutated creature first.

“Young Bakugou, Young Todoroki!” All Might bellowed, jumping in to intercept the Nomu before he could go after Katsuki. “You need to go back with the others!”

Katsuki scoffed and planted his feet on the ground. “You saw what happened to Deku! You really think that I’d let them go?”

All Might grunted with the effort to match Nomu's speed and strength, but since he still had One for All's full power, he had no issue with keeping up. “A hero doesn't involve himself with revenge, Young Bakugou!”

“Don't we fight for justice, though?” Katsuki interjected, but he backed off regardless. “It's a hero's
job to put those who harm others in their place!"

“Don’t argue, Young Bakugou. A true hero knows to pick and choose his battles to avoid injury; especially when they’re already injured,” All Might replied.

Shit, does he know? Katsuki immediately began to panic. Did someone find out and tell a teacher? Was it Deku? Matsuki? Fuck, if those villains find out that I told people, they’ll kill me! Or worse, go after Izuku!

With a rather powerful punch, All Might sent the Nomu flying to the other side of the arena and faced Katsuki with a stern glance. “We’ll talk about that later, young man, but for now, I want you to watch over Midoriya and make sure that he’s alright. I need to have a talk with you two about jumping into dangerous situations.”

Katsuki lowered his eyes and bit back a retort, clenching his hands into fists instead. “Fine,” he muttered and retreated back to the others.

He wasn’t looking forward to those ‘talks.’

***

The Pro Heroes arrived as soon as All Might launched the Nomu through the ceiling and attempted to apprehend Shigaraki and Kurogiri. Snipe, a ranged Pro Hero, even managed to shoot Shigaraki—much to Katsuki’s pleasure. However, the victory was short lived when Katsuki saw the familiar sight of purple enveloping Shigaraki’s fallen form.

The leading villains would escape, but at least the rest of the students were safe.

Katsuki watched as paramedics carried Thirteen, Aizawa and Izuku into ambulances. He was there when they called out a ‘Code Blue’ when they handled his boyfriend, who’s chest no longer rose and fell. Whether it was because of his quirk use or blood loss, Katsuki didn’t care; all he knew was that Izuku wasn’t breathing.

*God, please let him breathe.*

Blurrily, Izuku opened his eyes to find a white tiled ceiling.

Everything was foggy and unfocused, but Izuku felt oddly...light? He couldn’t hear anything past the white noise that softly rang in his ears, but even without hearing the familiar sound of the birds, Izuku knew from the bright lights that it was morning.

He inhaled deeply, smelling the stale air of the hospital room and the faint smell of flowers. Izuku turned his head slightly to look out the window, but his eyes caught on a vase filled with white camellias and a small smile broke out on Izuku’s lips.

*The hospital doesn’t provide flowers for its patients, Izuku thought to himself. I wonder who brought them for me?*

After a moment of laying there, constant beeping began to break through Izuku’s fuzzy hearing. The heart monitor brought some sense back into him, and he began to wonder what happened to everyone else. Last Izuku remembered, Aizawa looked to be in critical condition: what happened to his teacher while he was unconscious?

He tried to think deeper and remember more, but there seemed to be a mental block that put more
and more strain behind his eyes as Izuku tried to delve into his mind. Izuku winced as the pain flared in his head, so he nestled into the pillow and gave up on recollecting. There would be time later to think.

“I told you that your quirk would affect your brain, young man,” Recovery Girl said, shutting the door behind her. Izuku startled at hearing her voice, not even noticing when she had entered.

“Recovery Girl!” he said with a kind smile. “I'm guessing you had a part in healing me?”

She scoffed, waving her cane at him with a frown. “You and that damned Shouta took hours to heal, you know. I had to perform skin grafts on you to replace the lost skin on your forearm, and your ribs were fractured from blunt force.”

Izuku winced when he remembered the way he was smacked into the ground by the Nomu's attack. *That must have been when I damaged them.*

“Thank you for that, Miss. I...owe you my life, don't I?” Izuku hesitated and rested his hand on the cast on his arm. “I don't remember a lot, but something tells me that it was a pretty close call.”

The old woman sighed and pinched the bridge of her nose. “I guess you wouldn't remember it either way, since you were unconscious for most of the serious stuff. Though, you did wake up during the procedure once. Most patients that end up doing that will never remember it, though, so I think you're good.”

“I woke up during the procedure? How?”

“I don't know. It's very rare, but it can happen,” she hovered over him and ordered him to open his eyes so she could test his pupils. “How are you feeling? Any lingering pain?”

Izuku thought about it for a moment and shook his head. “My head hurts when I think too hard, but my arm and back don't hurt at all.”

“Good.”

“How's Aizawa? He was really injured when I last saw him,” Izuku asked.

“He's in intensive care right now. His wounds were a lot more serious, but like you, he'll make a fast recovery,” she said, scribbling some notes down on her clipboard. “You've been in a medically induced coma for two days, so I'm glad that everything ran smoothly. Expect to feel a little drowsy for the rest of the week and make sure to stay hydrated. Knowing your poor mother, she'll watch over you for the entire time, so I don't need to tell you to be supervised.”

*Two days? I was out for two whole days?*

His shock must have shown on his face, because the old woman chuckled and rested her hand on his shoulder. “Don’t worry about it, you didn’t miss anything other than a police interview, which you no longer have to do, might I add. Though, that Bakugou boy didn’t seem pleased when he got pulled from your side in order to be questioned. Sweet boy, deep down, isn’t he?”

Izuku nodded and answered, “Yeah, he really is. Where is he now, do you know?”

“He went down with your mother to grab breakfast a little while ago. He should be coming up in a moment. I can go and let him know that you’re awake, if you want,” she told him, tucking the clipboard under her arm and heading to the door.
“Yes, please. Thank you,” he spoke quietly and watched as the woman closed the door gently.

He didn’t have to wait long until the door slid open with a bang and a blur of blonde rushed Izuku’s senses. Katsuki ambushed the bed, wrapping his arms around Izuku’s neck and immediately burying his face into the crook of his shoulder. It took Izuku a few moments to hug him back, but when he did, Izuku made sure to squeeze him just as tight.

“Mornin’,” he murmured into his hair, curling his fingers around the blonde strands and inhaling the familiar spice of Katsuki’s cologne. It felt like home.

Katsuki laughed wetly and wiped away any tears that lingered on his cheeks. It was still a new concept to see him so open around Izuku, but it was a welcomed change. “How’re you feeling? Are you in pain?”

Izuku shook his head. “No, I feel fine. What about you? You didn’t get hurt or anything, did you?” he asked.

“No, no, I’m alright. You were the one sent into the ICU, not me. Glad to see that you’re awake though: seeing you in a coma is something that I wish I’d never experience.”

Izuku felt guilty, that much was sure. He was willing to throw down his life for his classmates, but he refused to tell the blonde that. Katsuki didn’t need to know that he planned to be a martyr. “I’m sorry,” he said and bowed his head.

Katsuki pressed a firm kiss on the crown of his head, just under the wild bunch of curls that overcasted his forehead. “As long as you’re safe, I’m okay with it. Just...don’t do that again, okay? You looked…” he trailed off and never finished. He didn’t need to.

I looked dead. And I almost was. Again.

“I’m going to try harder, I swear it,” Izuku promised, guiding the boy’s lips to his own so he could finally kiss him properly. He sought comfort, especially within the pristine white walls that surrounded him.

And as Katsuki nestled into the hospital bed and pressed against his side, Izuku managed to close his eyes and simply breathe.

He had too many run-ins with death for comfort.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! I decided to give you all some Katsuki POV in order to fill in for Izuku’s absence, so how did I do? Did you have a favorite part in this chapter? If so, let me know in the comments!

Also, do you have any predictions on who Katsuki was talking about when he mentioned a masked villain?
What Did You Get Yourself Into?

Chapter Summary

Where Izuku recovers, and All Might asks about Katsuki's bruises.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Izuku, sweetheart, please be careful today,” Inko pleaded as she walked him to the door.

A week had passed since the U.S.J. incident, and Izuku still sported bandages on his arm and thigh, which was where he had to get a skin graft. His bruises faded to a pale blue, still visible but not painful. Though, strangely enough, his arm barely hurt at all; it only throbbed.

Recovery Girl had told him that his arm would feel strange for a week or two and that he shouldn’t try moving it until later today, and Izuku wasn’t going to go back on his word.

Izuku pressed his lips to his mother’s cheek and gave her an one-armed embrace, sparing his injured arm. “I will, Mom,” he murmured into her hair. Izuku hated worrying her, and the guilt that came with it never felt good either.

She looked at him with clear doubt in her eyes, which made Izuku feel worse. I wouldn’t believe myself, either. Trouble always finds me, no matter where I go.

“Just...text me after school, okay? I want to know how that arm feels,” she said, opening the door and walking him to the apartment stairway. It was warm today, and the heat immediately crept under the bandages. It was uncomfortable to Izuku, since all he wanted to do was scratch and itch the feeling away. He couldn’t.

Izuku bid his mother goodbye and walked down the steps gingerly, sparing his thigh that stung every time he moved. He was fortunate that the bandages stopped bleeding through a few days ago, which meant that the wound was healing, but that also meant that the scab that would form was still sensitive to movement and touch.

He lifted his head and saw his boyfriend standing at the bottom of the stairs, scrolling aimlessly through his phone while he waited for Izuku. It brought a smile to his face, especially when he saw the happy smile that graced Katsuki’s face when their eyes met. Ever since the hospital visit, Katsuki had been attached to Izuku’s hip. Whether he was worried for him or not, Izuku appreciated the gesture.

Izuku felt...on edge ever since the villain attack. He found himself checking corners and shadows to see if there was going to be a surprise waiting for him, which was stupid and silly of him. There wasn’t going to be anything waiting for him, so why was he so paranoid? It was foolish of him, not to mention cowardly, so he kept it to himself. If he admitted to being afraid of villains, what kind of hero would he be?

“Feeling alright, Deku?” Katsuki asked, brushing the back of his hand against Izuku’s fingers. In return, Izuku grabbed his hand and squeezed lightly, linking their fingers together.
Izuku hesitated to respond, which immediately tipped Katsuki off. He sighed and rubbed his thumb in comforting circles on Izuku’s skin. “I’m alright, Kacchan,” he attempted to lie, but Izuku knew it was pointless as soon as the words left his mouth.

“Don’t lie, Izuku. What’s wrong?” Dropping the nicknames, Katsuki tightened his grip on his hand and urged him to walk.

He dropped his gaze in shame. Izuku knew that lying wasn’t going to work on the boy that he’d known for years, but it would have been so much easier than telling him that he was afraid. Katsuki had been dealing with villains for a lot longer than Izuku, and he didn’t seem the slightest bit scared.

His problems were stupid compared to Katsuki’s.

But Izuku still promised to be honest, so he had to come out and say it. “It’s completely ridiculous,” he started saying, “but I’m scared to leave the house.”

Katsuki hummed in acknowledgement, but didn’t say anything to interrupt. He was listening.

“I’m paranoid, right? I keep looking behind me every now and then, because I’m afraid that there’s going to be a villain there with a knife or something. It’s stupid,” Izuku tried laughing, but all that came out was a hollow chuckle.

The boy next to him was oddly silent as they walked, which made Izuku more and more embarrassed. Finally, when Izuku thought he couldn’t take any more silence, Katsuki finally spoke. “I’m scared too, you know,” he whispered and kept his eyes glued forward. “But I don’t think that feeling afraid is stupid. Or cowardly, especially with what you went through. Izuku, Shigaraki could have killed you, and you think that it’s stupid to be afraid after that?”

“No, but—”

“I’m not finished. Izuku, it’s alright to be afraid of villains. They’re fucking terrifying, and they’re meant to be scary. Anyone who isn’t afraid of them are either villains themselves or heartless. But you let this fear control you, then you’re letting the villains win. You’re letting Shigaraki win. And heroes don’t let the villains win, right, Izuku?”

Izuku fell silent, deep in thought. What Katsuki said made sense and cleared his head. Since when did Izuku think being afraid was a bad thing? Even All Might showed weaknesses sometimes; it showed that he was human. Maybe it was time for Izuku to return to his roots? He felt like he was rushing into heroism, which would only get him killed.

He smiled, raising his head to the sky. Izuku inhaled deeply, holding it in for a moment before releasing it as a sigh. “You’re right, Kacchan. I...don’t know what got into me.”

Katsuki shook his head and kissed his temple lightly. It was still early enough in their relationship to surprise Izuku with how affection his boyfriend was, but he welcomed the attention regardless. Izuku returned the gesture with a feather-light kiss to the corner of Katsuki’s mouth, before he tugged him along.

Izuku flashed him a smile, which caused the blonde to smile back. “We’re going to be late if we don’t hurry,” he ushered, crossing the street with Katsuki in tow. He felt light after his confession, but the fear still lingered. He just had to follow Katsuki’s advice and continue pushing forward.

Katsuki laughed softly, shaking his head faintly. “Well, we can’t have that, can we?”
Walking into the classroom was like stepping into a funeral. Everyone was somber and kept their heads down at their desks; even Aoyama’s sparkles were dim and lifeless. It was a stark difference to the excited students that he knew from a week prior.

Izuku spotted Matsuki at the back of the room, her head turned away from the door and instead watched the sky outside. Her demeanor worried Izuku, but before he could say anything, Uraraka made a noise of surprise.

“Deku!” she exclaimed, standing abruptly from her desk. The name brought the attention of the whole class to the doorway, where Izuku and Katsuki stood awkwardly. Suddenly, everyone crowded around him, asking various questions that his head couldn’t wrap around. Izuku felt claustrophobic, which didn’t go unnoticed by Katsuki.

He gave off a warning explosion in his palms, being careful not to hurt anyone. “Alright, back up! He’s still injured, for fucks sake.”

Izuku sighed in relief as people stepped back and offered a quiet “thanks” to the boy. He smiled tiredly at his classmates, trying to appear positive. “I’m glad that you all are okay! I’m sorry for any inconvenience that I caused by being dead weight during the fight,” he said and bowed his head.

Everyone was silent as they stared at him with slacked jaws, before Kirishima approached him and planted his hands firmly on Izuku’s shoulders. “Are you insane, Midoriya? You were the bravest one of all of us! You stood up to that Nomu and kept fighting him, even when you were injured!”

Kaminari butted in, “Yeah, man! You looked badass when you used your quirk!”

Izuku flushed red from the praise, but still felt guilty. “Thank you, Kaminari and Kirishima, but if I had been stronger...I could have prevented Aizawa from getting as injured as he was! I...I failed him.”

Katsuki smacked the back of his head and scowled. “You did not fail him, you idiot. You didn’t fail anybody. It wasn’t your job to jump in, but you thought you were doing the right thing—and you were.”

Yaoyorozu nodded in agreement. “Bakugou’s right, Midoriya! You helped Aizawa handle the villains, and you did everything you could.”

Uraraka, however, was a different story. Her initial surprise and relief from seeing that her friend was okay were replaced with anger, and Izuku could tell by the way her stony glare seemed to root him in place. “I recognized that stance, Deku. It was the same as the entrance exams, wasn’t it?”

Izuku cowered away in guilt, knowing full-well what was coming next. Of course Uraraka knew what he planned; she was there when he split the zero-pointer in half. She was also there when he collapsed, choking on the lack of air in his lungs. It was all because he had overused his quirk, which cut off circulation to his brain.

He had known the risks when he faced Nomu and was willing to die in order to protect his friends and teacher. And Uraraka knew that just by piecing it together.

“You knew what would happen if you held that Nomu for a long period of time. How long would it had taken for you to suffocate, Deku? How long were you willing to hold him? Did you want to die, or did you just accept it?” she advanced onto him, pressing her finger into his chest. “Answer me, Deku! Why did you do it when you knew that it could kill you?”

She’s clearly upset about this, with good reason. But how could I tell her that I didn’t care whether I
lived or died, as long as the job was done? Izuku thought intensely and worried his bottom lip with his teeth.

He was about to answer when the door behind him opened, revealing a heavily bandaged Aizawa. The man sighed and moved to rub his eyes, which were covered in cloth, and decided against it. His hand dropped to his side.

“Can someone tell me when my class turned into a soap opera, because I’d like to know,” he croaked. Everyone stared in astonishment at their teacher, who looked more like a mummy than the pale, grumpy man that they were used to seeing.

Izuku visibly paled when the images of the incident flashed through his mind. He couldn’t get the sight of his teacher bloodied and mangled out of his head, and Izuku began to feel bile creep up his throat. This was my fault, this was my fault, this was my fault! I’m the reason why he’s like this; if I had been stronger…!

Aizawa, who noticed the panicked expression on Izuku’s face, decided to drop it. “It doesn’t matter. Everyone, get in your seats and let me into my own classroom.”

Izuku numbly walked to his desk and pressed his forehead against the cool surface. It helped clear the images of the blood and charred tissue, so he stayed in that position while Aizawa took attendance. Izuku still felt queasy, but at least the urge to vomit went away.

“Alright,” Aizawa began. “Exactly one week ago, our training exercise in the U.S.J. training center was compromised by a group dubbed the ‘League of Villains.’ There was no way to prepare for it, but like regular hero work, unexpected is a guarantee.”

Aizawa straightened his back and continued. “However, young teenagers should never fear for their lives, especially when they haven’t even earned their provisional license yet. This attack was a surprise, but as your teacher and guardian, I should have considered the risks. I apologise for your fear and jeopardized safety, and I promise you all that I will work harder to provide a safe place for you to grow and learn.”

Katsuki scoffed in his seat and slouched in the chair. “You couldn’t have known. Shigaraki knew what he was doing, and that Nomu was too powerful for any of us to fend off. You did all you could, and you’ll probably get permanent scars for it. If I had any say, I’d put the blame on the villains and at least acknowledge the fact that we all made it out alive. And that some fought to protect our friends and you, Aizawa.”

The bandaged hero hummed and stared at Katsuki for a few seconds. “I guess you’re right, Bakugou,” he mused. “But that also brings me to my next point.” He directed his attention to Izuku now, who shied away from his piercing glare. His eyes may had been covered with cloth, but Izuku could still see that Aizawa was upset. “Three students decided to jump into the fray and endanger their lives. Two managed to stay relatively unharmed, but one nearly died due to his injuries and a quirk overuse.” Shit.

“Midoriya, though your intentions were honorable, your actions were self-sacrificial. You were only thinking of others, rather than taking a step back and evaluating the situation around you. Instead of finding a solution that would help both you and the other students, you simply went for the one that nearly got you killed.”

Izuku closed his eyes and released a defeated sigh. His shoulders caved in towards his chin, which made him look and feel smaller. More vulnerable. This is when I get expelled, isn’t it?
“But,” Aizawa interjected, “you offered support when I needed it most. If it wasn’t for you jumping in, I would probably be dead. A hero’s job is to save others and uphold justice, and you did just that. So...thank you, Midoriya. But if you do that again, I will expel you. You can count on that.”

Izuku’s eyes began to water, so he bowed his head and clenched his fists under the desk. “Thank you,” he said hoarsely, and he meant it.

“Now, on with the announcement. In two weeks, the school’s annual Sports Festival will begin. Starting today, we will be extensively working on your quirks and other techniques that will help you on the field.”

Aishido rose her hand. “Wait, what’s stopping the League of Villains from infiltrating this event? The U.S.J. incident wasn’t even public knowledge, and they managed to weasel their way in.”

“Let these villains win, and UA loses it’s rank as a top hero school,” Matsuki spoke up, surprising most of the class. She was deathly quiet before; even when Izuku walked in, Matsuki stayed in her seat and kept her eyes on the scenery outside.

“Principal Nezu has probably thought this out: let those villains instill an image of weakness onto the school, and the public will think that this school isn’t capable of protecting its students,” she said.

“Besides, there’ll be a lot of Pro Heroes that will scoping us out for interning. If the Villains did attack, they’d be walking into their own graves, kero ,” Asui croaked.

Aizawa nodded his head and continued, “Though your concerns are reasonable, Aishido, I promise that we’ll protect you all. What Asui and Matsuki said were absolutely correct.”

“Okay,” the pink-haired girl said, her face still showing some doubt. Izuku didn’t blame her: they all had experienced a terrifying event that, if gone wrong, would have killed them. Everyone would carry that hidden fear for awhile. And Izuku would have scars that would remind him for his entire life.

Before Aizawa could speak again, someone knocked on the door. The man sighed, hating to be interrupted, but pushed it aside. “Come in,” he said.

The door burst open to reveal All Might, who was clad in his usual hero suit. The grin on his face was huge, but the shimmer of blue in his eyes showed his true emotions clearly for Izuku; after all, Katsuki and Izuku had seen this glare during their training, when the man was angry and was about to scold them both.

But he looked relatively unharmed, and Izuku was able to forget his fear for a moment to be grateful for that.

Though, when the Symbol of Peace laid eyes on him and Katsuki, the “hand-stuck-in-the-cookie-jar” fear returned twice fold. Something told Izuku that they were going to get the scolding of a lifetime.

“I apologize for the interruption, Aizawa, but can I speak privately to Young Bakugou and Young Midoriya?”

Aizawa sighed and nodded. “I guess so.”

Izuku glanced at the back of Katsuki’s head, curious as to why the blonde’s shoulders were tense. Does he know what it’s about? Disregarding his thoughts for now, Izuku slowly rose from his seat and walked with Katsuki out of the classroom. They walked in strained silence all the way to the
teacher's lounge, where All Might closed the door quickly behind them.

Immediately, his towering form was swathed in smoke and the man sighed in relief. It was tiring for Yagi to maintain his form for long; though, since he still hadn't found a successor, his quirk duration was still significantly higher.

“Have a seat, please,” he said, gesturing to the couch. While the two boys hesitantly slumped down into the cushions, Yagi went to make some tea. “Do either of you want some?”

Izuku politely shook his head, while Katsuki just leaned on Izuku’s uninjured side and closed his eyes. He looked pale; but whether it was because of All Might or the villains, Izuku did not know. The boy sunk his fingers into Katsuki’s blonde hair, combing through them absentmindedly. He wanted to ease the pressure from his boyfriend’s shoulders, but how? Izuku had no idea who he was fighting.

He was left completely in the dark.

Yagi, cup in hand, sat down at the chair across from them and sighed. “You know,” he started, looking down at his lap. “I had a feeling that you two would be the first to jump into the fray. You both have experiences with villain attacks, and you always manage to find yourselves in the middle of it.”

So that was what this was about. “I’m sorry, All Might,” Izuku said and bowed his head. He wasn’t exactly sorry for protecting Aizawa, but due to the discussion that he had a few minutes ago, he understood that his selfless actions did more harm than good.

All Might frowned. “Did Aizawa already tell you why we’re upset at you, then?”

He nodded his head. “Yes,” Izuku replied.

The man groaned. “Really? I told Shouta that I’d do it! He took my thunder!” Yagi cleared his throat, returning to his serious demeanor. “Anyway, that wasn’t all that I wanted to talk you about. Putting your selfless tendencies aside, I wanted to talk about something else.”

“Young Bakugou, for the past few weeks, your teachers--including me--have noticed that you’ve come to class with bruises and cuts,” All Might stared at Katsuki, who was tensed up and was no longer leaning on Izuku. “I originally thought you were maybe training, but then Aizawa told me about the injuries that he saw under your shirt when you wore your hero costume. Seems pretty foolish of you to overwork yourself, unless it wasn’t you that was doing it. So, tell me, Young Bakugou…”

“What have you gotten yourself into?”

Chapter End Notes

So, midterms are coming up...that means that my schedule (which is already fucked) is going to be even worse. I'll be posting the chapters as they are finished instead of waiting for a specific day.

Anyway, how'd you like it? Sorry that it's a bit short, but the next chapter will be longer!

Stay tuned, and thank you for reading!
You Can't Tell a Soul. Okay?

Chapter Summary

Where All Might pulls through, and Izuku finds himself in the last place he should be on a school night.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

As soon as the question left All Might's lips, Katsuki visibly paled. The secret that he desperately tried to hide was coming apart at the seams.

Taking one glance at Katsuki’s shell-shocked face was all that All Might needed to do in order to know that the boy was in some sort of trouble. With a sigh, the man leaned back into the chair and raised an eyebrow. He was waiting for Katsuki to speak.

The boy in question looked around quickly, just like when they were on the rooftop. Then, quietly, he spoke, “It’s...complicated, All Might. I got myself into some deep shit, yeah, but I have to handle this on my own.”

“Handle what on your own? Bakugou, if this is something that needs to be addressed, I absolutely need to know.”

“There’s,” his eyes darted to Izuku, before returning to All Might, “a group of villains that won't leave me alone. I meet them at the various locations that they send me to and they 'teach me a lesson.' Most of the time, I give them a run for their money. Like hell I’m going to let them ruin my face,” he tried to joke, but his laugh sounded hollow.

“But sometimes they bring this one asshole into the fight. I've never seen his face, but his quirk is a royal pain in the ass,” he tells All Might.

“What’s the quirk?” All Might asked him, his voice airy and light. He was horrified to hear that his student was being abused right under his nose, but the teacher knew that Katsuki wouldn’t like any sort of pity.

“Blue fire. It’s unbelievably hot, and no matter what I do, it somehow manages to burn me. He’s relatively new though, but the other villains don’t like him as much. Maybe they’re paying him?”

Izuku found Katsuki’s hand and squeezed it gently, providing him with as much support as he could. He knew that it was hard to talk about this, especially to his idol, but he was admittedly proud of his boyfriend for doing so. He was naturally prideful, so admitting that he had an issue was a step in the right direction. Not to mention the help that he could get now that he’d come clean.

“How long has this been going on?”

“Near the end of middle school. The fuckers made me miss out on my own graduation,” Katsuki answered, his voice choking slightly on an invisible knot in his throat. “Then everything went downhill from there.”
“Downhill?”

Izuku looked at Katsuki, who’s eyes were squeezed shut. It still pained him to admit that Yoku was closed down. “Kacchan has been going to counseling, All Might, ever since he was little. A week or so after the villain attacks, the facility had shut down due to funding issues. It’s been really hard on him.”

All Might looked down at his lap, sighing into his cup of tea. He appeared to be lost in thought for a moment, a distraught frown settled on his lips. The entire teacher’s lounge was coated in tension, yet Izuku couldn’t figure out a way to make the situation any better.

Maybe it doesn’t need to be any better? Isn’t it okay for a situation to be bad? There’s nothing lighthearted about this topic to begin with.

Their teacher cleared his throat and took a hesitant sip from the cup. “Bakugou,” he began, “I won’t lie to you: this is pretty serious stuff. I don’t condone you hiding this from your teachers and parents, but there must be a reason why you haven’t informed us.”

Katsuki nodded slowly and exhaled softly from his mouth. It sounded defeated, which made Izuku even more heartbroken.

This is your fault, Izuku. Kacchan has to deal with this abuse because you couldn’t just shut up and take a beating. What the hell is wrong with you?

No, it wasn’t my fault! I have a right to stand up for myself...

Your fault. Your fault. Your--

“It started off with a bully named Ren, but after Izuku dealt with him, he’s been a coward and sends his ‘friends’ to hurt me because he knows that I’d kick his ass in a heartbeat,” the boy growled and wrung his hands in his lap. “I haven’t seen him in awhile though, so he might not even be behind this anymore.”

He continued, “They threatened to go after Deku and his mom if I told anyone, so I had to stay quiet. Hell, for the first few weeks of dealing with them, they’d followed me everywhere to make sure that I wouldn’t tell. That’s why I was so hesitant on saying anything...who’s saying that they’re not watchin’ me now?”

All Might clenched his fists and the two boys flinched when the cup cracked under the pressure. “Damn it. It’s my job to protect you two, and I...failed. What good of a teacher am I if I allow my students to be threatened with their lives?”

Katsuki and Izuku both shook their heads rapidly. “No, it’s not your fault!” they both said at once as they leaned forward in the sofa.

“I should have found ways to tell you,” Katsuki said with another sigh. “And if I weren’t so damn weak, I’d be able to kick their asses and not have to worry anyone.”

Izuku knew that feeling well. If he had been strong enough, he could have helped Aizawa at the U.S.J. center. It wasn’t a pleasant thought to have, especially when it ate at its host at any given time. He was sick of the deprecating thoughts that surrounded him constantly, but he couldn’t stop them even if he tried. But, if he could prevent the same seed from planting in Katsuki’s head...

“Katsuki, you are the strongest kid I know. You don’t have to be a damn legend at fifteen years old, for God’s sake! That attitude will just get you killed. Take it from me: I tried to be stronger than what I could handle, and now I have a limit of how many times I can overuse my own quirk before my brain shuts down. Please, please don’t push yourself or put yourself down for being what you aren’t
yet.”

Izuku swallowed nervously and diverted his attention to the floor. “We have our whole lifetime to be the best. Aren’t we allowed to be kids for once?”

Katsuki opened his mouth to speak, but found that he couldn’t find it in himself to respond. “You’ve...never told me that. I had no idea that you had any sort of limit.”

Izuku nodded slowly. “Yeah. I didn’t want to freak anyone out, but I’ve learned that I shouldn’t overwork myself if I can help it. My quirk came late, yes, but I still have a lot of time to improve it and make it better. I shouldn’t rush it, or think of myself as weak. It was out of my control, just like how this entire situation is out of your control.”

In front of them, All Might laughed softly. “And here I was, thinking that I’d be the one giving motivational speeches here. But Midoriya is right. You shouldn’t think of yourself as weak, not when you’ve shown so much improvement over the year that I’ve been training and teaching you.”

The blonde ducked his head and aggressively wiped his eyes in fear that the two would see him cry, before sniffing and nodding his head. “Alright. Thank you,” he whispered, and that was that.

All Might finished the rest of his tea and set it down on the coffee table in front of him. Clearing his throat, he straightened his back and said, “Now that I know the origins of your injuries, I’ll get with Shouta and see what we can do about these villains.”

Katsuki opened his mouth to protest, but All Might cut him off. “We’ll remain discreet, Bakugou. You won’t need to worry about your secret getting out, I promise you, so please trust your teachers. We aren’t certified pro heroes for nothing, you know.”

Izuku bowed his head in thanks and breathed out a sigh of relief. “Thank you, All Might. I couldn’t do anything about the villains, but maybe with you and Aizawa, you can help Kacchan.”

Katsuki scoffed and lightly elbowed Izuku’s side, but the flush of his cheeks gave his true feelings away. He was embarrassed, yes, but he was also grateful. “Idiot,” he muttered, “you thanked him before I could.”

The hero in front of them smiled and stood up, ruffling their hair while he looked down at them. “You both have gone through a lot in the span of a year. If I could ease the weight on your shoulders, even a little, I would. Now, I’ve taken enough of your class time. We’ll talk more about this later, but in the meantime, please try and focus on your studies.”

Katsuki and Izuku got to their feet and bowed once more before walking towards the door. Just when Izuku pulled open the door, All Might called out to him. “Ah, but Young Midoriya? Can I speak to you in private?”

Izuku’s eyes widened, but he nodded and stopped in his tracks. “Um, sure!” he said. Katsuki passed by him on his way out, offering him a small wave before disappearing down the hall.

I wonder what All Might needs from me? Did I do something? Is it because of what I said about my quirk limits? Ah, now I’m nervous! Izuku was so buried in his thoughts that he failed to notice All Might’s hand reaching out to rest on his shoulder. With that, Izuku nearly jumped out of his skin with a puppy-like yelp.

“Sorry, my boy! You were staring in space, so I wanted to make sure you were still in the land of the living. I didn’t mean to startle you.”
The boy apologized profusely for spacing out and promised that he was paying attention. “What did you need to talk about?” he asked.

All Might looked hesitant and slightly uncomfortable, which wasn’t familiar to Izuku at all. The hero was usually so sure of himself; but lately, Izuku has seen a man unlike the one on his computer screen. It made All Might seem more human and easier to relate to, which was better for Izuku when he looked up to him—it was better to know that his idol wasn’t invincible to emotions and other troubles.

“Well, I wanted to talk more about Bakugou, if you don’t mind? He mentioned counseling?”

Izuku nodded once. “Yeah. I didn’t know about it until my last year of middle school, but he’s been going since he was really young. I don’t know why he goes, to be honest, but I have a hunch?”

“A hunch?” All Might pressed.

“I think he goes for some sort of anger management. I’ve seen him come out of those sessions, All Might, and he looked so calm and relaxed that he seemed like a totally different person. He would bring me there to protect me, did you know that?” he said, his voice wobbling as tears filled his eyes.

Izuku gave a watery grin at the memory of when he first came to Yoku. It was completely new territory for him, but the staff there were so kind and offered him something to drink immediately. He had gone so many times after that, and every visit felt so welcoming. Izuku had no idea that they were struggling with finances, but they truly seemed well-off.

All Might patted his shoulder gently and silently urged him to continue. Sniffing slightly, Izuku cleared his throat and continued, “After the whole Ren incident, who was the bully that Kacchan mentioned, he took me there and I’d wait out in the lobby while he had his afternoon sessions. Most of the time, I’d just do homework, but the staff would always make these drinks for me.”

Izuku took a moment to think back on that nighttime walk that they’d taken after the first session, when Katsuki had looked up at the stars and truly smiled. “He never really talked about it a lot with me, but Kacchan would always have this soft smile on his face whenever he mentioned it.”

The hero nodded his head and grabbed a notepad. “Now, Young Midoriya, could you tell me the name of this counseling facility?”

Izuku tilted his head to the side slightly, curiosity getting the best of him. “Sure, it’s Yoku, but why? It’d be long gone by now, I would think…”

All Might scribbled the name down and smiled. It was a sly grin, one that hid something. “I have an idea, Midoriya, but you can’t tell a soul. Okay?”

“All right…”

He tapped the pen against the pad and set it down on the nightstand. “U.A. has an open building near one of the gyms. It used to be for a counseling department, but over the years, it seemed to die out. If I can find Yoku’s employees and offer them a spot in campus, then the students can partake in counseling sessions. Especially 1-A, who were unfortunate enough to experience a surprise villain attack at such a young age.”

Izuku’s eyes watered once more, but a hopeful smile spread across his face. No way…

“I told you…if I could ease the weight off of all of your shoulders, I would. I’ve seen Bakugou’s mood change ever since he came to U.A., and I don’t like it as much as you don’t. If it’ll help my
student, I’ll do whatever I can.”

All Might then shooed him out of the lounge, holding the door open for him. “Now, get back to class, Young Midoriya! You need to be in tip-top shape for the Sports Festival, after all!”

Izuku walked away with wet cheeks and a blinding grin. Thank you, All Might.

And he meant it completely.

Izuku’s head was in the clouds for the entire day after that, a small smile permanently plastered on his face.

Despite the suspicious and concerned glances that his classmates gave him, Izuku maintained his high all the way until dinner. Inko, knowing that her son was too far gone, simply set the table and placed the steaming food in front of him with a smile of her own. She knew that faraway look from when he would watch the All Might videos when he was little, so Inko tried not to disturb him.

Halfway into dinner, Inko’s curiosity won over her, and she had to ask why he was that happy in the first place. “So, hon, how was school?”

Izuku swallowed his food, chasing it down with a gulp of water, before he answered, “The Sports Festival is coming up in a few weeks! Everyone’s excited about it.” That isn’t really why I’m excited, but I can’t just tell her about the whole villain thing. Maybe I could tell her about the counseling department? She knows about Kacchan’s therapy sessions, so I wouldn’t be spilling any secrets about him, per se…

“You can’t tell anyone, but there’s going to be a counseling department reopening on campus, too. All Might was talking about bringing in Yoku’s old staff in order to help out the students that encountered villains or just need to talk! He noticed that Kacchan was acting differently after it closed down, so he wants to help him,” Izuku explained. The warm feeling in his chest blossomed after saying it aloud, and judging by his mother’s mirrored grin, she was happy too.

“Oh, Izuku, that’s amazing! With that recent villain attack that you had to go through, I think the kids would love to have a professional help them.” She paused then, lowering her eyes to the vegetables on her plate. “I think...you would benefit from going too, you know.”

Izuku raised his eyebrows slightly at his mom’s words. “What do you mean by that?” he asked her, keeping his defensive tone to himself.

She looked nervous, which Izuku hated to see on her. A mother shouldn’t have to be afraid to bring up a topic to her son, but Izuku knew that she just didn’t want to offend him or set him off. She’s trying to help, so I need to hear her out, Izuku told himself.

“Well, you’re doing wonderful right now, sweetheart, but I can’t just forget about what you went through before you developed your quirk. Your notebooks, your demeanor...everything was so dark and depressed. I know you’re happy now, but what’s stopping that from coming back? I...I can’t always be here to take care of you and make sure that you’re doing alright, you know?”

“Mom…” I’m fine...right?

“Besides...you were nearly killed by villains! At age fifteen, my baby was already coming home bruised and bloody because of terrible people. You’re wearing an arm brace, for God’s sake!” Inko’s lip wobbled, which caused Izuku to sigh and get out of his chair. Walking to her side of the table, he kneeled down and threw his good arm around her, squeezing her tightly.
“I just want my boy to be happy. I should have done more for you, but if a therapist could help you, please try it. I don’t want my son to fear stepping outside of his house because of what he experienced. I don’t want my son to ever think about ending his life because he thought he’d be better off dead,” she sobbed, burying her face into Izuku’s shoulder. “Please, Izu.”

Izuku blinked away his tears and nodded his head. “Okay, Mom. I promise that I will.”

He pulled away slowly and guiltily looked elsewhere. His past would never leave him, so it seemed, and it would never leave his mother either. If there was something he could do to make her happier and worry less, Izuku would do it in a heartbeat. She didn’t deserve it, not after his father left their lives and placed the weight on her shoulders.

“Mom, one day…” he trailed off, closing his eyes. An image of her smiling happily in a home that she could call hers, carefree and living her best life, stared back at him from closed eyelids. That was his dream. He wanted to become a hero to her and for many, but the money that he received from hero work would go to her first.

He would give it all to her, if it’d get her to be happy again.

“One day, you won’t have to worry about me anymore. I’ll take care of you, and my past will never come back to haunt you ever again. You’ll live in a nice house, with a pet that I know you’ve wanted but could never afford, and I’ll give it all to you. I’ll--”

Izuku wiped his eyes and clenched his fists, staring at her shell-shocked face with determination. “I’ll become number one; not just on the hero charts, but to you. And if taking therapy would help me reach that goal, then I’ll do it.”

Inko grabbed his uninjured arm and wailed, a pitiful sound that bounced across the small walls of their dining room. “You were always my number one! Izuku, you don’t need to prove yourself to me when I’m already so proud of who you are!”

The both of them sniffed and stood there by the table, not knowing what to say or do to break the silence. Finally, after another second of awkward foot shuffling, Izuku decided that he was going to take initiative and leave first. He had finished eating anyway, so he grabbed his plate and washed it in the sink quickly, leaving it to dry on the rack.

There was nothing left to say, Izuku having made his statement clear. He wanted to pay his mother back for everything that she had done for him, no matter what. So, with that in mind, he went upstairs and closed his door quietly, sighing in small relief when he heard his mother’s fork scrape against the plate as she continued eating. Good, she isn’t so upset that she can’t eat. I’m glad.

Taking a deep breath, Izuku collapsed on his bed and shielded his eyes with his good arm, letting his other arm rest on his stomach. If he was being honest, Izuku didn’t really want to be home...not after having that emotional talk with Inko. Maybe he could go into the city for a bit and walk around; clear his head, too, while was at it.

Izuku pushed to his feet and grabbed his phone, pocketing it. He fished out some shoes from his closet and slid them on, making sure to not make a sound, before sliding open the window. The air was still cold enough to bite his cheeks, but Izuku just huffed and swung his legs out, dropping to the fire escape with ease.

He made sure the window was closed, yet unlocked, then snuck down the ladders until he was safely on the ground. Alright, so far, so good! Now, where to go…?
It was nearly nine o’clock when Izuku realized that he had absentmindedly wandered into the Kamino Ward. The street was still brightly illuminated by the neon lights, and there were still a significant amount of people lingering the streets with shopping bags around their wrists. It was as if the world around it was dead, but Kamino continued to thrive.

“You lost, sweetheart?” a seductive voice purred in his ear, causing Izuku to jolt to the side. He sputtered, covering his reddening face with his fingers.

He peeked through and saw a woman a few years older leaning towards him, her hand resting on her bare waist. She was wearing a crop top and white shorts with black fishnets, but what shocked Izuku the most was the bright makeup that seemed to scream at him. There were paper yen bills stuffed into her bra and shorts, and her purpose never seemed more clear.

Is this a...prostitute? Oh god, I’ve never had to deal with this before. How do I tell her that I’m not interested?

She giggled, teasing her hands along his arms. “C’mon, hon, why don’t we have some fun? I’ll give you a discount for being so cute.”

“S-Sorry,” he stuttered, “but I’m not interested…”

The woman pouted and leaned in more, nearly getting into his face. “Are you sure, hon? I could give you all you want!” she said with a wink, but Izuku couldn’t back away from her. He grew more and more flustered, the warmth in his face spreading uncomfortably to his neck, but he didn’t want to push her away in fear of hurting her.

Then, in the blink of an eye, she was gone. Izuku gasped, whipping his head around to find where she went. When he heard a small yelp from above him, though, he found her. She was dangling in mid-air, her face mirroring the shock that Izuku likely showed. The woman tried to struggle but found that she couldn’t move. Is something holding her up? I’m certainly not.

A cloaked figure stepped into the streetlights, their shoulders shaking with concealed laughter. “I told you that I’d lift you if you tried anything funny, doll,” the voice--a woman, Izuku assumed--snickered. She lowered the prostitute to the ground with a small finger gesture. “If you were thinking straight instead of trying to get into his pants, you’d know that this boy is a minor. You want to be arrested, doll?”

The woman paled, her mouth gaping open in fear. “I-I had no idea! Please don’t hurt me, Mentalist!”

Mentalist…? Why does that sound so familiar?

The cloaked figure scoffed and shooed her away. “I don’t do that anymore, kid. Just don’t come by here, alright?” she said lowly, watching as the woman nodded and scampered off into the streets. Sighing, the woman scratched her head and threw back her hood. Curly ginger hair fell into her pale, freckled face as she wiped away the sweat from her brow, and Izuku suddenly tensed when he realized just who he was looking at.

It was the Mentalist: a villain who was on Japan’s most wanted list.

Chapter End Notes
I'm back again :) It's currently winter break, so expect another chapter to be released some time next week! ANYWAY, how did you feel about this chapter? What do you think Izuku's going to do about Mentalist (who is a made-up villain, btw)? I wonder...

Anyway, thank you all for being so patient with my updating schedule. I've been very busy lately, and I desperately want to write, but sometimes I just don't have time *cries*
I Should Have Let Her Go

Chapter Summary

Where Izuku realizes that he's not the only one, and Aizawa actually shows emotion for once.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Izuku immediately tensed up, preparing to attack if he needed to. Encountering a villain was already bad enough, but stumbling into a notorious one? He’d have to be cautious.

Seeing his stance, Mentalist sighed and rubbed the back of her hand, daring to appear awkward. Her hood was still draped along her shoulders, exposing her angular face and piercing green eyes. She didn’t look at him as if he was an enemy, but Izuku didn’t trust the woman in front of him at all.

“Damn, so people still are on the prowl for me? You’d think after five years, I’d be free from this shit,” she sighed, directing her gaze to the starless night. The city lights swallowed up the stars, leaving the sky as a dark gray mass.

Izuku scoffed. “Of course people are still looking for you! You’ve killed hundreds!”

She flinched at that, lowering her eyes. “Hm, I suppose that’s a good enough reason. Got me there.” Mentalist crossed her arms and tilted her head at him, curious whether he’d act now or report her. “So, what are you going to do about me, boy? Are you going to report me? Fight me?”

He thought about it for a moment. Fighting her was out of the question: her telekinetic quirk was too powerful to face alone. Reporting her was an option, but his gut told him that something was amiss. “No,” he decided, “I won’t. You helped me out and even spared that woman, telling her that you didn’t want to kill her.”

The woman relaxed her hunched shoulders and released a sigh of relief. “Thank goodness. I’ve spent an entire decade running away from the authorities, and to lose all that to a high schooler seemed awfully wasteful, doesn’t it?”

She smiled, her teeth bared in a sharp grin. “But now you’ve made me curious. Who are you, kid?”

“Why should I tell a villain that?”

“Ex-villain to you,” she butted in with a scowl.

His eyes widened in surprise, but he refused to falter. “Look, I don’t feel comfortable talking to a murderer, whether you’re done with that life or not.”

Mentalist hummed quietly, tapping her chin. “You’re interesting. I’ll give you that. But I should tell you, there’s something very...strange with you. Call it instincts.”

Strange? What does she meant by that? Should I even listen to her? What if she’s just tricking me?
But her gaze was no longer on him, but someplace behind him. “Come with me. I want to show you something,” she said suddenly, grabbing his wrist. Izuku immediately was on the defensive, preparing to at least try and push her away when she leaned down by his ear. “Unless you have a very tall friend with a ski mask on, I’d say you’re being followed, boy. Just follow me for a sec, okay? Just until you lose him.”

_Ski mask? Someone’s following me?_ Izuku panicked, remembering what Katsuki had said about how the villains were keeping tabs on him and his mom. Did they know that he told All Might?

Seeing no other choice in the matter, Izuku nodded briskly and allowed the woman to pull him along. They both pretended to look at the various storefronts until the woman neared an alleyway, where she turned into it without a second glance. From there, the two took various winding turns until Izuku found himself at a dead end.

Mentalist waved her hand at the back wall, pulling apart the bricks. A hidden doorway was revealed, torches lining the hallway inside. “Hurry and go in there. I’ll close the entrance up until I get back, okay? If I don’t show up in ten minutes, go past the room that you’ll first enter and follow the hallway. You’ll have to push away the bricks, but you’ll find yourself in the back of a train station.”

Before Izuku could even utter a word, she ushered him in the hallway. “Oh, and be nice, will you? There’s kids in there.” And then the entrance was sealed.

Izuku stood in the hall for a few seconds more in complete disbelief. All he wanted to do was take a walk and distract himself from home, but now he’s really done it. He’s in a hidden “lair” made by a mass murderer and is possibly being followed by one of Katsuki’s villains.

“Why is this happening to me?” Izuku groaned as he walked down the corridor, taking in the surroundings. There were children’s handprints lining the walls, followed by faded names under them. _She did mention that there were kids in here_, Izuku reminded himself.

Eventually, he found the room that Mentalist had mentioned. It was large and spacious with various storage crates scattered around. In the center, there seemed to be some sort of arena with white chalk that outlined the boundaries. Whatever place it was, the room was definitely for some sort of fight.

Izuku wandered to the arena, crouching down to run his hands along the powdery chalk. It was fresh; someone had recently applied it. He pushed off of his knees and was about to walk towards one of the crates in order to sit, but something sharp pressed against his side.

“One wrong move, Mister, and I’ll stab ya,” a small voice threatened behind him. Izuku inwardly cursed at his horrible luck, slowly raising his hands up. It sounded like a kid, and Izuku refused to use his quirk on a little kid. “State your business.”

“Mentalist sent me in here to protect me. You know her?” Izuku said quietly.

Immediately, the knife was removed from his side. Izuku turned around and saw a little boy, nearly half his height. Their hands were shaking around the kitchen knife, showing his innocence clearly, but red eyes glared at him fiercely despite that.

“Mother did that?” the boy muttered, biting his lower lip. Behind him, from the other corridors, other children peeked their heads around the walls after hearing the name.

_Mother? There's no way that Mentalist had children...did she?_ Izuku was even more confused.

“Yeah,” Izuku said simply, tapping his feet against the floor. “Who are you all?”
The boy looked at him wearily, but answered him anyway. “We’re her ‘disciples’. She took us in from the streets and gave us shelter and food to eat.”

Izuku’s eyes widened at that. *She took them in? A murderer accepted all of these kids into her “home”? Am I missing something here?*

Ignoring Izuku’s silence, the boy continued, “Most of us are Quirkless or have weaker quirks, so she teaches us self-defense so we can defend ourselves. Without her, we’d still be on the streets.”

His head hurt from how much information Izuku was getting at once. The Mentalist was described as an apathetic killer that murders innocents for the sake of herself, but why would a psychotic woman take in a bunch of abandoned kids? He was definitely missing something important, but at this point, he was torn between waiting for her to return or leaving.

Above them, one of the lights flickered and swayed. The kids went back to their original positions, hiding behind the cover of walls and boxes. The armed boy sighed and dragged Izuku to a larger crate, forcing him to hide.

“The light only flickers when someone enters the hideout. Stay here,” the boy said, and Izuku wanted to roll his eyes. *I can’t believe a five-year-old is trying to protect me...come on, I think I can defend myself.* Yet Izuku couldn’t help but smile behind his palm anyway, appreciating the thought.

Footsteps echoed throughout the room, soft enough to nearly go unnoticed by Izuku. For a moment, Izuku feared that the villain found the secret entrance and was trying to find Izuku, but that worry was soon replaced when he heard a young girl cry out.

“Mom!” she yelled, and the tension immediately vanished. The kids all swarmed the figure, who Izuku knew to be the Mentalist, and he stood from where he was forced to hide.

The woman made eye contact with Izuku and gently set down the girl. “Yeah, yeah. Good job, everyone, sorry for the scare! But could you all excuse us? I need to talk to my friend here,” she spoke in a soft voice, shooing the children away. They all obeyed without question and vanished into the other corridors.

Mentalist brushed off the dirt from her cloak and removed it from her shoulders, revealing normal clothes. For some reason, Izuku expected to see her villain uniform underneath. “So, still think I’m some soulless killer, boy?” she said, demeanor changing drastically. A dark shadow covered her eyes, and Izuku felt fear creep along his skin.

He found the courage to respond. “The kids call you ‘Mom’. You raised them, didn’t you?”

She smiled, somewhat relieved in his answer. “Yes, because no one else would. After I had to run for my life, I found this hideout and decided to stay here. Then, I found my first kid.”

A faraway look passed over her eyes, and she fell silent. “He died the second day I took him in. Some asshole decided to beat him up for kicks because he couldn’t defend himself, and his injuries were infected. I wanted to take him to the hospital, but he refused. ‘You’ll get caught, Miss’ is what he told me, and he was willing to die so that I’d still be free.”

She sighed, raking her fingers through her red curls. “The second kid I brought in was a Quirkless girl around your age. She kept muttering about wantin’ to go to U.A. and train to become a hero, and she was too far gone to realize that she was homeless the whole time. She died too.”

Izuku lowered his gaze to the floor, speechless. *Quirkless and wanting to become a hero...that’s close to home.*
Mentalist clapped her hands, startling the boy from his thoughts. “But they inspired me to help other kids protect themselves. Others may have their Quirks to protect themselves, but what about these kids? They’re either too young to use their gifts properly, or they lack them to begin with. Eventually, they decided to call me Mom, and now I’m here.”

“That’s...not villainous at all. Why the change of heart?” Izuku asked her.

She laughed at the question. “You call me a villain because I killed people, but no one knows the whole story, do they? I’m no victim—I had a choice—but killing those people was an accident. I lost control of my quirk while I was interning with a hero, and I had a choice. I chose the one with less deaths.”

_Hundreds of people_ was less? Izuku couldn’t wrap his head around it: it was entirely new information, and he had no idea the Mentalist was a hero in training. Why didn’t the police say anything about that? Why didn’t the hero she was interning with defend her?

“Telekinesis is an unstable quirk. But you’d know, wouldn’t you?” she said bitterly. “It consumes your mind and has crippling side effects if you push too hard.”

Izuku stiffened, raising his head to stare at her. _How’d she know about my quirk? I haven’t used it once! And what does she mean by that?_

Mentalist laughed at his shocked expression. “Sorry, your little friend from earlier was telling me about you. Tried warning me about how ‘dangerous’ you were with your quirk so that I’d hand you over. Don’t worry,” she smirked, “I showed him how dangerous our quirks can be.”

The boy shivered from her smile. “What do you mean when you say that telekinesis consumes your mind?

She shrugged, tossing her cloak over one of the crates. “Have you ever lost control of it? Have you done something that you didn’t mean to do with your quirk? Random shit starts floating around you without you doing any of it? That’s what it does to you. Controlling it takes _years_ of practice, but you and I got the short end of the stick, didn’t we?”

A hollow feeling settled in Izuku’s stomach, making him feel sick. _I had choked Ren without even knowing. I had cried blood after everything in my bathroom began to float. She was right, but why did she say that we got the ‘short end of the stick’? Why were we different?_

A single drop of blood dripped from his nose, likely from stress, which drew him away from his thoughts. Mentalist looked at him with a stoic expression. “See? It harms you. Telekinesis is all mental, but why is it tied into emotions? Why do we lose control so often, while others with the same gift of levitation don’t? It’s because we were never supposed to wield something so powerful. If we truly wanted to, we can take apart this world with a mere finger gesture.”

She stretched her arms then, a simple smile on her face. “It’s scary, but I could teach you. I haven’t lost control in years because of my training, and I refuse to have you make the same mistakes that I did because you think you have it under control. I thought I did too, when I was nineteen and naive. That’s how I killed those people. I was too ignorant of my quirk, and now I have to live with the consequences...”

Mentalist glanced at him for a moment and saw the horror on his face. She smiled and tried to lighten the mood. “But in the meantime, you should go back home, kiddo. What’s your mom going to think if she finds out that you’ve been out and about?”
Izuku wasn’t sure if he wanted to see the Mentalist again. He was terrified of how spot on she was, but Izuku knew deep down that the woman only wanted to help him. He didn’t know the whole story behind her internship, but if he could prevent a similar incident from happening to him, he’d do it in a heartbeat. “Okay,” he murmured last, still in shock. “I’ll come back.”

Mentalist smiled and stepped forward until she was towering over him. She raised her hand slowly, resting it on the soft green curls. Ruffling them slightly, she saw him off. Even though she didn’t accompany him to the exit, Izuku knew that she was watching him leave.

“Oh, and kid?” she called out. He turned his head to face her, only seeing her silhouette from the end of the corridor. “Tell Aizawa that ‘Koa’s sorry for failing you.’ He’ll understand the message.”

Then she turned her back, leaving Izuku to do the same.

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That night, Izuku dreamt of blood and broken bodies, too mangled to recognize. Among them, a black and orange hero outfit stood out the most. Blond hair was matted and tangled.

Katsuki was dead. And it was all because of him.

“You look like shit,” Katsuki told him as they walked to school. The blond ignored how tight Izuku was holding his hand, as if he was afraid to let him go.

Izuku gave him a mock glare, but didn’t deny it. “I didn’t sleep very well, plus I had the weirdest experience of my life when I took a walk last night.”

Katsuki hummed, leading Izuku onto the train. It was always packed, so Katsuki served as his shield when people got too pushy or grabby. Today, however, they were lucky enough to get a spot near the door where both of them could hold onto the handrail without bumping into anyone.

“Tell me about it?” he asked, checking the time on his phone briefly before shoving it in his back pocket.

Izuku wasn’t sure if he could freely say that he met Mentalist and was being trailed by one of Katsuki’s villains, especially in public, so he decided to tell him when they got to school instead. It was safer than telling him where there were so many other people listening in.


As soon as they entered campus, early as usual, Katsuki turned to him with an expectant look in his eyes. “So...spill. What happened?”

The shorter boy scratched the back of his head with a nervous laugh. “So, you know the villain by the name of ‘Mentalist’, right?” Katsuki nodded slowly, glancing at him with suspicion. “Well, I found myself in the Kamino ward and stumbled into her.”

Katsuki stiffened, immediately raking his eyes over Izuku’s body in case he was injured. “Are you okay? Did she hurt you? Why didn’t you call?” he bombarded him, the wrinkle between his brow deepening the more he stressed over it.

Izuku shook his head, smiling reassuringly at the blond. “No. In fact, she helped me. I was being followed by someone, and she noticed, so she hid me away while she dealt with him. Kacchan, she told me about her quirk, and it was scarily similar to mine. She had the same side effects, and she told
me the truth about how she was categorized as a villain in the first place!”

He glared at him with burning red eyes, his mouth set in a firm line. “Izuku, she’s killed people! What’s there to trust?”

“Heroes have killed people too, on accident. She told me that she lost control of her quirk and had to choose the lesser body count. Katsuki, Mentalist was a hero-in-training, just like us!”

Katsuki still didn’t look convinced. “That doesn’t excuse the fact that there are hundreds of civilians buried six feet under because of her. If she was truly a hero, she’d turn herself in and take responsibility. Besides, if her quirk was that unstable, she shouldn’t be a hero to begin with.”

Izuku couldn’t help but feel slightly hurt from his words. Her quirk was his, so what did that mean for Izuku? Did Katsuki think that he was unsuitable for hero work, too?

Noticing Izuku’s silence, Katsuki sighed and grabbed his hand, rubbing calloused thumbs over his palm. “I didn’t mean you, idiot. You’re getting stable, I can tell. I’m just...worried, okay?”

Izuku squeezed Katsuki’s hand in hopes of comforting him. “I was cautious, trust me. Then I met the kids. She’s taking in orphans from the streets and giving them shelter, Katsuki. I saw her face when she was handling them: she was at peace. I can just tell that she’s not the type of person to purposely harm anyone.”

The blond fell silent as he thought about it, shaking his head with a defeated smile. “You’re already sure of yourself, you stubborn ass. I can’t say anything to convince you otherwise, can I?”

Izuku laughed quietly, leaning forward to press soft lips to Katsuki’s cheek. “Nope,” he murmured. “But it makes me happy to hear that you’re worried about me.”

Katsuki pulled away with pink cheeks and looked away from Izuku. “Whatever,” he muttered, leading Izuku into the school building so they’d take their seats early. It was their ritual of sorts, so they could relax in the morning haze, while the empty classroom provided them with privacy. It was a time to take a break and relax before the day officially started, which was a blessing, especially after the villain attack. The two of them didn’t need to say anything to know that they were both unsettled about it, so a moment of peace was much needed.

Now, it gave Izuku time to think about why the Mentalist wanted him to leave a message for Aizawa. There was a possibility that she went to U.A., or maybe even interned under Aizawa before. Izuku was definitely curious, but he’d wait until after school to bring it up to his teacher.

He had a feeling that once he left the message, Aizawa would have a lot of questions for him.

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“Aizawa, can I talk to you?” Izuku asked as soon as everyone filtered out of the classroom at the end of the day. Katsuki told him that he’d wait for him at the school gates, so Izuku was truly alone with his teacher.

The man, still heavily bandaged, hummed in response and stacked his papers. “What do you need, Midoriya?” he drawled.

Izuku shuffled his feet slightly, trying to come up with a right way to bring it up. If he jumped right into things, Aizawa would definitely be shocked. He wasn’t sure if that’s what he wanted to do, but at the same time, Izuku knew that he’d be startled either way.
“Koa’s sorry for failing you,” Izuku said quietly, unknowing of the meaning. Something told him that it was meaningful for the two of them, so he treaded lightly.

Aizawa froze, fingers wrinkling paper as he clenched his fists. His eyes locked with Izuku, and the teacher took a step towards him. “How do you know that name?” Aizawa rasped.

“I met Mentalist last night after she helped me out. She told me to tell you that,” Izuku explained. His tongue was heavy with unanswered questions that he wanted to ask. “Did she go here, Aizawa? Was she interning for this school when she lost control?”

The bandaged hero heaved a sigh and ran a hand through his hair. He looked worn out just from hearing the name. “She was one of my first students that I taught from U.A. and had an extremely powerful quirk. Like you, she had telekinesis and sought ways to control it so she could become a hero.”

He paused, taking a breath. “Tsubasa Koa worked hard to catch up to the rest of her peers, having to train on the side. Her quirk would take over often, so she tried to prevent it through practice. For a time, she was successful. But then things started going wrong. No hero wanted to intern her because of her unpredictable quirk, and everyone could see just how badly that was affecting her. Her self-esteem was shot, and by the time she was a third-year, Tsubasa wanted to drop out of the hero course.”

Izuku could only stare at his teacher’s slouched form with shock. While Mentalist--Tsubasa Koa, he should say--was telling him about her quirk, she had such a bitter expression on her face. It was as if she didn’t want it to begin with. That would explain it, then. All her life, she was desperate to have it under control so she could become a hero...instead, she accidentally killed people and was labeled a villain.

“I refused to let her. She had potential, but Tsubasa told me that she wouldn’t be able to graduate without a hero internship. So I offered to intern her,” Aizawa said. He laughed, a bitter sound, and faced the window. “I should have let her go.”

“We were on patrol, and she kept saying that something wasn’t right. Tsubasa was never the one to have her heart on her sleeve, but I could tell that she was nervous about something. Then a group of villains attacked us on the way back, and I was occupied with my share of them. I was binding them when I felt it.”

Aizawa had a faraway look in his eyes. “Everyone in a two mile vicinity was forced to the ground. Buildings crumbled to the street due to the extreme pressure pushing downward. Bodies were crushed from either the rubble or the force applied to them. The casualties were in the hundreds.”

“The Yamagoku Massacre,” Izuku murmured, horror washing over him in waves. Two miles of the city was flattened because of her, but hearing that it was an accident scared him. What could she do if she willed it?

“Yes,” Aizawa affirmed. “I managed to cancel her quirk and rush to her, but she was so frantic that I couldn’t calm her down. She kept saying that she couldn’t hold it back, that she was trying her hardest not to crush the whole city. That’s when I realized: she could have killed thousands instead of just the people in her radius. And she wouldn’t have any control over it.”

He choked on a laugh, and for the first time, Izuku saw his teacher cry. “But I couldn’t turn her in. She’d live the rest of her life in a prison cell with multiple sentences. Tsubasa was a nice girl, top of her class, and I didn’t want her to die behind bars. So I told her to run and never show her face. I fabricated the story and said that she was a villain by the name of ‘Mentalist’ and hoped that she
would be smart enough to hide away.”

Aizawa was silent after that, wiping his eyes. “And she says that she failed me. I failed her. I should have listened, but I didn’t want my student to quit.”

Izuku hesitated, struggling between offering support or leaving him be. “What was her hero name?” he asked softly. The Mentalist was scary and unfitting for her, but he was curious what she would have been called if she had succeeded.

Aizawa smiled then, as if he recalled a memory. “She would always be called ‘TK’ by her friends, because they were the initials for telekinesis. So when Tsubasa had to come up with a name, she stood up at the podium and grinned. It was the happiest I’d ever seen her. She ended up choosing her nickname.” The teacher looked down at Izuku then, a smirk on his face.

“I guess you two have a lot in common after all.”

Chapter End Notes

You can tell how much I love tragic backstories, can’t you?

Anyway, what did you think? Does anyone have any ideas on why I’m involving TK in this story? Any predictions about later chapters? Comment down below! Thanks for reading :)
Chapter Summary

Where things between Katsuki get steamy, and Izuku begins to train.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After the discussion, Aizawa kicked Izuku out of his classroom with a tired wave. The boy didn’t know what to think after the new information was brought to light, but Aizawa seemed relieved after hearing that his old intern was still alive and well.

But I can’t believe that Aizawa fabricated the story to help Tsubasa...he’s a stickler for rules and obedience, yet he let her go after the Yamagoku Massacre, Izuku thought to himself as he walked out of the school building. He took a moment to breathe in the fresh air, hoping that it was enough to settle his mind.

Remembering that Katsuki was waiting for him, Izuku walked over to the front gates and kept an eye out for him. He knew that his boyfriend wouldn’t go far, but it didn’t stop him from fearing the worst. What if he had been taken? Kidnapped? The possibilities were seemingly endless, considering Katsuki’s involvement with unknown villains.

To his relief, Katsuki was simply hidden away on a bench, mindlessly scrolling through his phone under the shade of a nearby tree. From a distance, he didn’t even look like himself; his hair was closer to brown than blonde and bright red eyes were diluted to a deep amber. Gorgeous as usual, Izuku admired him with a smile.

“Sorry for the wait.”

The blonde shook his head and rose to his feet. “Nah, it wasn't bad. How was it?”

Izuku blew out a sigh, scratching the back of his neck. “It went well, I think? I relayed a message for Mentalist because they both knew each other, and I learned a lot.”

Sensing his distress, Katsuki slipped his hand into Izuku's open palm and began walking. “What did Aizawa say about it?”

“She interned under him when she was younger. Tsubasa—that's her name—had been losing control of her quirk and wanted to drop out of the hero course, but Aizawa didn't want her to. The Yamagoku Massacre wasn't anything malicious at all: she had simply lost control.”

Katsuki looked skeptical, his upper lip curling into a rebuttal. “Then why was she called a villain?”

“Aizawa made it all up to protect her. He said that she didn't deserve to spend the rest of her life in jail for something that could have been prevented.”

“Doesn't really excuse it, though,” Katsuki said. “There were hundreds of victims who had friends and family. They will never see them again.”
Izuku knew that. Yet, when he thought about a young Tsubasa Koa behind bars, it didn't sit well with him. She was a good person: someone who raised Quirkless kids and taught them how to defend themselves. Tsubasa had even protected him from the man that trailed after him without even knowing Izuku beforehand.

“I know,” Izuku murmured. “But it’s sad. She just wanted to be a hero, but she ended up being a villain to everyone. No one knew her true story.”

Katsuki didn't rebuke him after that, respecting his opinion. “I guess. It just worries me, that’s all. What’s stopping her from losing control again?”

Izuku shrugged. “I don't know. But if I'm given a chance to improve and manage my quirk, I'm going to take it. She knows better than anyone else how to use her quirk, so I trust her with it.”

“Okay.”

“You don't...have anything else to say? No complaints?” Izuku asked, surprised at how quick Katsuki was to accept.

The boy shrugged. “If it makes you happy, I'm not going to stop you. But if things get to be too much for you, I'm hoping that you'll be smart enough to stop.”

Izuku smiled at that. “Of course. I promised that I wouldn't overdo it, didn't I?” Quieter, he added, “Besides, I have things to live for now. I won't try anything that would jeopardize that.”

From the corner of his eye, Izuku saw Katsuki smile as they continued walking. The sun was low against the horizon, staining the sky red and orange, and Izuku kept the image of his boyfriend smiling in the back of his head.

Yeah, he thought to himself, smiling as they walked to the station. I have a lot to live for, now.

The train ride was uneventful yet empty, so the both of them slouched in the seats near the door and dozed. Izuku didn't sleep well, and Katsuki always looked worn out, but they used each other as pillows anyway. And when their stop came up, Izuku sleepily shook Katsuki awake.

“C'mon,” Izuku whispered, guiding Katsuki out of the train car while he rubbed the tiredness from his eyes. “My house is closer.”

Katsuki didn't argue with that, so he followed suit without a word. It really wasn't a long walk to Izuku's apartment, and before they knew it, Katsuki and Izuku were stumbling into his room and dropping off their bags by the door. It was already dark, the only source of light being the streetlight that filtered in through the blinds, so Izuku simply tossed Katsuki a spare set of pajamas.

Knowing him, he's just going to stay the night anyway, Izuku thought to himself as he rummaged through the closet for his usual sleeping clothes.

He had just thrown on his shirt when he felt arms encircle his waist. Izuku hummed quietly and turned his head, pressing a chaste kiss to Katsuki’s jaw. With a small sigh, the boy led Izuku to the edge of the bed, where he eased him on his back while hovering over him. Katsuki’s lips were quirked up in a smile as he stared down at him, exhaustion absent from his face.

“Kacchan…?” Izuku trailed off and wondered what the boy had planned. He isn’t going to tickle me again, is he?

Katsuki lowered his head and met Izuku’s lips, nibbling on his bottom lip as his hand began to
wander across Izuku’s side. Smiling through the kiss, Izuku reciprocated the action gladly, running his hands through Katsuki’s soft hair while humming in pleasure when his fingers would graze over sensitive skin. He didn’t know where the sudden affection came from, but if it was going to be anything like last time, Izuku was all for it.

Hands continued to roam, creeping under the hem of Izuku’s shirt. The boy shivered and inhaled, his breath hitching as fingers came dangerously close to the waistband of his shorts. Instead of lowering his hand, however, Katsuki stayed within his limits and simply brushed his thumb over his hip bone.

“Katsuki,” he breathed out. Izuku tugged his hair back gently and guided his head to his neck, anxious for some sort of contact other than touching. Hickeys, bitemarks...it didn’t matter, as long as he was touched.

The blonde chuckled and raked his teeth along his Adam’s apple, drawing out a pitiful moan from Izuku’s mouth. He sucked at his pulse next, using his hand to still Izuku’s rising hips as he choked back a gasp. Izuku hid his mouth behind his palm in order to swallow up most of his sounds, and felt the warmth blossoming across his face. It felt good, and Izuku wondered why they didn’t do this more often.

Katsuki broke away from his neck to survey his handiwork, smiling devilishly at the reddening spots that surfaced. He slowly removed Izuku’s hand from his mouth and backed away until he was kneeling over the base of Izuku’s hips. “Shirt off,” he commanded, already peeling off the white shirt that he was given.

Izuku sat up quickly, fumbling over his cast as he removed the article of clothing. As soon as it was thrown to the floor, Katsuki was on top of him again, pinning both of his hands (albeit being gentle with his injured arm) over his head while he nipped at the freckled skin that was up for display. He trailed down his broad chest and pressed kisses along the way, stopping every now and then to bite or suck on skin. Izuku moaned every time he felt Katsuki’s lips, unable to muffle them. Tears had already started to blur his vision, spilling over his cheeks when Katsuki nudged his knee in between his legs. It wasn't a surprise that Izuku was hard—he’d be surprised if Katsuki wasn’t—but he couldn't help but feel a little fearful at the implication of what came next.

“Not tonight,” Katsuki murmured, returning to Izuku's lips to press a kiss at the corner of his mouth. “Hm?” Izuku hummed, still dazed from their heavy make out session. He could barely understand him.

The blonde chuckled. “We won't do anything extreme tonight. I don't think we're ready yet. This feels fucking amazing, and trust me when I say that I want to, but…” he trailed off after that, and Izuku finally noticed how red Katsuki's face really was. He didn't seem embarrassed when he took control, but it looked like he was still as flustered as Izuku when it came to any sort of intimacy.

It felt reassuring to see that he wasn't the only one that was uncertain.

Izuku smiled and laced his fingers in Katsuki's hair, tugging him down to meet his lips once more. “Okay,” he whispered on his lips.

They continued to exchange feather-light touches for awhile; at least, until Izuku’s stomach began to growl. His face flushed with newfound embarrassment, but Katsuki simply pulled back and flashed him a grin from above.

“Hungry?” he asked, carefully maneuvering his body until he was no longer pinning Izuku to the
mattress. Katsuki stretched his back with a sigh as soon as his feet hit the ground, his joints popping faintly. He reached across the bed to grab his shirt and slowly pulled it over his head; after he was properly dressed and covered, he bent down and handed Izuku his own discarded shirt.

“Thank you,” Izuku said, taking it.

Katsuki and Izuku walked down the stairs and turned on the kitchen lights, bathing the room in a golden glow. His mother wouldn’t be home until later at night, when the two would likely be passed out. It wouldn’t hurt to make a small dinner for the two of them, having enough leftovers for Inko, as long as they didn’t burn it like their failed breakfast awhile back.

The blond pulled out the vegetables for a simple stir fry while Izuku got the necessary bowls and measuring cups. They chopped the vegetables in relative peace, occasionally engaging in small talk. Other than that, the two enjoyed the serene night.

And after they finished combining the ingredients, Izuku set the table for two and waited for Katsuki to take a seat across from him. They looked at each other for a moment, smiles gracing both of their faces, before picking up their chopsticks and digging in.

It was delicious.

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_Burning, flames towering over broken buildings. Smoke was filling his lungs, suffocating him and leaving his vision foggy and blurry._

“Kacchan? Where are you?” he called out, clutching his side. Blood dripped freely from a wound in his side, but Izuku needed to know where his boyfriend was. Something was wrong.

Then, as if the smoke heard his thoughts, the path cleared. Izuku stopped in his tracks, frozen at what he saw. Katsuki was there, standing in the middle of the street with what looked like a masked man. He was tall, broad and had a scarred face.

The man’s arm pulsed and grew in size until it was nearly triple the normal size. He swept Katsuki aside with a simple backhanded swipe, sending the blonde flying into the rubble with a sickening crunch.

Izuku didn’t need to see it to know that the strike killed him. He heard the bones crunch, and that was more than enough proof.

_The scarred man turned to him and chuckled through the mask, the sound muffled. “I knew that I’d get to see you again, Midoriya Izuku.”_  

He didn’t know why, but those words brought heavy dread into his stomach, nearly causing him to vomit.

Izuku woke up in a panic, his bedsheets pooling around his waist as he scrambled to sit up. He was breathing heavily and felt nauseous, the urge to puke nearly overriding his other senses.

He quickly dashed to the bathroom, emptying the remnants of his dinner into the toilet bowl. Izuku stayed on his knees for a moment longer in order to catch his breath, resting his head against the wall. He felt beads of sweat drip down his forehead, yet he was oddly cold.

“Deku?” a sleepily voice broke him out of his daze. Katsuki stood at the door, rubbing his eyes
tiredly. His hair was askew--flat on one side, but wild on the other--but Izuku couldn’t find it himself to laugh at it.

*I saw him die. He was...tossed aside as if he weighed nothing.* That very thought caused bile to rise in his throat, and with a pitiful groan, Izuku found himself puking once again. He faintly felt a warm hand brush against his back as he continued to dry-heave, and Izuku inwardly thanked Katsuki for the support.

“You okay?” he asked as soon as Izuku was done. “Was it the food?”

Izuku shook his head, pushing himself on wobbly feet so he could swish his mouth out. The bitter tang of vomit was stuck on his tongue, and it made him sick. “No, the food was amazing. I just had a terrible nightmare.”

Katsuki handed him a glass of water and waited patiently for Izuku to finish. “Kacchan, it was awful. There was this man with a huge scar that covered his whole face, and you were there...he had this weird enhancement quirk, and you were flung to a building as if you were nothing.”

The boy flinched at that, but stayed quiet. “Then he claimed to have seen me before, and for some reason, that made me feel sick to my stomach. After that, I woke up.”

Katsuki took him by the hand and led him back to his room, closing the door behind him. Izuku wandered to the bed and sat down, leaning into Katsuki’s side when the boy sat down next to him. His arm wrapped around his shoulders and held him close, thumb brushing lightly over the exposed sleeve. It was a comforting gesture that soothed his nerves enough to stop the swarm of thoughts that nearly overwhelmed him.

“Do you want to try to sleep again?”

Izuku thought about it, before nodding quietly. “Yeah.”

They settled back under the sheets, Katsuki’s arm snaking around his waist as soon as he was comfortable. Izuku’s back was flush against Katsuki’s chest, while the blonde’s head found the crook of his neck and kissed the skin there lightly. For a moment, their quiet breaths were the only things that Izuku could hear, the sound lulling him to sleep.

Izuku dreamt of nothing after that.

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Sunlight crept in through his window the next morning, creating lines of yellow light that casted over his face. It was subtle, however, so he woke up with a gentle sigh and turned around in Katsuki’s arms. He was still tempted by sleep, but Izuku knew that he had to get ready for school soon.

That didn’t stop him from staying close to Katsuki, at least for a few extra minutes.

He saw how soft Katsuki was while he was asleep, the steady rise and fall of his chest comforting to watch. His eyelashes were long and rested on his cheeks, and Izuku leaned forward to kiss his forehead.

Izuku would let him sleep for a bit while he got changed for school; then he’d have to wake him up. A part of him wanted Katsuki to sleep in more so the dark circles under his eyes would fade away, but Izuku knew that it was simply wishful thinking. Trying to keep him away from the villains was only going to make matters worse for Katsuki, so Izuku had to turn a blind eye until their teachers handled it.
That didn't make it any easier to cope with, though.

The boy carefully weaseled out of Katsuki's grip and quietly walked to his closet, pulling out his uniform and a spare one for the sleeping blonde. He had left a bunch of spare clothes behind after spending few nights at Izuku's, claiming that it was better than wearing something that wasn't his. Izuku saw through that ruse easily enough and knew full well that it was because Katsuki knew he'd be staying the night often at his house.

Izuku stripped off his shirt and glanced at himself in the mirror, sucking in a tight breath when he saw the purple and red marks that littered his skin. Dammit, Kacchan, he found himself thinking, yet he couldn’t help but laugh quietly. It was just like the first time, only Izuku was actually aware of it.

He buttoned up his uniform and tousled his hair with deft fingers. It was never going to be tamed, no matter how hard he tried, but he could at least get it to follow a certain direction. After that, Izuku quietly slipped out into the hall to see if his mom was awake. She’d usually be making breakfast by now, but the house lacked the familiar sound of sizzling vegetables.

“Mom?” Izuku muttered when he peeked his head around the kitchen corner. She was at the table, sitting with a steaming cup of tea.

Her head lifted after hearing her name, and a small smile graced her face. “Ah, Izuku! Good morning.”

“Good morning…”

Inko stood from her chair and walked to the fridge, pulling out the eggs. “Sorry, I was thinking about something and lost track of time. Is Katsuki going to come down and eat?”

So she did know, Izuku mused. Nothing escaped his vigilant mother’s attention. “He’s still asleep. I’ll go up and wake him up right now, if you want.”

She shook her head gently and proceeded to crack the eggs into the pan. “No, no, let him sleep. Besides, I need to talk to you about something.”

Curious, Izuku sat down at the table and glanced up at her. “What is it?”

“Well,” she began, “I was wondering if everything was going okay? The Sports Festival is coming up in a week or two, and I wanted to know if you were prepared for it. I…don’t want you to hurt yourself again.”

Izuku sighed, tilting his head back against the backboard of the chair. “I’m getting there. Aizawa has offered to help me train, so I might stay after school for an hour or more,” he lied. Izuku couldn’t tell her that he was planning on meeting up with Tsubasa afterwards and train with her. His mom didn’t need to worry about him meeting with a “stranger”.

She smiled at that, returning to her cooking. “I’m glad. It’s so good to see you working so hard towards your goal, sweetheart. I’m very proud of you.”

Ugly guilt twisted low in his stomach. He hated lying to her, especially when she tells him such sweet words of encouragement. “Thanks, Mom. I’m happy to be chasing my hero dream again.”

After their brief conversation, Izuku decided to excuse himself and wake up Katsuki. Part of it was to simply get away so he could wallow in misery without his mom noticing, but he also genuinely needed to give his boyfriend enough time to get dressed and ready for school. He climbed the stairs and tentatively cracked open the door, being careful not to make too much noise.
Katsuki was still a small, curled up ball on his bed, undisturbed. Usually, the boy was awake earlier than most, but he looked so worn out recently that his sleeping schedule was muddled. Izuku approached the bed quietly, sitting at the edge and resting a gentle hand on his head. Brushing away the stray hairs that covered his brow, Izuku bent down and pressed a kiss against his brow.

“Kacchan, it’s time to wake up,” he murmured.

The boy hummed from deep in his throat and shifted slightly. “S’too early…” he muttered. He rolled onto his back, his eyes still closed.

Izuku tsked and climbed on top of him, straddling his hips. He cradled his head in his hands and pressed several kisses to his face. “C’mon, Mom’s making breakfast for the two of us. Get up~”

Katsuki cracked a small smile and opened his eyes, glancing blearily at Izuku. “Don’t wanna…give me more kisses, and I’ll think about it.”

The boy scoffed but complied anyway. He nipped at Katsuki’s bottom lip, drawing out a low moan, before trailing to his jaw. “Come on, I’m starving.”

Giving in, Katsuki finally sat up and pressed a lingering kiss to Izuku’s lips before pushing the boy off of him. Izuku fell onto the sheets with a laugh, not even bothering to sit up. He settled for watching Katsuki get up and walk around instead. The blonde shuffled his feet and pulled on his uniform, making sure to flip off Izuku when he noticed his prying eyes.

“You’re such a creep,” he teased, but Izuku just smiled at him.

“It’s not my fault that you’re so pretty.”

Katsuki blushed faintly at that and said nothing. Victorious, Izuku grinned and continued to watch him from his spot at the bed.

“Such a creep,” he heard Katsuki grumble, causing him to laugh.

It was always nice to wake up like this.

***

The day went by without any faults, and Izuku finally found himself back at the train station where he last saw Tsubasa Koa. The brick wall was still there, hidden in plain sight for those who didn’t bother to look.

He used his quirk to clear it while no one was looking, stepping in quickly. Izuku closed the entrance behind him and walked down the corridor with a new sense of resolve. After hearing her true story, he was no longer afraid of her. She was simply misunderstood.

Izuku found himself in the large room once more, only he wasn’t greeted by any of the kids or Tsubasa. In fact, the room was bare as if it had been cleared out.

“Tsubasa?” he called out, using her real name.

No one responded. He took hesitant steps forward until he was close to the center of the room, where the bordered arena still stood. This is really weird…she said that I could come back, but she disappeared. And where are the kids?

A prick in the back of his neck was all he felt before whirling around, instinctively using his quirk to
suspend whatever flew at him. He realized as soon as he saw that one of the wooden crates had fallen right above him. In fact, when he looked beyond that, all of the things that littered the floor when he was there last was levitating above him.

“Good! Your reflexes aren’t complete shit. Makes my job easier,” a familiar voice echoed above him. He squinted past the boxes and saw Tsubasa’s signature cloak dangling from one of the boxes.

Izuku released the box as soon as he lowered it to the ground. He smiled up at her, relieved to see that she hadn’t abandoned her hideout. “You had me scared for a second! I thought you’d left me.”

She laughed. “Now, why would I do that? I’ve spent years on this place,” she said. “Besides, I told you that I’d teach you. I don’t go back on my word often, Midoriya Izuku.”

“You know my name?” he asked her.

Tsubasa lowered herself to the ground, still sitting cross-legged on the crate. “I had one of my kids trail after you after we first met. I needed to make sure you weren’t going to get followed again, you see, and he managed to get your name in the progress. Win-win, eh?”

Izuku crossed his arms. “Creepy, but thank you.”

She waved away his words, uncrossing her legs. “Yeah, yeah. Did you deliver the message for me?”

Izuku thought about Aizawa, and how he had teared up after hearing from his old student.

“Yes,” he muttered. “Yeah, I did.”

Chapter End Notes

Thought that you all deserved a break from all the angst, so enjoy the fluff and almost smut! We'll get back to the heavy stuff in a bit, I promise ;)

That aside, what did you think about this chapter? Any comments? Write them down below, and I'll get back to you! Thank you for reading!
They Did a Number on You, Didn't They

Chapter Summary

Where Izuku trains with Tsubasa, and Katsuki finally knows who the man behind the mask is.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tsubasa did not ask any other questions after that, seemingly satisfied with hearing that her message was delivered successfully. Even though Izuku wanted to tell her everything about the encounter, especially about how Aizawa felt about her past, he knew that she had no desire to know.

It was as if she was at peace with it, judging by the soft smile that tilted her lips upwards.

“Thank you,” she murmured, then focusing on the levitating boxes, Tsubasa turned around. “The first lesson I want to teach you is pushing. If a villain is coming at you that you know you cannot match in strength, the first thing you need to do is gain some distance. Pushing them away will give you enough time to think or run; which, by the way, will save your life.”

Izuku nodded, listening intently. He remembered trying to push the Nomu away and failing, resulting in his current injury. If he could learn about avoiding direct confrontation, Izuku wouldn’t have to worry about being put out of commission due to an injury. He wouldn’t be in the way anymore.

“Focus on weak points, and apply uneven pressure if it’s a large target. Often enough, if you pull their legs closer to you quickly while pushing their torso away, you can trip your enemy and buy you some time,” she said, but Tsubasa grimaced shortly after. “Though I will admit that it's pretty risky. It takes some concentration in order to apply two forces at the same time, especially in your case, so you have to know for certain that it'll work before trying it.”

She pointed to a faint scar on her arm. “I tried it during the Sports Festival, and my opponent was too strong to trip, so I wasted precious time. I was lucky that he didn't throw me completely out of the arena, to be honest.”

Izuku imagined a smaller Tsubasa being thrown, and he couldn't help but crack a grin. Looking at her now, it was hard to believe that she'd even let someone get close enough to grab her, but she was less experienced back then. “Did you still win?” he asked, curious.

A wolfish grin spread across her face. “Of course I did,” she said simply, confidence sneaking into her tone, and they soon returned to training.

Izuku tried not to notice the sad look behind her eyes after mentioning the festival, focusing on her instructions instead. He’d ask about it later.

***

Katsuki was sent tumbling to the ground, a low groan escaping past his lips. He couldn’t see past the blood that trickled into his eyes, but the boy knew that the villains were surrounding him judging by the snickers that he heard.
“C’mon, kid, you usually last longer than this!” a man crowed, kneeling in front of his head. Grabbing a handful of hair, he pulled Katsuki’s head up to meet his eyes.

Squinting through the red, Katsuki could barely make out the features of the man in front of him. It was one of the regulars, that he knew for certain, but he was so dazed and blinded that he couldn’t identify who it was. All he knew was that the situation was getting bad. I need to get out of here, he thought to himself, trying to jerk his head away from the hold.

“Fuck off.” He spat in the man’s face, laughing as the villain cursed and sputtered. “I don’t know why you guys get off on beating up a high schooler, but you all disgust me.”

A laugh, farther away from the rest of the villains, caught Katsuki’s attention. It was deep, slightly raspy, and the blond could already match the voice to the face. It was the masked villain with the blue flames.

The man holding his hair released him with a shove, wiping the blood-coated spit off of his cheek in the process. “Oh, look who decided to show up! I thought you had more important things to worry about?”

Katsuki began to squirm as he remembered the feeling of fire against his skin, branding him and causing blisters. The scarred man showed no remorse when it came to putting Katsuki in his place, but it seemed like he wasn’t doing it out of enjoyment. Perhaps he was being paid?

“How’s that injury that Mentalist gave you? Heard she gave you quite a thrashing after she caught you following that boy,” another villain pitched in, which immediately caught Katsuki’s interest. The Mentalist? Following that boy? What was that scarred bastard doing around Izuku?

The boy stumbled to his feet, baring his teeth in anger. “You guys promised to leave him alone if I cooperated! Why the fuck are you trailing him?”

A hand grabbed his shoulder and shoved him back down to his knees, a steady reminder that he wasn’t in control here. “I needed to make sure that you followed our end of the deal, Bakugou. We won’t harm him or his mother as long as you don’t tell them about us.”

Jokes on you, fuckers, the Pros know.

“The wound is fine. She’s strong, yes, but she has a weak spot against killing.” The black-haired man turned to the other villains. “He hasn’t said a word, by the way. Little Bakugou over here has been obedient.”

Either this man is really stupid and does a shit job at trailing, or he’s withholding information, Katsuki mused, wiping his eyes with the edge of his sleeve. It was possible that the man wasn’t as bad as he seemed, but that wasn’t likely. Maybe he wanted blackmail material?

Katsuki stayed quiet, going over all of his options in his head. The villains were getting more aggressive, even going as far as breaking bones. If it wasn’t for Recovery Girl, Katsuki would be hospitalized for the injuries that he received weekly. But everything he did was for the Midoriyas. They don’t deserve any of this, so Katsuki would endure it for them. For Izuku.

He didn’t notice the scarred man until he was kneeling beside him. Rough fingers clasped around his jaw, raising his head so it was level. Bright blue met his gaze, and Katsuki fought back the urge to spit in his face too. “They did a number on you, didn’t they?” he asked. “Wouldn’t it be easier to just cut ties with the Midoriya family and let us handle business?”
“Fuck you.”

He laughed at that, shaking his head. “I don’t like taking business from a boy like Ren, trust me, but I’m getting paid a shit ton of cash for this. Make my job easier, kid. Leave Midoriya behind.”

Katsuki gritted his teeth, his red eyes reflecting the setting sun. “No.”

“Loyal even to a fault, eh? Alright,” the man said with a shrug. Then, in a lower voice, he murmured, “I’ll tell you this, kid. These guys aren’t following orders from that Ren kid anymore. Hell, Ren isn’t even in the picture anymore. They’re just bloodthirsty assholes who get a kick out of beating you up.”

“But if you follow my directions, I can get you out of here. I can help you out. All I need from you is a favor.”

“What kind of favor?” Katsuki whispered lowly, cautious.

“I don’t know yet. But I’ll keep in touch, alright? I’ll let you know.” He then pulled away, straightening his low cut shirt with his hands. The man looked to his left, far past the villains, and settled on an alleyway. His appearance seemed to shift then, from a dealer to a villain. A cruel grin shone on his face and flames licked at his arms, illuminating the courtyard in electric blue.

Katsuki’s eyes widened, and he tried to back away. “Get away!” The man inched forward, reaching out a haunting hand. It came closer, reminding him of Shigaraki’s hand as it touched Izuku, and the panic only seemed to escalate. “Get the fuck away from me!”

He paid no mind to Katsuki’s fear, surrounding the two of them in a wall of blue fire. The sound of it crackling and popping would haunt him for weeks, sweat already beginning to drip down his face from the intense heat. “The name’s Dabi, kid. Their hideout is in the Kamino Ward. It’s in a bar with a bright red sign. Tell that to the heroes, and they’ll help you out.”

The flames got closer, scalding his skin. Katsuki howled as he felt his skin of his arms bubble and flake away, but Dabi didn’t let up. “Don’t worry, kid. The pain will only last for a minute before I damage the nerves.”

Another scream tore from his throat—like a wounded animal—when the pain only seemed to increase. It hurts, it hurts, get away!

Katsuki collapsed as soon as the flames rescinded, landing on his back. He was wheezing for air, black spots crowding his vision in clusters. There was blood, he knew it by the way it trickled down his arms, but he just needed to catch his breath...

The other villains whistled at his treatment, patting Dabi on the back with matching grins. “Nice job! A few more burns like that, and he’ll be a miniature version of you!”

Dabi scoffed and waved them away. “He’s damaged enough. You guys should leave him alone for awhile. Let him heal. How about I buy drinks back at the bar for you guys?”

They agreed, leaving Katsuki behind as they laughed and cheered. As soon as their voices faded, Dabi walked over to him, assessing the damage. “One of Mentalist’s kids was watching, so she’ll be here to help you soon. Remember our deal, and this will all be over. Stay alive, Bakugou Katsuki...I expect to see you soon.”

The man disappeared from Katsuki’s hazy sight, leaving him alone in the overgrown courtyard. There were potted trees surrounding him, swaying in the breeze, and Katsuki raised his eyes to the
red sky above. It was orange too, a pretty blend of warm colors with thick storm clouds drifting in from the north. It was peaceful, even as the boy’s arms burned to no end.

Katsuki’s breathing slowed, his eyes closing gently. *Wouldn’t it be nice to just enjoy the breeze?*  
*Just...for a little…*

***

Izuku was sent to the ground, a breathless laugh taking over him. He nearly had her fighting pattern all figured out, but landing a “TK Punch” on her was hard.

For the past half hour, he was trying to incorporate martial arts and other fighting styles while also using his telekinesis to accentuate the power behind his punches and kicks. It sounded easy in theory, but as soon as he tried it out, he put too much behind it and nearly threw himself towards Tsubasa.

“I am so close, Tsubasa! One more time!” Izuku persisted, shakily returning to his feet.

The redhead in front of him scoffed and rested her hands on her hips. “Oh, please. You can’t even land a single hit on me, let alone *stand.* Take a break, workaholic.”

Izuku groaned but complied. He was there for two hours now, the muscles screaming in protest told the time for him, and Izuku assumed that the sun was setting at this rate. *Maybe I should call it a day? Mom might be wondering where I've been by now.*

Tsubasa settled next to him, running her fingers through the tangles in her curls. “You’re making good progress, though! Keep working on that technique, and you’ll make it through the festival just fine.”

Izuku perked up at that, turning to face her. “That reminds me! You said you won that match during the Sports Festival, right? Did you win the entire thing? Is it on video? Does UA still have the records for it?”

She raised her hands up and smiled. “Calm down, kid; one question at a time. Yes, I won the whole thing. And I don’t know? I would think that they cleared those records awhile ago to cover my tracks.”

He leaned back against the crate and gushed, “That must have felt amazing. Seeing the crowd cheer all around you, feeling the medal weighing against your neck...Do you still have it? The medal, I mean.”

Tsubasa shook her head. “It's at my parents' house. They... probably threw it away or something.”

Izuku's smile vanished when he saw the far away look in her eyes. “I don't think that they did. If I was a parent, I'd hold onto that kind of stuff.”

“Even if your kid was a murderer?” Her face was screwed up in a grimace.

“It wasn't your fault.”

“Like hell it wasn't.”

Izuku hardened his resolve and stared at her head-on, a frown settling on his face. As he suspected, the guilt was eating away at her. Tsubasa didn't understand that she was a good person; instead, she focused on the lives that she took when she lost control of her quirk. If only there was something that
he could do for her!

However, before he could open his mouth to speak his mind, one of Tsubasa's kids came tumbling from the hallways. Her face was flushed red with exertion, sweat dripping from her nose as if she had ran for miles. Perhaps she had.

“Mom!” she cried out, struggling to breathe. The girl's clothes were pungent with the smell of smoke.

Any sign of Tsubasa's carefree attitude was gone when she saw her, and the woman rose to her feet at an instant. Pulling her cloak from its hook across the room, Tsubasa hurried to the girl and bent to her level.

“What is it? Any updates on that man? Did he hurt you?” she ushered, raking her eyes over the child to check for injuries.

The kid shook her head frantically. “No, I'm okay! But he hurt someone else really badly! He...he burnt them, even when the blonde boy begged him to stop--!” She shuddered then, as the memory rushed to her head, her reddened face turning pale.

_Blonde boy?_ Izuku perked up, hand ghosting his pocket where his phone was. _It couldn't be Kacchan, he's at home._

“You have to come help him! Oh, Mom, he'll die there!” she pleaded.

Tsubasa didn't even hesitate. She asked for directions and went for the door, pausing at the entrance.

“Well hurry up, Midoriya!” she barked.

He scampered to his feet, grabbing his things quickly and rushing to her side. They wasted no time running down the winding corridor, worry and doubt slowly clouding Izuku's mind.

_Is Katsuki still at home? Would he be out at this time?_

Then, another thought--darker than the rest--came to him. _Was it the villains?_ The two of them rushed through the bustling streets until they finally began to smell a hint of smoke coming from in between two buildings. Tsubasa didn't even bother to check to see if it was safe before running in, leading Izuku to do the same.

His heart was in his throat, suffocating him. Izuku was so nervous as he wondered who the injured boy could possibly be, but he held onto the thin strand of hope that it wasn't Katsuki.

Izuku was so enveloped in his own thoughts that he nearly bumped into Tsubasa when she stopped. She silently stepped to the side, quiet as a ghost.

“He's got your uniform, kid…”

That's all Izuku had to hear for him to burst forward, running right into the courtyard. The sun was already below the horizon, casting a hazy glow across the grass and trees. That's where he saw him, splayed out with his face to the sky. Blonde hair was mottled and stained with blood, nearly unrecognizable under Izuku's teary gaze, but what really made Izuku's stomach drop was the stillness of his chest. Katsuki was laying there, back resting on the bloodstained grass, but Izuku couldn't see his chest rise and fall.

“Oh, Katsuki,” Izuku whispered as he fell to his knees, cradling the blonde's head in his lap while he tried to find a pulse. A faint flutter met his fingertips, soft enough to nearly go unnoticed. A relieved sob broke through his lips, tears already dripping from his cheeks.
Tsubasa knelt down beside him and assessed the damage. His arms and shoulders were charred and blackened with burns, the smell of burnt flesh filling the air. It was repulsive, but Tsubasa simply slipped her arms under his legs and upper back, lifting him with ease.

“Come on,” she murmured.

“...okay.”

Izuku walked in a daze, focusing only on the limp arm that hung from Katsuki’s side as he was being carried. He had no idea where they were going, but as long as Katsuki got help, Izuku didn't care. Tsubasa would occasionally stop to check Katsuki's pulse, walking faster after every pause. Judging by her bit lip and taut jaw, Katsuki was walking on very thin ice.

It wasn't until Izuku felt the raindrops fall on his face that he began to cry in earnest, heart wrenching sobs tearing from deep within his chest. His love--his Katsuki--was dying all because of Izuku. If he hadn't bothered Ren, the boy would be home studying. Or cooking. Or anything.

“Not dead yet,” Tsubasa grounded out, turning another corner. “You can get in this way, can’t you?”

Curious by what she meant, Izuku looked up to find himself in front of UA's campus. The tall gate, illuminated by the street lights surrounding it, stood between them and Recovery Girl. It was common knowledge that she stayed on campus most nights, but the fact that Tsubasa still remembered that from all those years ago relieved Izuku.

“Yeah,” Izuku said with a nod. “But only those with an ID can get in…”

Tsubasa smiled and faced the wall. She looked younger at that moment, as if it was her first time seeing it all over again. “I remember the night practices that Aizawa would have for me. He told me that if I was ever unable to get in with my card, I'd just have to stand by a camera and he'd buzz me in.”

She walked up to Izuku and held out Katsuki, gesturing him to hold him. Izuku did wordlessly and tried not to look down at the pale, clammy boy that he loved.

“Go and take him to Recovery Girl. I'll be with you in a second,” Tsubasa murmured, turning back to the wall. “I have someone to talk to first.”

Izuku didn’t hesitate, walking briskly past the gate. He made it up the stairs, barely feeling Katsuki’s dead weight in his arms. The blonde’s breathing was so faint that it was nearly nonexistent. Izuku moved faster, clutching him to his chest as he scaled the steps and stumbled down the hall. Hang on, Kacchan, we’re almost there. Please hang on!

He almost collapsed through the infirmary door then, relieved to see that the old woman was scribbling at her desk. Her head snapped up at the noise, a retort beginning on her lips, then she saw who was in Izuku's arms. Wordlessly, she pushed to her feet and cleared a bed for him, grabbing bandages and other tools from a drawer. It looks like she's done this for him before. There isn't any surprise on her face, only...disappointment?

“You boys never stay out of trouble, do you?” she grumbled, waving Izuku away from Katsuki’s side. She leaned over and pressed a kiss to his temple, making sure to have her lips linger for a moment while her quirk transferred. But she didn’t leave it at that: Recovery Girl made sure to treat his burns with ointment and wrap them up while his body worked on healing itself.

Izuku found a seat on the chair next to the bed, waiting for her to finish. He found himself lost in his thoughts the moment he sat down. How did this happen to him? Why wasn’t he at home? Who did
this to him? Why did Tsubasa have one of her kids trail the villain anyway? Who did she want to talk with at the gate?

A hand settled on his shoulder startled him out of his questions. Recovery Girl stood in front of him with a smile. “He’s going to be fine, boy. I’ve patched him up dozens of times already, so this won’t be any different. It was a close call, but he’ll make a full recovery.” She took his injured arm and analyzed it with a critical eye. “Your arm should be fine without a cast now. Since you’re here, you might as well get it off.”

Izuku nodded slowly, glancing at the white cast that encased his arm. He barely noticed it most of the time, since it still felt numb, but Izuku figured that he was fully healed by now. Recovery Girl removed it slowly, checking the skin there with frail fingers before setting the appendage down at his lap.

“Flex your hand for me? I need to see if you have mobility,” she said.

He moved to clench his fist, sighing in defeat when he could only barely touch his fingertips to his palms. It was obvious to him now that the reason why he could scarcely feel his forearm was because he simply couldn’t. Nerve damage was a major factor when Shigaraki dissolved most of the muscle tissue in that area, and Izuku knew that even Recovery Girl couldn’t heal all of the damage.

Izuku glanced up at her his mouth in a firm line. “Could I eventually get it back?”

“It’s not likely, no.”

“Well. Shit.”

She scoffed. “It’s not the end of the world. Your quirk is telekinesis. That just means that you’ll have to stay away from close contact, or start relying on your right a lot more now.”

“Right,” he said, tilting his head back. “What about Kacchan? He won’t have any lasting injuries, will he? Those burns looked terrible.”

Recovery Girl looked at the boy, who was relaxed and breathing easier now that he was stabilized. His hair was still bloodsoaked and the rest of his body was still dirty and charred, but he was peaceful. “No, he won’t. Unlike you, his injuries weren’t as deep as to affect the nerves.”

Izuku let out a breath of relief. He didn’t want Katsuki to have to worry about that on top of everything else. It was good that he’d make a complete recovery.

He stood up and found himself taking the blonde’s hand, gently squeezing it to remind himself that he was still there. Seeing him in the courtyard terrified him, especially when he was barely breathing. If anything had happened to him, if things had turned out worse …

I wouldn’t want to continue. A story without Katsuki is not worth reading, let alone living.

A quiet knock went unnoticed by him, but Recovery Girl greeted the person at the door. “It’s open.”

The door slid open, revealing both Tsubasa and Aizawa. Their faces were neutral, but the red rimming her eyes was obvious in the brightly lit room. Recovery Girl wasn’t surprised to see her either, yet the warm smile that stretched across her face was new.

Tsubasa approached the older woman slowly, bowing lowly. “I’m sorry,” was all she said, and the message was clear. The red haired woman knew about the stress that she caused her teachers when she had to disappear, and she wanted to try to right that wrong.
“You were always the polite one, weren’t you? Ah, it’s been awhile, dear,” Recovery Girl greeted her. “But you don't need to bow to me. Shouta told me everything all those years ago.”

Aizawa stepped forward, ruffling her curly hair. He was nothing like the strict man that Izuku had seen in the classroom; instead, the man looked at ease when he stood next to his old intern. Aizawa looked at Izuku head on before diverting his attention to Katsuki.

“He’s gotten himself in a lot of trouble lately. Why is it that it’s either you or him in the infirmary?” he drawled, an exasperated sigh breaking past his lips.

Izuku couldn’t help but chuckle weakly, ducking his head to the side. His eyes fell on Katsuki’s face, his cheeks flushed and lips parted as he breathed deeply. He was alive, safe. That’s all that mattered to him. The boy returned his gaze to Aizawa and Tsubasa, about to open his mouth to respond, when someone beat him to it.

“You’re the one in charge of us, Sensei.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! Sorry for the lack of updates, I've been sick for a week and had to focus on catching up on school work. But I finally managed to get this out for you all! Comment below if you liked it, and give me your predictions on what will happen next! Until next time!

Also, check out my Tumblr, SFW Twitter and NSFW Twitter. My SFW Twitter is where I'll have updates on why chapters are late and just overall news updates and art. My NSFW Twitter is for my NSFW art and other retweets, and should only be followed by 18+ crowds. Thank you~
Chapter Summary

Where the Sports Festival finally begins, and a ghost reappears.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Katsuki was trying to sit up, arms wobbly and unstable. Immediately, Izuku and Recovery Girl eased him back down to the mattress.

“You need to rest, young man,” she chastised, strong hands nearly pinning his shoulders to the sheets.

Izuku hovered anxiously by his side, feet tapping the floor as he worried over Katsuki. He looked exhausted, likely because of the use of Recovery Girl's quirk, but the blonde had a smile on his face. What does he have to be happy about?

Aizawa rolled his eyes and crossed his arms over his chest. “I'm not teaching you kids how to land yourselves in critical care.”

Katsuki scoffed, but dropped the topic. Instead, he looked at Aizawa with a steady gaze. He seemed lighter, more carefree, as if there was a weight off his chest.

“I know where their hideout is, Aizawa. We can catch these fucking villains and get them off the streets!” he exclaimed. Then, grinning at Izuku, he continued. “We can finally put an end to this shit. You can be safe.”

This was always about me, wasn’t it? He didn’t care what happened to him as long as I was okay. How far was he willing to go for me? Izuku didn’t know what to think. The whole situation seemed to be pointing the blame towards himself. The whole situation with Ren was his fault, and Katsuki had to pay the price because of it. But now that it was over...

Their teacher looked relieved. “We can send out some heroes there to arrest them. I'm sure both police and pro heroes alike want to get these guys behind bars.”

Tsubasa, who was quiet throughout the ordeal, spoke up. “But that brings attention to the school. If word gets out that a student has been tormented by villains this whole time, UA's reputation gets tarnished. C'mon, I can imagine it now: some conservative article saying that the teachers aren't keeping track of their students.”

She crossed her arms. “Let me take care of it. I can get in there and rough 'em up a bit, and then they’ll be delivered to the cops’ door with a small, little note.”

A small noise of disapproval was all Aizawa made, but he didn't deny it. “No deaths, alright?”

Tsubasa flashed him a grin. “Things are different now, Aizawa. No one’s gonna die on my watch.”

He nodded once--satisfied with her answer--before turning to the two boys. “You both are going
straight home after this and staying there until Koa gets this situation under control. I don’t want any of you wandering outside and getting yourselves in trouble, you hear?”

Izuku faced his teacher with a level gaze, knowing that they weren’t willing to leave the house after the whole villain scare. It was bad enough that Izuku had a fear of them in the back of his mind ever since the U.S.J. incident, but seeing his boyfriend laying in his own pool of blood? That was enough to haunt him for more than a few nights.

He sought out comfort, to hold Katsuki for tonight while he assured himself that he was there and okay.

Katsuki seemed to see the sure expression on Izuku’s face, as he sat back against the sheets and nodded his head. “That...would be nice, actually.”

The adults were satisfied with his answer and immediately went to work: Aizawa got on the phone with All Might while Tsubasa ducked out of the room to apprehend the villains in the Kamino Ward. Izuku didn’t doubt in Tsubasa’s ability, knowing full well that her capabilities as telekinetic were impressive, but he couldn’t stop the feeling of fright from coiling around his throat. This is it. After this, Kacchan can finally live his life without having to deal with these villains. He can be free!

Recovery Girl was the only one left in the room, but she was sat in the desk across the room with her back to them. Her hand never stopped moving as she wrote down the evaluation forms for both of them.

Katsuki’s eyelids drooped, but as soon as he began nodding off, he'd jerk back awake. He kept a solid grip on Izuku's left hand, too exhausted to ask why he wasn’t squeezing back with as much force. The blonde didn't seem to notice the massive scar that covered Izuku's forearm or even that the cast was off. He was simply in a daze, blinking away fatigue as his head kept tilting to the side.

“You can fall asleep, Kacchan,” Izuku murmured, lifting his free hand and framing the boy's cheek with it. He leaned into Izuku's touch, breath fanning out across his palm. “I'll wake you up if anything happens.”

Katsuki’s eyebrow twitched as if he wanted to say something, but Recovery Girl's quirk began to take effect. His eyes slowly closed--a peaceful expression set on his face--as Izuku gently ran his fingers through his hair. It was one of the rare chances that Katsuki was calm and relaxed.

After fifteen minutes of waiting, Bakugou’s parents rushed into the room, Inko hot on their heels. Aizawa must have called them as soon as he finished with All Might. The door smacked against the wall, startling both Izuku and Recovery Girl.

“Who did it?” Mitsuki demanded, red eyes blazing. Masaru looked equally upset, but he was as silent and calm as ever. The only sign of fury was the clenched fists at his side. “Did you catch the fuckers that did this to him?”

Katsuki stirred from the commotion but didn’t wake.

Recovery Girl looked at the couple with quiet frustration, tempted to shoo them out of the room so they didn’t disrupt Katsuki’s rest. But she kept her mouth closed and returned to her writing. Izuku decided to speak up in her stead, lest the whole room erupted in screaming.

“Auntie Mitsuki, please try and keep quiet. Kacchan needs to rest,” Izuku said softly, rising to his feet. “But to answer your question, a couple villains had done this to him. He was…” Izuku stopped, uncertain if he should be honest and tell them everything. Katsuki wanted to keep the whole situation
on the down low, but everything was better now. “He was walking home and got ambushed by a bunch of low-class villains. Aizawa got a hold of their location though, so he’s getting the authorities to help.”

Izuku lied. He hated every word, it tasted bitter in his mouth, but he didn’t know if Katsuki wanted them to know.

Mitsuki sucked in a breath, gazing at her boy with gritted teeth. “He should’ve had someone with him, dammit. What was my boy doing out there alone?”

“I don’t know,” replied Izuku. “But he’s doing alright. He was awake a few minutes ago, but Recovery Girl’s quirk is a bit taxing on the body, so he had to fall asleep.”

Masaru unclenched his fists, seemingly comforted by the news. “That’s a relief,” he murmured, walking forward and taking a seat at Katsuki’s side. The father’s gaze swept across every bandage that Katsuki wore, a frown settling on his face. Mitsuki soon joined him and reached out to gently rest her hand on her son’s head.

Izuku watched with a quiet twist of his hands. He didn’t know what to say—if he should say anything at all—and his mother was as silent as him. Her gaze was fixated on Izuku’s arm, which he knew was scarred and uneven and ugly. She’s probably worried about me. Or she thinks it’s repulsive to look at. Maybe both of those things.

He unconsciously covered his left arm with his hand, averting his eyes to the floor. If she knew that he could barely feel anything from his elbow down, Inko would throw a fit. But he had to tell her. But when will I? And how will she take it? She won’t let me continue with school, I bet.

Right on time, Aizawa stepped into the room, face set into nonchalance. The bandaged man held his gaze on the Bakugou’s for a moment before turning to look at Izuku. He had something to tell him, Izuku just knew, so the boy politely excused himself and walked out to the hallway.

As soon as the door was closed behind them, Aizawa began to speak. “How long have you been in contact with Koa?”

Izuku didn’t know the meaning behind the words or whether Tsubasa would get in trouble, but he knew the bond between the teacher and ex-student. Aizawa wouldn’t throw away all that he did for her by ratting her out. “Only for a few days. The first time I saw her, she helped me get out of a bad situation. She offered to help me train as soon as she figured out that I had telekinesis, and she was training me this afternoon when…”

The next words didn’t need to be said. Aizawa nodded his head and shuffled his feet. “You haven’t told anyone about her, have you?” he asked, and Izuku heard the slight worry in his voice. So he's just worried then. That's good.

“Only Kacchan knows, and he won’t tell a soul.”

Aizawa hummed but continued talking. “Good. She told me about your training session. I’m…fine with it, as long as you both take caution with your abilities. I won’t have a repeat of what happened all those years ago.”

Izuku looked at him straight on, his face set in determination. He had a strong feeling that he would improve greatly with Tsubasa; without her, he would still be using old methods that would ruin his chances of becoming a proper hero. He had to keep practicing.

“I'll show you what I’m made of, sir. I'll make you proud.”
A week passed by, and the Sports Festival was upon them.

Izuku had been training nearly every evening with Tsubasa as he worked on close combat (sparring his left arm, of course) and manipulating the space around him. Tsubasa taught him all she could in a short amount of time about using the environment to his advantage. Bending metal without breaking it, pulling a branch without it snapping...Tsubasa had him focus on extreme control of his quirk, and the hard work paid off.

And now, Izuku was ready to step out into the limelight. He had his blue uniform on, the fabric cool against his skin, and Izuku couldn’t have been more excited. Years of watching the festival behind a buzzing television screen were nothing compared to actually experiencing it. The thrill of the upcoming trials ignited goosebumps under his skin.

To say that he was excited was an understatement.

A hand patted his shoulder, and Izuku turned his head. Uraraka was standing behind him with a smile. “Nervous?” she asked him, and the boy shaked his head.

“Not really, no. I’m confident in my chances of winning.”

The girl laughed, but the smile didn’t remain on her face for long. There was something eating at her, and Izuku turned around on the locker room bench to face her. Taking a seat next to him, Uraraka rested against the blue lockers.

“I never told you about my family, did I?”

Izuku shook his head. “No, you haven’t.”

“My family isn’t exactly the best off...we’re not poor, but we can’t afford all the luxuries that Momo or Todoroki can. They work for construction, but a lot of quirks are being developed…”

“And their jobs are in jeopardy.” Izuku finished the sentence for her, looking at her with a frown.

Uraraka nodded. “Exactly. I offered to stay home and help them, but they wanted me to follow my dream and become a hero. I agreed, but I only did it so I could pay for their retirement. Pro-heroes aren’t really struggling with money, not with their paychecks.”

“Is that bad, Deku? That I’m mostly doing it for the money?” she asked, looking down at her feet.

Izuku gently took her shoulder and turned her so she was facing him. “Uraraka, I don’t think there’s anything wrong with doing it for your family. Hell, the reason why I’m becoming a hero has some part to do with getting my mom a better house to live in. You have a compassionate heart, and I think wanting to help your loved ones is very kind.”

She gave him a shaky smile, hugging him tightly. “You’re so nice, Deku. Thank you.”

He wrapped his arms around her back and squeezed. “Of course, Uraraka. Let me know if I can do anything for you, okay?”

“I will, I swear.”

Jirou peeked her head around the corner, interrupting the two. “Sorry, guys, but the speech is gonna start in a few minutes and Aizawa wants us on the field for the representative’s speech.”
Uraraka pulled away with a smile, getting to her feet. “Okay, Deku! Let the best man win, alright?”

Izuku grinned and followed her lead. “Hell yeah!”

The Sports Festival was going well for Izuku.

The obstacle course was simple, especially when he now knew how to levitate himself above the dangerous gaps and hard stages. He was a close third behind Todoroki and Katsuki in that trial, which already got him a lot of fans among the pro-heroes up top.

Next was the Cavalry Battle, which was a slight failure on his part. He had paired with Hatsume, Uraraka and Tokoyami, but just when they were about to finish second, Katsuki came in and snatched their most valuable band, lowering them down to fourth. It was a fair match, but Izuku couldn’t help but feel slightly angry at his boyfriend for dropping his team down.

And now, Izuku was being paired with a fighting partner. A part of him was dreading it: he was nervous that his close combat wasn’t enough to stop those with physically-enhanced quirks, but Izuku had to give it a shot.

But in the meantime, he’d sit in the waiting room until his name was called for the first round of fighting.

A small knock came from the door, and Izuku sat up in his seat. “Oh, come in!”

Ojiro walked in, tail swishing nervously at his feet. “Sorry to bother you, Midoriya, but I took a look at the roster...you’re fighting against Shinsou first, right? The lazy-eyed guy with purple hair?”

Izuku dug into his memories until he saw the image in his head. Shinsou Hitoshi was a student from the general department and reminded him a lot of Aizawa. Although he never saw his quirk in action, Izuku assumed that it was powerful: Shinsou wasn’t in the final trial for nothing, after all.

“Yes, I believe so. Is anything wrong?” he asked. Him and Ojiro were friends, sure, but they weren’t so close that Ojiro would personally seek him out and talk. Unless there was a reason...?

Ojiro scratched the back of his head. “There’s something off about that guy. I don’t really remember much about the cavalry battle, which is odd enough, but I swear that I can’t remember anything after the guy asked me something. Maybe I got hit in the head by something, I don’t know. But test my theory: don’t respond to him.”

Izuku thought about it, acknowledging Ojiro’s words. It may have been a mental quirk that rendered his foe in an unconscious state? Or maybe even brainwashing? “Thank you for the heads up, Ojiro. I’ll definitely be on my guard.”

Ojiro looked relieved. “Thanks, man. It didn’t feel right, and I’d hate for your fight to be so short-lived like mine was.”

Midnight’s voice echoed through the speakers, announcing the start of the first fight. Izuku stood from his place at the table, stretched out his arms, and walked with Ojiro until he got the arena’s double doors. The tailed boy nodded and wished him luck before heading up the stairs to the observatory deck.

Possible brainwashing quirk caused by response. As long as I keep my mouth shut, I’ll be fine. All I
need to do is push my opponent and nudge him over the line.

Izuku opened the door, closing his eyes to block out the bright light. A cacophony of cheers from the crowd boosted him forward; confident steps brought him closer to the center of the arena where Shinsou stood.

The boy’s face was slack and showed no emotion. His hair was unruly and curled by his jaw, but his unkempt appearance was attractive in its own way. *If he was smiling, I’m sure he’d be charming. I wonder why he looks so solemn?*

Before Shinsou could get a word in, Izuku beat him to it. “Looking forward to a *fair* fight!” he smiled, silently stressing ‘fair.’ Izuku wanted to see his capabilities, especially his unique quirk, in action, but he also wanted to stay in the fight as long as possible.

Izuku wanted to make everyone proud.

Shinsou hummed in response and offered him a slight nod. “Me too.”

Midnight continued with the announcements, saying, “Our impressive and powerful kid from Class 1-A, Midoriya Izuku versus our mysterious and broody Shinsou Hitoshi from the General Department! Keep an eye on these two during the fight!” Sweeping her hair over her shoulder, she faced the two of them. “Ready? Fight!”

Izuku stood in place, watching Shinsou with a cautious eye. On the other side of the arena, Shinsou began to smile, also staying in place.

“That monkey threw away his chance to win by surrendering early, didn’t he? What a fool,” he mocked.

Izuku gritted his teeth, but stayed quiet. As much as he wanted to defend his friend, Ojiro wanted him to win for him. He wasn’t going to go back on his word. He took a step forward, right hand unfurling. Dust picked up at his feet, raw energy building up in his hand in preparation for a “TK Punch.”

Undeterred, Shinsou began talking again. “But let’s talk about you. The “sunshine” of 1-A, right? *Cursed* with telekinesis as your quirk. Let’s not forget the Yamagoku Incident, Midoriya. The Mentalist had telekinesis too, and she slaughtered hundreds. Will that be you?”

The power behind his hand increased two-fold, and a drop of blood slipped down his lip. Izuku spat it out and glared at Shinsou. *He’s trying to rile me up, and it’s working. I need to calm down…*

“C’mon, Deku! You should’ve won by now!” Katsuki’s voice rang in the arena, soothing Izuku’s nerves. Focus returned to him, and the boy wrestled control back into his grasp. Izuku was almost upon Shinsou when the boy uttered one last sentence.

“Deku. ‘Useless’ is what he calls you, yet you still stay with him. Bakugou Katsuki is nothing less than an abuser and a hothead, and he definitely doesn’t deserve someone like you.”

Red blinded Izuku’s sight, untamed power swirling around his body. “*Shut up!*” he howled.

Shinsou smirked as Izuku’s body went slack, eyes taking a glazed sheen. “Got you,” he said with a chuckle. “Now, do me a favor and lose for me, yeah?”

Izuku helplessly watched himself turn around and walk to the line like a zombie. *No, stop! You can’t lose now, not when you’re so close!*
“Oh! Midoriya is walking to the edge!” Present Mic hollered. “Is this a guaranteed victory for Shinsou?”

Tears built in the corners of his eyes as Izuku saw his foot cross over the line, hovering dangerously over it. Please don’t let this be the end!

His eyes met with red curls. Tsubasa was watching with a cool, calculated gaze; hidden under her signature cloak. She had come to watch his tournament, and he would fail her. Izuku could imagine her disappointment now as he lost to his own anger.

Izuku felt his right hand thrum with untapped energy, barely being held back. Acting out of reflex, the power burst, sending gusts of air swirling around the arena. Body lurching back, Izuku let out a deafening gasp as he gained control over his body once more. Still concealed by the dust billowing around, Izuku stopped his foot and turned around. Mustered up power once again, Izuku darted forward and drew back his fist.

His knuckles came in firm contact with Shinsou’s stunned face, sending him toppling back a few yards. Izuku stood there, feet planted, as he stared Shinsou down.

“You talk too damn much,” he snarled, shaking out his fist. “Get up and fight for real!”

Shinsou spat a wad of blood onto the dirt and shakily got to his feet. “How did you…? You shouldn’t have broken out of that!”

Izuku didn’t answer, taking a step forward. He was still breathing heavily, spit mixing with the blood running down his nose. The power that it took to get out of Shinsou’s control was a lot, but it wasn’t damaging.

Seeing that he wasn’t going to get an answer, Shinsou charged forward. “You’ll never understand how I feel, will you? Having a villain’s quirk? Being told that you’ll never become a hero? You can have it all, and I’m stuck with a shitty quirk!”

You’re wrong. I do understand, Shinsou.

Izuku allowed Shinsou to land a hit on his face, reeling back a step. But he recovered quickly, grabbing the front of his uniform and his forearm and throwing him over his shoulder. The purple-haired boy let out a gasp as his breath was forced from his lungs, but his eyes were still glaring at Izuku.

Even when he was declared the loser of the round for being off the line, Shinsou was still riled up and upset. Midnight rose her hand up and signaled the end, announcing Izuku the winner, but Izuku didn’t feel right leaving it like that.

Helping Shinsou up, Izuku murmured lowly, “I don’t think your quirk is villainous at all. It’s powerful and could help deal with a lot of bad people. Shinsou, your quirk is yours to make, not anyone else’s. It’s your job to make it into what you want it to be.”

The boy stayed quiet all the way to the grass, when he suddenly turned around on his heel and scowled. “Mark my words, Midoriya: I’ll find my way into the hero department and wipe you guys out. I’ll be the best damn hero you’ve ever seen.”

Izuku smiled. “Looking forward to it.” As soon as the words were said, he swayed on his feet, dizziness overcoming his senses. Yeah, that was expected. I used a lot of power in such a short amount of time.
They both made their way to their designated spots, but Izuku made sure to stop by Recovery Girl’s office so he could lay down for awhile. A migraine clung to his brain, lights and noises making his head pound.

She already had a glass of water and a bed ready for him tucked away in the corner of the room. He thanked her and laid down, sighing in relief when she turned off the lights. A second later, the door opened and shut quietly.

“Koa? You shouldn’t be here, girl! You’ll get caught!” the woman protested, which got the attention of Izuku. He sat up slowly, rubbing his eyes in the process. Tsubasa is here?

“It’ll be fine! It’s only for a moment.”

She took her spot by Izuku’s bedside, sinking into the mattress. A soft hand found itself in his hair, ruffling it gently. “Good job, kid. You saved yourself back there with your stored power technique.”

Izuku huffed. “It definitely drained me, though. I wish I hadn’t of lost control in the first place.”

“Take your victories when you can, Midoriya! You looked like a badass.”

Izuku and Tsubasa both laughed at that. “You think so? Do you think I’ll get any internship offers this year?”

She looked at him with a smile. “Of course! You’re showing great control, and the pros are looking for that. I wouldn’t be surprised if you get more than a hundred offers, to be honest with you.”

Izuku’s heart swelled with happiness. He was content with Tsubasa’s praise but hearing that he was looking great out in the arena made his day. His mom was watching him succeed. Everyone was.

Tsubasa and him engaged in technique talk for awhile, losing track of time and lowering their defenses. It wasn’t until the door began to open when both of them froze. Tsubasa, an infamous “villain,” wasn’t supposed to be here.

Izuku panicked, eyes immediately darting to the door. Matsuki walked in, a bright smile on her face. However, when her eyes fell on Tsubasa, her smile dropped immediately. Her eyes widened in panic.

“Is that…?” She paled.

Tsubasa stood up, frozen in shock. Izuku also stood. “Matsuki, listen to me, okay? It’s not what it seems…”

She began to shake in fear. “What are you doing here…”

But to Izuku’s surprise, Tsubasa looked just as shocked. It was as if a ghost appeared in front of her, if her whitening face was anything to go off by.

Finally, she spoke in a whisper, saying:

“How are you still alive?”

Chapter End Notes
Your girl is back with more cliffhangers. Of course. Thank you for being so patient with me, and I hope you enjoyed this chapter!!

Anyway, that aside, how did you like this chapter? Any predictions on why Tsubasa said what she said? Just *who* is Matsuki to TK, hmm?
Yell at me on my Tumblr, SFW Twitter or NSFW Twitter.
Then the Heat Came

Chapter Summary

Where truths are revealed, and Izuku pushes past Todoroki's barriers.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The question hung heavy in the room, blanketing the infirmary with silence. Izuku's eyes darted between Tsubasa and Matsuki, who were intensely staring at each other.

“I'd recognize those violet eyes anywhere…” Tsubasa trailed off, taking a step forward. “You were there, weren't you? Five years ago?”

Five years ago? Was Tsubasa talking about the Yamagoku Incident?

Matsuki's hands were shaking by her sides, but her initial fear slightly subsided. Instead, something akin to cold anger washed upon her face. “I was only ten,” she croaked, head lowering as her hands clenched into fists.

Tsubasa narrowed her eyes, lips curling into a sneer. She was angry, but it didn’t look like the anger was directed at Matsuki. “You were being used. Aizawa and I could tell when we were fighting them. What else were we supposed to do?”

“My parents were just trying to get by! They weren’t bad people...all they wanted to do was make sure there was food on the table! Mom and Dad were not villains, just civilians that strayed a little too far off the path. And you killed them for that,” Matsuki countered, voice rising.

Tsubasa was silent, mouth set into a firm line. “That was an accident. But had your parents decided not to attack Aizawa and I that day, your parents and hundreds of others would still be here. It was not my fault, but theirs. You need to accept that.”

Izuku and Recovery Girl looked at each other with equally lost expressions. The boy remembered Tsubasa telling him that there were villains on the scene, which caused her to lose control of her quirk and desecrate the Yamagoku district. Does that mean that Matsuki’s parents were villains? Didn’t she say that her parents were still alive? What is happening here?

“If had more control on your damn quirk, everyone would be alive. At the end of the day, you were a hero-in-training that didn’t have any idea how her quirk worked. What makes you think that it was a good idea to patrol without first knowing what to do? Why did you go out there?”

“Because I told her to,” a familiar, gruff voice echoed by the doorway. Aizawa stood with his arms crossed, a dark look in his eyes. Katsuki stood next to him, slightly nervous to walk in on a tense moment without any knowledge. “Matsuki, Koa, you both need to calm down before you bring attention to yourselves.”

The two girls unwillingly stepped apart, shoulders still tense. Aizawa stayed by the door, but Katsuki walked in until he was beside Izuku. His hand brushed against Izuku’s.
“Matsuki, I already talked to you about this. Don’t make me repeat myself. Koa, what the hell are you even doing here? You’re in public: if you got caught, everything that we’ve done for you would’ve gone down the drain.”

Tsubasa bowed her head, guilty. “I just wanted to see Midoriya’s tournament. Maybe help him out, too.” She looked up at Matsuki. “But now I see that I am not welcomed here. I’ll leave.”

Matsuki sneered and watched her as she strode out of the room. “‘Not welcomed,’ my ass.”

Aizawa shot her a glare. “Matsuki, stop it. You said that you no longer had anything to do with your parents, so why are you so hostile? You know that your parents used you as a pity card so they’d get loans and handouts.”

She scoffed but said nothing in response to that. Instead, she turned to Izuku and glared at him. “I don’t know why you’re so close to her, I really don’t. But you should remember who the real villain is. It’ll always be her.”

Izuku looked down at his feet and murmured, “You don’t know the full story, Matsuki.”

Matsuki turned around and stormed out, shutting the door behind her. But before she left, Matsuki said over her shoulder, “I know enough.”

The sound of the door slamming shut was final. Aizawa sighed, rubbing his exhausted eyes, and took a seat on one of the unused beds. “That went better than I thought.”

“I’d hardly call that ‘better,’ Shouta,” Recovery Girl said with a sigh. “Why didn’t you tell her that Matsuki was still alive?”

He raked his fingers through his hair. “I didn’t even know Koa was still alive until a week ago. How was I supposed to warn her about that?”

Izuku, having finally connected most of the dots, butted in. “So Matsuki was there in the Yamagoku district? And she’s the daughter of the villains that attacked you two?”

Aizawa nodded. “Yes. The Matsuki family was always in poverty, and her parents turned to drug dealing and robberies in order to stay stable. She may deny it, but Matsuki was being used as a pity pawn so they’d receive government loans.”

“That’s terrible…” Izuku murmured, eyes wide. Suddenly, everything that Matsuki told him made sense.

“Besides, being a hero never appealed to me. Or my parents.” She had told him when they first met. Izuku didn’t think much of it at the time: he thought her parents were just protective of her. But now that he knew the real reason why, Izuku felt terrible. He had no idea that Matsuki’s parents were dead.

“I’ve vented my problems to her, yet she’s been struggling with deceased parents…my issues must have been miniscule compared to hers.”

Katsuki nudged him and scowled. “I can already see the gears turning in your damn head. Don’t stress about it, nerd, everything’ll settle down.”

Izuku released some of the tension in his shoulders and sat back down, cradling his head in his hands. He ran his fingers through the soft tufts of hair, sighing softly as he tried to ease his migraine’s severity. All of the drama in the last few minutes caused his head to ache more than it already did,
and the stress that came with it wasn’t doing him any favors either.

Recovery Girl looked at him and rubbed the bridge of her nose, huffing in annoyance. “Well, so much for my student taking a nap and resting. Aizawa, go and find Matsuki before she says anything. Bakugou, I honestly don’t care what you do as long as your boyfriend here gets rid of that migraine of his.”

Aizawa groaned but complied, leaving the three of them in the room. Recovery Girl shut off the lights and returned to her desk, paying no mind to the two teenagers in the corner. While she was occupied, Katsuki settled next to Izuku and rubbed his back.

“I saw your match,” he said. “I don’t know how the hell you got out that extra’s quirk, but it was pretty impressive. Do you think you’ll be okay for the next round of fighting?”

Izuku shrugged. “I’m hoping that my head isn’t bothering me by the time I’m up to fight, but it’s not bad right now.”

“Well, I’ll leave you to rest. I didn’t get a chance to read the roster, so I have no idea when I’m about to go. Feel better, Deku,” Katsuki told him, squeezing his shoulder on his way to the door. After offering a slight bow to Recovery Girl, he slipped out the door and into the hall.

Izuku lay back against the sheets and allowed his eyes to rest. The constant pressure behind his eyes was annoying, but if he just stayed like that for awhile, it’d hopefully go away soon.

“Could you wake me up in ten minutes or so? I want to be able to watch the tournaments,” Izuku spoke lowly in the dim room, nearly slurring over his words. He was tired after his quirk drained him, but he knew that Recovery Girl would let him sleep for a longer time than necessary if he didn’t say something.

She tutted. “Yes, but if you still have that headache when I wake you, I’m strapping you to that bed until it's your turn to fight, got it? You aren't going out there with a migraine.”

Izuku nodded, a small smile on his face, and drifted into sleep.

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It was the same dream again.

Izuku felt the hopelessness seep into his pores, holding him in place. He couldn't move past the spot in the middle of the road: his feet wouldn't budge.

Katsuki was a few feet in front of him, bruised and bloodied. He was hunched over and panted with every labored breath, right hand covering his left. Blood freely dripped through his fingers, and Izuku quickly realized that Katsuki wasn’t holding his left hand, but what remained of it.

“Kacchan…?” he croaked, stumbling forward. His head pounded, nose and eyes leaking blood, and he pieced together the story.

He must have been fighting someone with Katsuki. Izuku didn’t know who or why, but there was a fight, and both of them weren't going to make it out unscathed.

The masked man towered over the two of them, eyes replaced with scarred tissue and empty sockets. He chuckled at the sight of Katsuki before him, taking another step towards the blonde. “Your desire to protect the boy that you love is admirable, Bakugou, but it will be your downfall.”
Katsuki coughed wetly, shoulders trembling. His back was still facing Izuku, which concealed his expression. “I won’t let you take him,” he choked out.

The man reeled back his arm in preparation to strike. “He is the final piece of the puzzle. Whether he wants it or not, Midoriya Izuku will be the harbinger of the end.”

What…? Izuku thought to himself, his blood freezing in his veins.

His boyfriend shook his head and stumbled slightly. “You will not have him, you bastard.”

“I will. Even if I must kill you to get him.”

Izuku leapt forward, hand outstretched towards the pair, but he was too late. Time slipped through his fingers, memories flashing past his eyes, as the man’s arm swelled to an impossible size and swiped Katsuki to the side. His body flung into the remains of a city building, bones crunching under the pressure, and Izuku knew that it was the end.

“Katsuki!” he screamed, voice cracking as he ran to the body. Izuku tripped on rubble, however, and was pinned by the masked man. He thrashed, red tears rushing down his cheeks, but Izuku was so overcome with exhaustion that he could no longer lift a finger to defend himself. “Get off of me!” he sobbed. “Please, please, let me see him. Let me see him!”

“The boy is dead. Everyone you know is dead. You know this, Midoriya Izuku. There is nothing keeping you here anymore,” the voice hissed in his ear. “Give up on this city and join me…your power…”

Izuku sucked in through his teeth, anger blinding him. “My power is mine and mine alone. You took everything from me…”

One last surge of power ran through his body and thrummed painfully in the edges of his fingertips. His mother, Katsuki, his friends…they were all gone. There was no point in living anymore.

End it. Finish what Tsubasa started all those years ago.

Tuning out the outside noise, Izuku closed his eyes. He imagined the smell of spiced pine fill his nose as he took in the image of Katsuki, a small smile gracing his lips. He would see him soon.

Izuku would see all of them soon.

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He woke slowly this time, the taste of bile absent from his mouth. Izuku had no idea who that masked man was, or why he wanted Izuku's telekinesis in the first place, but having the dream two times now didn't sit right with him.

What does it mean? he pondered, sitting up and rubbing his eyes. Izuku’s gaze swept to the clock on the far wall, showing that he’d been asleep for only fifteen minutes. Recovery Girl was still writing on her desk, humming quietly to herself. She wasn’t aware that Izuku had woken up yet.

His throat was dry, tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. “May I have some water?” he rasped, blinking away the remnants of his poor sleep.

Recovery Girl turned to him and stood, pouring him a glass. “How’s your head, boy?”

There was still a slight throbbing behind his eyes, but it was significantly better than before. “Nearly
gone now. I should be fine to go into the stands.”

She gave him one last suspicious glance as she handed him water but decided to drop it. “Don’t come back to me crying because you pushed yourself too far again, alright? I’ve told you about your limit already.”

“Yes, ma’am,” he said, downing the glass in a few moments. “It won’t get to that point again, I promise.”

“Sure it won’t. Now get out of here, I can’t see with the lights off.”

He laughed lightly, pushing himself out of the cot and towards the exit. “Thank you again, ma’am.”

She simply waved him away, not even glancing back at him as he walked out.

***

Uraraka ended up losing to Katsuki.

Izuku saw the match while he was sitting at the stands, teeth nibbling gently on his bottom lip while he watched the battle play out. He knew that Katsuki had both strength and wit, but Uraraka’s grit lasted her a lot longer than others who were unfortunate enough to fight against the explosive blonde.

Her grit just wasn’t enough to win. Yet, when the smoke cleared, Katsuki had the most dead-set expression on his face; he was satisfied with the fight and gave it everything he got, which is what Uraraka wanted all along.

After the fight, Izuku met Katsuki in the hallway and pressed his bitten lips against the corner of Katsuki’s. “Good fight, Kacchan! We both made it to the next round.”

Katsuki grinned and ghosted his hands on Izuku’s hips, ducking his head to press their foreheads together. “Of course it was a good fight,” he boasted. “Everything I do is good.”

Rolling his eyes, Izuku pinched the boy’s arm and maneuvered out of his hold. “Right, right, forgot about that.” They walked along the hall towards 1-A’s spot, hands interlocked. “How are you feeling? Any pain from your injuries?”

He shook his head. “No, I’m doing good. I barely feel it, actually. How’s your head?”

“Better,” was all he said in response.

Both took a seat in the center of the section, bodies turning towards their friends. There was a murmur in the crowd, especially after Katsuki’s merciless display, that Izuku worried about. It was a constant thought in Katsuki’s head that he was still as cruel and mean-spirited as his middle school self. The spectators didn’t know about his values or how he believes in a fair, honest fight.

The spectators didn’t know Kacchan, not like he did.

But looking at Katsuki from the corner of his eye, Izuku didn’t see any doubt or depreciation on his face. He looked completely at ease as he joked around with Kirishima and Kaminari. Immediately, Izuku’s heart began to swell with pride: Katsuki looked like he was on a road to recovery.

“Ladies and gentlemen! We’re back from our short break to reveal the next round of the battle tournament! First match will be Midoriya Izuku versus Todoroki Shouto!” Present Mic announced, rattling the stadium. Izuku’s eyes rested on Todoroki’s back, a frown making its way on his face.
Last time they fought, Todoroki revealed a small glimpse of his flames. If Izuku was lucky, he would get Todoroki to go all out and not be afraid of his quirk.

Both of them walked out together, an awkward silence hanging in the empty corridor. But the quiet was short lived--Todoroki stopped Izuku with a hesitant hand on his shoulder.

“Can I speak to you for a moment?” he asked, voice soft.

What will this be about? Maybe he’ll talk about his quirk? Did something happen to him?

“Sure,” Izuku stammered. They turned into a corner, backs tucked against the wall. The shadows clung to one side of Todoroki’s frame, concealing his burnt side completely.

His eye, cold as ice, gazed straight into Izuku. “I cannot use my left. I know you’ll try to convince me otherwise and spout nonsense about me “owning my quirk,” but I absolutely won’t use the left.”

Izuku bit his tongue. That was exactly what he was aiming to do. “Why? What are you afraid of?”

Todoroki glared at him, lips curled in a sneer. “Who said anything about fear?”

“Why else would you hold back? You were born with it, why aren’t you using it? There are hundreds of kids that would die for your quirk, and this is how you act? It isn’t--”

“My father made me into this!” Todoroki burst out, eyes ablaze. “I was never given a choice. Every day from when I turned four, I would train and train. I was kept away from my siblings, pushed to my limits, all for the sake of my damn father. All so I could surpass All Might!”

Izuku was shocked into silence. “That scar…” Was it from your father?

“No, it wasn’t Endeavor. That was from my mother, bless her soul. She was afraid of what she saw in me, and she broke.”

It was bitter, but it was a relief regardless. If Endeavor had physically abused him, Izuku wasn’t sure if he could face the man without the desire to strangle him. The fact that it came from his mother, though, brought a sense of sadness deep inside Izuku.

His mother was nothing but kind to him, but Izuku kept forgetting that things were different with other families. It wasn’t fair!

“Is that why you’re refusing to use your fire? To spite him?”

“Yes.”

With that, they went onto the field. Izuku was so lost in his thoughts that he could barely hear Midnight announcing the rules. He simply wandered to where he was supposed to stand and looked at the boy before him.

Todoroki said, a long time ago, that he had some scars from his childhood. Now, Izuku knew what he meant. But there was something there within his opponent that Izuku saw, an opportunity. If Izuku said the right thing, maybe he could break past the ice enclosing Todoroki. He could free him.

But it all depended on whether Todoroki wanted to be freed.

“Alright, boys, ready to start?” Midnight asked, manicured nails drumming against the base of her whip. Only after they both nodded their heads did she lift up the whip, strands from the cattail splaying out over her arm. “Begin!”
He’ll try and overpower me immediately...I need to have the element of surprise!

Izuku leapt forward. Wind tousled his hair while he charged, his quirk creating small craters where his feet once were. He felt power thrumming untamed throughout his body, teasing his fingertips with its promised result. Izuku would face Todoroki head-on and use Tsubasa’s martial arts techniques to push the boy out of his comfort zone.

At the same time, Todoroki had his foot planted on the ground, teeth gritted. Ice surged towards Izuku, barely being dodged as he sidestepped. Izuku continued his onslaught with a steeled determination that only seemed to grow inside him, raw force pushing him to his target.

Another pillar of ice came towards him, jagged spikes barely grazing his sides and arms. Blood beaded from the small cuts, yet Izuku pushed on. He had a match to win, but he also had a friend to save.

And if it came to it, Izuku would gladly lose the fight for the chance to help Todoroki.

Izuku was finally upon him when he reeled back his fist, colliding it with Todoroki’s jaw. The boy’s head snapped to the side, his body rolling a few feet from the line.

“Stand up!” Izuku shouted, standing his ground. “Stop giving me half of what you’re capable of!”

Todoroki shakily got to his feet and spat a wad of blood from his lips. “Stop,” he grounded out. Frost clung to his right cheek as he sent out a wider cone of ice, which was easily crumbled to bits by Izuku’s telekinesis. “I won’t...!”

“It’s not his power! It’s no one’s but your own!”

“Shut up...”

Izuku took a step forward. “You watched All Might as a kid, didn’t you? You truly believed you could become a hero back then, right? Not to surpass All Might, but to genuinely help others? You can become anything you want, Todoroki! No one can tell you otherwise!”

“Stop it.”

The gusts of air that Izuku kicked up began to pick up small shards of ice, creating serpents of blue that snaked around his body. Snowflakes clung to his green hair like a vice. “Wake up, Todoroki. You’re not a little kid anymore. This is your chance to make a name for yourself; not as a successor, but as a hero!”

For a moment, all was still. The murmurs from the crowd dulled into silence as everything around the boys seemed to freeze in time. Izuku wondered briefly if he had gone too far: maybe he pushed as far as Todoroki’s boundaries were willing to go?

Then the heat came.

Strong gusts of solid warmth overcame the arena, illuminating the world around them in an intense orange. Flames from Todoroki’s left crackled and hissed, thawing the ice that began to incase him.

“I don’t know if you’re brave or stupid for helping your opponent,” Todoroki murmured, silent tears sliding down his cheeks. “But thank you.”

(Many that watched the match were not able to see the entire attack. Most would say that there was a bright flash of light that concealed the entire arena in white, completely covering the battle below.)
That much was true: there was no official call regarding what had been the winning blow against Izuku.

When Izuku woke up an hour later, he was not able to properly describe what happened either. He remembered trying to block an attack that was both searing and freezing, but everything else was a blur.

It wasn’t until Todoroki told him a few days later that he had used a special move on him--the combination of fire and ice--to both blind and render him unconscious. But that was still days away.

Izuku woke up with a groan, muscles aching. The familiar sight of the infirmary greeted him, white paneled ceilings looming over him.

Recovery Girl leaned over him with a small flashlight. “You really have to stop ending up like this, boy,” she said, running the light over Izuku’s eyes. “As much as I enjoy the company, this can’t be healthy.”

He winced, both from the intruding light and her words, and immediately began forming an apology on his lips. “I’m sorry. I didn’t even see it coming, to be honest with you.”

She tutted but retreated back to the cabinets. “No one really knows what happened after Todoroki’s attack either. But at least you came out of it with only a few scrapes and burns: it could have been worse if you weren’t already on the defence.”

Izuku pushed himself up until his back was resting against the headboard, sighing softly as he found a comfortable position. He gratefully took the pain medicine and water that Recovery Girl offered him with a soft spoken “thank you.”

“You know, Bakugou came to see you after the fight. He was a bit distressed when he couldn’t stay long enough to see you wake up. His fight is starting in a few minutes.”

Before he could move to stand, Recovery Girl’s arms pinned him back to the bed. “You need to rest, young man. If Bakugou makes it past this round, you’ll get to see him compete again.”

Izuku was unable to argue. While she was talking, he felt his eyelids begin to grow heavy once more. No matter how badly he wanted to, Izuku just couldn’t stay awake for Katsuki’s match. With a heavy heart--filled entirely with guilt--Izuku rearranged himself so he was snugly fit under the covers.

I’ll see you in the next round, Kacchan. Don’t you dare lose!

Chapter End Notes

Hello, dears! I'm back with another chapter! Sorry for the small wait, but spring break is just around the corner, so I'm hoping for a chance to work on the next chapter as soon as I can!

Anyway, what did you think? Any comments on anything? Predictions? I'd love to hear from you! Thank you so much for reading!

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